

signalizing their triumphs by the sacrifice of hecatombs of captives; while the Incas, although they pursued the game of conquest with equal pertinacity, preferred a milder policy, substituting negotiation and intrigue for violence, and dealt with their antagonists so that their future resources should not be crippled, and that they should come as friends, not as foes, into the bosom of the empire.

Their policy towards the conquered forms a contrast no less striking to that pursued by the Aztecs. The Mexican vassals were ground by excessive imposts and military conscriptions. No regard was had to their welfare, and the only limit to oppression was the power of endurance. They were overawed by fortresses and armed garrisons, and were made to feel every hour that they were not part and parcel of the nation, but held only in subjugation as a conquered people. The Incas, on the other hand, admitted their new subjects at once to all the rights enjoyed by the rest of the community; and, though they made them conform to the established laws and usages of the empire, they watched over their personal security and comfort with a sort of parental solicitude. The motley population, thus bound together by common interest, was animated by a common feeling of loyalty, which gave greater strength and stability to the empire, as it became more and more widely extended; while the various tribes who successively came under the Mexican sceptre, being held together only by the pressure of external force, were ready to fall asunder the moment that that force was withdrawn. The policy of the two nations displayed the principle of fear as contrasted with the principle of love.

The characteristic features of their religious systems had as little resemblance to each other. The whole Aztec pantheon partook more or less of the sanguinary spirit of the terrible war-god who presided over it, and their frivolous ceremonial almost always terminated with human sacrifice and cannibal orgies. But the rites of the Peruvi-

ans were of a more innocent cast, as they tended to a more spiritual worship. For the worship of the Creator is most nearly approached by that of the heavenly bodies, which, as they revolve in their bright orbits, seem to be the most glorious symbols of his beneficence and power.

In the minuter mechanical arts, both showed considerable skill; but in the construction of important public works, of roads, aqueducts, canals, and in agriculture in all its details, the Peruvians were much superior. Strange that they should have fallen so far below their rivals in their efforts after a higher intellectual culture, in astronomical science more especially, and in the art of communicating thought by visible symbols. When we consider the greater refinement of the Incas, their inferiority to the Aztecs in these particulars can be explained only by the fact that the latter in all probability were indebted for their science to the race who preceded them in the land,—that shadowy race whose origin and whose end are alike veiled from the eye of the Inquirer, but who possibly may have sought a refuge from their ferocious invaders in those regions of Central America the architectural remains of which now supply us with the most pleasing monuments of Indian civilization. It is with this more polished race, to whom the Peruvians seem to have borne some resemblance in their mental and moral organization, that they should be compared. Had the empire of the Incas been permitted to extend itself with the rapid strides with which it was advancing at the period of the Spanish conquest, the two races might have come into conflict, or, perhaps, into alliance with one another.

The Mexicans and Peruvians, so different in the character of their peculiar civilization, were, it seems probable, ignorant of each other's existence; and it may appear singular that, during the simultaneous continuance of their empires, some of the seeds of science and of art, which pass so imperceptibly from one people to another, should not have found

their way across the interval which separated the two nations. They furnish an interesting example of the opposite directions which the human mind may take in its struggle to emerge from darkness into the light of civilization.

A closer resemblance—as I have more than once taken occasion to notice—may be found between the Peruvian institutions and some of the despotic governments of Eastern Asia; those governments where despotism appears in its more mitigated form, and the whole people, under the patriarchal sway of its sovereign, seem to be gathered together like the members of one vast family. Such were the Chinese, for example, whom the Peruvians resembled in their implicit obedience to authority, their mild yet somewhat stubborn temper, their solicitude for forms, their reverence for ancient usage, their skill in the minuter manufactures, their imitative rather than inventive cast of mind, and their invincible patience, which serves instead of a more adventurous spirit for the execution of difficult undertakings.³⁴

A still closer analogy may be found with the natives of Hindostan in their division into castes, their worship of the heavenly bodies and the elements of nature, and their acquaintance with the scientific principles of husbandry. To the ancient Egyptians, also, they bore considerable resemblance in the same particulars, as well as in those ideas of a future existence which led them to attach so much importance to the permanent preservation of the body.

But we shall look in vain in the history of the East for a parallel to the absolute control exercised by the Incas

³⁴ Count Carli has amused himself with tracing out the different points of resemblance between the Chinese and the Peruvians. The emperor of China was styled the son of Heaven or of the Sun. He also held a plough once a year in presence of his people, to show his respect for agriculture. And the solstices and equinoxes were noted, to determine the periods of their religious festivals. The coincidences are curious. *Lettres Américaines*, tom. II. pp. 7, 8.

over their subjects. In the East, this was founded on physical power,—on the external resources of the government. The authority of the Inca might be compared with that of the Pope in the day of his might, when Christendom trembled at the thunders of the Vatican, and the successor of St. Peter set his foot on the necks of princes. But the authority of the Pope was founded on opinion. His temporal power was nothing. The empire of the Incas rested on both. It was a theocracy more potent in its operation than that of the Jews; for, though the sanction of the law might be as great among the latter, the law was expounded by a human lawgiver, the servant and representative of Divinity. But the Inca was both the lawgiver and the law. He was not merely the representative of Divinity, or, like the Pope, its vicegerent, but he was Divinity itself. The violation of his ordinance was sacrilege. Never was there a scheme of government enforced by such terrible sanctions, or which bore so oppressively on the subjects of it. For it reached not only to the visible acts, but to the private conduct, the words, the very thoughts, of its vassals.

It added not a little to the efficacy of the government, that, below the sovereign, there was an order of hereditary nobles of the same divine original with himself, who, placed far below himself, were still immeasurably above the rest of the community, not merely by descent, but, as it would seem, by their intellectual nature. These were the exclusive depositaries of power, and, as their long hereditary training made them familiar with their vocation, and secured them implicit deference from the multitude, they became the prompt and well-practised agents for carrying out the executive measures of the administration. All that occurred throughout the wide extent of his empire—such was the perfect system of communication—passed in review, as it were, before the eyes of the monarch, and a thousand hands, armed with irresistible authority, stood ready in

every quarter to do his bidding. Was it not, as we have said, the most oppressive, though the mildest, of despotism?

It was the mildest, from the very circumstance, that the transcendent rank of the sovereign, and the humble, nay, superstitious, devotion to his will made it superfluous to assert this will by acts of violence or rigor. The great mass of the people may have appeared to his eyes as but little removed above the condition of the brute, formed to minister to his pleasures. But, from their very helplessness, he regarded them with feelings of commiseration, like those which a kind master might feel for the poor animals committed to his charge, or—to do justice to the beneficent character attributed to many of the Incas—that a parent might feel for his young and impotent offspring. The laws were carefully directed to their preservation and personal comfort. The people were not allowed to be employed on works pernicious to their health, nor to pine—a sad contrast to their subsequent destiny—under the imposition of tasks too heavy for their powers. They were never made the victims of public or private extortion; and a benevolent forecast watched carefully over their necessities, and provided for their relief in seasons of infirmity, and for their sustenance in health. The government of the Incas, however arbitrary in form, was in its spirit truly patriarchal.

Yet in this there was nothing cheering to the dignity of human nature. What the people had was conceded as a boon, not as a right. When a nation was brought under the sceptre of the Incas, it resigned every personal right, even the rights dearest to humanity. Under this extraordinary polity, a people advanced in many of the social refinements, well skilled in manufactures and agriculture, were unacquainted, as we have seen, with money. They had nothing that deserved to be called property. They could follow no craft, could engage in no labor, no amuse-

ment, but such as was specially provided by law. They could not change their residence or their dress without a license from the government. They could not even exercise the freedom which is conceded to the most abject in other countries, that of selecting their own wives. The imperative spirit of despotism would not allow them to be happy or miserable in any way but that established by law. The power of free agency—the inestimable and inborn right of every human being—was annihilated in Peru.

The astonishing mechanism of the Peruvian polity could have resulted only from the combined authority of opinion and positive power in the ruler to an extent unprecedented in the history of man. Yet that it should have so successfully gone into operation, and so long endured, in opposition to the taste, the prejudices, and the very principles of our nature, is a strong proof of a generally wise and temperate administration of the government.

The policy habitually pursued by the Incas for the *prevention* of evils that might have disturbed the order of things is well exemplified in their provisions against poverty and idleness. In these they rightly discerned the two great causes of disaffection in a populous community. The industry of the people was secured not only by their compulsory occupations at home, but by their employment on those great public works which covered every part of the country, and which still bear testimony in their decay to their primitive grandeur. Yet it may well astonish us to find, that the natural difficulty of these undertakings, sufficiently great in itself, considering the imperfection of their tools and machinery, was inconceivably enhanced by the politic contrivance of government. The royal edifices of Quito, we are assured by the Spanish conquerors, were constructed of huge masses of stone, many of which were carried all the way along the mountain roads from Cuzco, a distance of several hundred leagues.³⁵ The great square

³⁵ "Era muy principal intento que la gente no holgase, que dava

of the capital was filled to a considerable depth with mould brought with incredible labor up the steep slopes of the Cordilleras from the distant shores of the Pacific Ocean.³⁶ Labor was regarded not only as a means, but as an end, by the Peruvian law.

With their manifold provisions against poverty the reader has already been made acquainted. They were so perfect, that, in their wide extent of territory,—much of it smitten with the curse of barrenness,—no man, however humble, suffered from the want of food and clothing. Famine, so common a scourge in every other American nation, so common at that period in every country of civilized Europe, was an evil unknown in the dominions of the Incas.

The most enlightened of the Spaniards who first visited

causa a que despues que los Ingas estuvieron en paz hacer traer de Quito al Cuzco piedra que venia de provincia en provincia para hacer casas para si ó p^a el Sol en gran cantidad, y del Cuzco llevalla a Quito p^a el mismo efecto, y asi destas cosas hacian los Ingas muchas de poco provecho y de escesimo trabajo en que traian ocupadas las provincias ordinarias, y en fin el trabajo era causa de su conservacion." Ondegardo, Rel. Prim., MS.—Also Antig. y Monumentos del Peru, MS.

³⁶ This was literally gold dust; for Ondegardo states that, when governor of Cuzco, he caused great quantities of gold vessels and ornaments to be disinterred from the sand in which they had been secreted by the natives. "Que toda aquella plaza del Cuzco le sacaron la tierra propia, y se llevó á otras partes por cosa de gran estima, é la hincheron de arena de la costa de la mar, como hasta dos palmos y medio en algunas partes, mas sembraron por toda ella muchos vasas de oro é plata, y hovejuelas y hombrecillos pequeños de lo mismo, lo cual se ha sacado en mucha cantidad, que todo lo hemos visto; desta arena estaba toda la plaza, quando yo fui á gobernar aquella Ciudad; é si fue verdad que aquella se trajo de ellos, afirman é tienen puestos en sns registros, pareceme que sea así, que toda la tierra junta tubo necesidad de entender en ello, por que la plaza es grande, y no tiene numero las cargas que en ella entraron; y la costa por lo mas cerca esta mas de noventa leguas á lo que creo, y cierto yo me satisface, porque todos dicen, que aquel genero de arena, no lo hay hasta la costa." Rel. Seg., MS.

Peru, struck with the general appearance of plenty and prosperity, and with the astonishing order with which everything throughout the country was regulated, are loud in their expressions of admiration. No better government, in their opinion, could have been devised for the people. Contented with their condition, and free from vice, to borrow the language of an eminent authority of that early day, the mild and docile character of the Peruvians would have well fitted them to receive the teachings of Christianity, had the love of conversion, instead of gold, animated the breasts of the Conquerors.³⁷ And a philosopher of a later time, warmed by the contemplation of the picture—which his own fancy had colored—of public prosperity and private happiness under the rule of the Incas, pronounces "the moral man in Peru far superior to the European."³⁸

³⁷ "Y si Dios permitiera que tubieran quien con celo de Cristiandad, y no con ramo de codicia, en lo pasado, les dieran entera noticia de nuestra sagrada Religion, era gente en que bien imprimiera, segun vemos por lo que ahora con la buena orden que hay se obra." Sarmiento, Relacion, MS., cap. 22.

But the most emphatic testimony to the merits of the people is that afforded by Mancio Sierra Lejesema, the last survivor of the early Spanish Conquerors, who settled in Peru. In the preamble to his testament, made, as he states, to relieve his conscience, at the time of his death, he declares that the whole population, under the Incas, was distinguished by sobriety and industry; that such things as robbery and theft were unknown; that, far from licentiousness, there was not even a prostitute in the country; and that everything was conducted with the greatest order and entire submission to authority. The panegyric is somewhat too unqualified for a whole nation, and may lead one to suspect that the stings of remorse for his own treatment of the natives goaded the dying veteran into a higher estimate of their deserts than was strictly warranted by facts. Yet this testimony by such a man at such a time is too remarkable, as well as too honorable to the Peruvians, to be passed over in silence by the historian; and I have transferred the document in the original to *Appendix, No. 4.*

³⁸ "Sans doute l'homme moral du Pérou étoit infiniment plus per-

Yet such results are scarcely reconcilable with the theory of the government I have attempted to analyze. Where there is no free agency, there can be no morality. Where there is no temptation, there can be little claim to virtue. Where the routine is rigorously prescribed by law, the law, and not the man, must have the credit of the conduct. If that government is the best, which is felt the least, which encroaches on the natural liberty of the subject only so far as is essential to civil subordination, then of all governments devised by man the Peruvian has the least real claim to our admiration.

It is not easy to comprehend the genius and the full import of institutions so opposite to those of our own free republic, where every man, however humble his condition, may aspire to the highest honors of the state,—may select his own career, and carve out his fortune in his own way; where the light of knowledge, instead of being concentrated on a chosen few, is shed abroad like the light of day, and suffered to fall equally on the poor and the rich; where the collision of man with man wakens a generous emulation that calls out latent talent and tasks the energies to the utmost; where consciousness of independence gives a feeling of self-reliance unknown to the timid subjects of a despotism; where, in short, the government is made for man,—not as in Peru, where man seemed to be made only for the government. The New World is the theatre on which these two political systems, so opposite in their character, have been carried into operation. The empire of the Incas has passed away and left no trace. The other great experiment is still going on,—the experiment which is to solve the problem, so long contested in the Old World, of the capacity of man for self-government. Alas for humanity, if it should fail!

The testimony of the Spanish conquerors is not uniform *fectionné que l'Européen.*" Carli, *Lettres Américaines*, tom. I. p. 215.

in respect to the favorable influence exerted by the Peruvian institutions on the character of the people. Drinking and dancing are said to have been the pleasures to which they were immoderately addicted. Like the slaves and serfs in other lands, whose position excluded them from more serious and ennobling occupations, they found a substitute in frivolous or sensual indulgence. Lazy, luxurious, and licentious, are the epithets bestowed on them by one of those who saw them at the Conquest, but whose pen was not too friendly to the Indian.³⁹ Yet the spirit of independence could hardly be strong in a people who had no interest in the soil, no personal rights to defend; and the facility with which they yielded to the Spanish invader—after every allowance for their comparative inferiority—argues a deplorable destitution of that patriotic feeling which holds life as little in comparison with freedom.

But we must not judge too hardly of the unfortunate native, because he quailed before the civilization of the European. We must not be insensible to the really great results that were achieved by the government of the Incas. We must not forget, that, under their rule, the meanest of the people enjoyed a far greater degree of personal comfort, at least, a greater exemption from physical suffering, than was possessed by similar classes in other nations on the American continent,—greater, probably, than was possessed

³⁹ "Heran muy dados á la lujuria y al beber, tenían acceso carnal con las hermanas y les mugeres de sus padres como no fuesen sus mismas madres, y algunos avia que con ellas mismas lo hacian y ansi mismo con sus hijas. Estando borrachos tocavan algunos en el pecado nefando, emborrachavanse muy á menudo, y estando borrachos todo lo que el demonio les traía á la voluntad hacian. Heran estos orejones muy soberbios y presuntuosos. . . . Tenian otras muchas maldades que por ser muchas no las digo." Pedro Pizarro, *Descub. y Conq.*, MS.

These random aspersions of the hard conqueror show too gross an ignorance of the institutions of the people to merit much confidence as to what is said of their character.

by these classes in most of the countries of feudal Europe. Under their sceptre, the higher orders of the state had made advances in many of the arts that belong to a cultivated community. The foundations of a regular government were laid, which, in an age of rapine, secured to its subjects the inestimable blessings of tranquillity and safety. By the well-sustained policy of the Incas, the rude tribes of the forest were gradually drawn from their fastnesses, and gathered within the folds of civilization; and of these materials was constructed a flourishing and populous empire, such as was to be found in no other quarter of the American continent. The defects of this government were those of over-refinement in legislation,—the last defects to have been looked for, certainly, in the American aborigines.

NOTE. I have not thought it necessary to swell this Introduction by an inquiry into the origin of Peruvian civilization, like that appended to the history of the Mexican. The Peruvian history doubtless suggests analogies with more than one nation in the East, some of which have been briefly adverted to in the preceding pages; although these analogies are adduced there not as evidence of a common origin, but as showing the coincidences which might naturally spring up among different nations under the same phase of civilization. Such coincidences are neither so numerous nor so striking as those afforded by the Aztec history. The correspondence presented by the astronomical science of the Mexicans is alone of more importance than all the rest. Yet the light of analogy, afforded by the institutions of the Incas, seems to point, as far as it goes, towards the same direction; and as the investigation could present but little substantially to confirm, and still less to confute, the views taken in the former disquisition, I have not thought it best to fatigue the reader with it.

Two of the prominent authorities on whom I have relied in this Introductory portion of the work are Juan de Sarmiento and the Licentiate Ondegardo. Of the former I have been able to collect no information beyond what is afforded by his own writings. In the title prefixed to his manuscript, he is styled President of the Council of the Indies, a post of high authority, which infers a weight of character in the party, and means of information, that entitle his opinions on colonial topics to great deference.

These means of information were much enlarged by Sarmiento's visit to the colonies, during the administration of Gasca. Having conceived the design of compiling a history of the ancient Peruvian institutions, he visited Cuzco, as he tells us, in 1550, and there drew from the natives themselves the materials for his narrative. His position gave him access to the most authentic sources of knowledge, and from the lips of the Inca nobles, the best instructed of the conquered race, he gathered the traditions of their national history and institutions. The quipus formed, as we have seen, an imperfect system of mnemonics, requiring constant attention, and much inferior to the Mexican hieroglyphics. It was only by diligent instruction that they were made available to historical purposes; and this instruction was so far neglected after the Conquest, that the ancient annals of the country would have perished with the generation which was the sole depositary of them, had it not been for the efforts of a few intelligent scholars, like Sarmiento, who saw the importance, at this critical period, of cultivating an intercourse with the natives, and drawing from them their hidden stores of information.

To give still further authenticity to his work, Sarmiento travelled over the country, examined the principal objects of interest with his own eyes, and thus verified the accounts of the natives as far as possible by personal observation. The result of these labors was his work entitled, "Relacion de la sucesion y gobierno de las Yngas Señores naturales que fueron de las Provincias del Peru y otras cosas tocantes á aquel Reyno, para el Ilmo. Señor Dⁿ Juan Sarmiento, Presidente del Consejo R^l de Indias."

It is divided into chapters, and embraces about four hundred folio pages in manuscript. The introductory portion of the work is occupied with the traditionary tales of the origin and early period of the Incas; teeming, as usual, in the antiquities of a barbarous people, with legendary fables of the most wild and monstrous character. Yet these puerile conceptions afford an inexhaustible mine for the labors of the antiquarian, who endeavors to unravel the allegorical web which a cunning priesthood had devised as symbolical of

those mysteries of creation that it was beyond their power to comprehend. But Sarmiento happily confines himself to the mere statement of traditional fables, without the chimerical ambition to explain them.

From this region of romance, Sarmiento passes to the institutions of the Peruvians, describes their ancient polity, their religion, their progress in the arts, especially agriculture; and presents, in short, an elaborate picture of the civilization which they reached under the Inca dynasty. This part of his work, resting, as it does, on the best authority, confirmed in many instances by his own observation, is of unquestionable value, and is written with an apparent respect for truth, that engages the confidence of the reader. The concluding portion of the manuscript is occupied with the civil history of the country. The reigns of the early Incas, which lie beyond the sober province of history, he despatches with commendable brevity. But on the three last reigns, and fortunately of the greatest princes who occupied the Peruvian throne, he is more diffuse. This was comparatively firm ground for the chronicler, for the events were too recent to be obscured by the vulgar legends that gather like moss round every incident of the older time. His account stops with the Spanish invasion; for this story, Sarmiento felt, might be safely left to his contemporaries who acted a part in it, but whose taste and education had qualified them but indifferently for exploring the antiquities and social institutions of the natives.

Sarmiento's work is composed in a simple, perspicuous style, without that ambition of rhetorical display too common with his countrymen. He writes with honest candor, and while he does ample justice to the merits and capacity of the conquered races, he notices with indignation the atrocities of the Spaniards and the demoralizing tendency of the Conquest. It may be thought, indeed, that he forms too high an estimate of the attainments of the nation under the Incas. And it is not improbable, that, astonished by the vestiges it afforded of an original civilization, he became enamored of his subject, and thus exhibited it in colors somewhat too glowing to the eye of the European. But this was an amiable failing, not too largely shared by the stern Conquerors, who subverted the institutions of the country, and saw little to admire in it, save its gold. It must be further admitted, that Sarmiento has no design to impose on his reader, and that he is careful to distinguish between what he reports on hearsay, and what on personal experience. The Father of History himself does not discriminate between these two things more carefully.

Neither is the Spanish historian to be altogether vindicated from the superstition which belongs to his time; and we often find him referring to the immediate interposition of Satan those effects which might quite as well be charged on the perverseness of man. But this was common to the age, and to the wisest men in it; and it is too much to demand of a man to be wiser than his generation. It is sufficient praise of Sarmiento, that, in an age when superstition was too often allied with fanaticism, he seems to have had no tincture of bigotry in his nature. His heart opens with benevolent fulness to the unfortunate native; and his language, while it is not kindled into the religious glow of the missionary, is warmed by a generous ray of philanthropy that embraces the conquered, no less than the conquerors, as his brethren.

Notwithstanding the great value of Sarmiento's work for the information it affords of Peru under the Incas, it is but little known, has been rarely consulted by historians, and still remains among the unpublished manuscripts which lie, like uncoined bullion, in the secret chambers of the Escorial.

The other authority to whom I have alluded, the Licentiate Polo de Ondegardo, was a highly respectable jurist, whose name appears frequently in the affairs of Peru. I find no account of the period when he first came into the country. But he was there on the arrival of Gasca, and resided at Lima under the usurpation of Gonzalo Pizarro. When the artful Cepeda endeavored to secure the signatures of the inhabitants to the instrument proclaiming the sovereignty of his chief, we find Ondegardo taking the lead among those of his profession in resisting it. On Gasca's arrival, he consented to take a commission in his army. At the close of the rebellion he was made corregidor of La Plata, and subsequently of Cuzco, in which honorable station he seems to have remained several years. In the exercise of his magisterial functions, he was brought into familiar intercourse with the natives, and had ample opportunity for studying their laws and ancient customs. He conducted himself with such prudence and moderation, that he seems to have won the confidence not only of his countrymen but of the Indians; while the administration was careful to profit by his large experience in devising measures for the better government of the colony.

The *Relaciones*, so often cited in this History, were prepared at the suggestion of the viceroys, the first being addressed to the Marques de Cañete, in 1561, and the second, ten years later, to the Conde de Nieva. The two cover about as much ground as Sarmiento's manuscript; and the second memorial, written so long after the first,

may be thought to intimate the advancing age of the author, in the greater carelessness and diffuseness of the composition.

As these documents are in the nature of answers to the interrogatories propounded by government, the range of topics might seem to be limited within narrower bounds than the modern historian would desire. These queries, indeed, had particular reference to the revenues, tributes,—the financial administration, in short, of the Incas; and on these obscure topics the communication of Ondegardo is particularly full. But the enlightened curiosity of government embraced a far wider range; and the answers necessarily implied an acquaintance with the domestic policy of the Incas, with their laws, social habits, their religion, science, and arts, in short, with all that make up the elements of civilization. Ondegardo's memoirs, therefore, cover the whole ground of inquiry for the philosophic historian.

In the management of these various subjects, Ondegardo displays both acuteness and erudition. He never shrinks from the discussion, however difficult; and while he gives his conclusions with an air of modesty, it is evident that he feels conscious of having derived his information through the most authentic channels. He rejects the fabulous with disdain; decides on the probabilities of such facts as he relates, and candidly exposes the deficiency of evidence. Far from displaying the simple enthusiasm of the well-meaning but credulous missionary, he proceeds with the cool and cautious step of a lawyer accustomed to the conflict of testimony and the uncertainty of oral tradition. This circumspect manner of proceeding, and the temperate character of his judgments, entitled Ondegardo to much higher consideration as an authority than most of his countrymen who have treated of Indian antiquities.

There runs through his writings a vein of humanity, shown particularly in his tenderness to the unfortunate natives, to whose ancient civilization he does entire, but not extravagant, justice; while, like Sarmiento, he fearlessly denounces the excesses of his own countrymen, and admits the dark reproach they had brought on the honor of the nation. But while this censure forms the strongest ground for condemnation of the Conquerors, since it comes from the lips of a Spaniard like themselves, it proves, also, that Spain in this age of violence could send forth from her bosom wise and good men who refused to make common cause with the licentious rabble around them. Indeed, proof enough is given in these very memorials of the unceasing efforts of the colonial government, from the good viceroy Mendoza downwards, to secure protection and

the benefit of a mild legislation to the unfortunate natives. But the iron Conquerors, and the colonist whose heart softened only to the touch of gold, presented a formidable barrier to improvement.

Ondegardo's writings are honorably distinguished by freedom from that superstition which is the debasing characteristic of the times; a superstition shown in the easy credit given to the marvellous, and this equally whether in heathen or in Christian story; for in the former the eye of credulity could discern as readily the direct interposition of Satan, as in the latter the hand of the Almighty. It is this ready belief in a spiritual agency, whether for good or for evil, which forms one of the most prominent features in the writings of the sixteenth century. Nothing could be more repugnant to the true spirit of philosophical inquiry, or more irreconcilable with rational criticism. Far from betraying such weakness, Ondegardo writes in a direct and business-like manner, estimating things for what they are worth by the plain rule of common-sense. He keeps the main object of his argument ever in view, without allowing himself, like the garrulous chroniclers of the period, to be led astray into a thousand rambling episodes that bewilder the reader and lead to nothing.

Ondegardo's memoirs deal not only with the antiquities of the nation, but with its actual condition, and with the best means for redressing the manifold evils to which it was subjected under the stern rule of its conquerors. His suggestions are replete with wisdom, and a merciful policy, that would reconcile the interests of government with the prosperity and happiness of its humblest vassal. Thus, while his contemporaries gathered light from his suggestions as to the present condition of affairs, the historian of later times is no less indebted to him for information in respect to the past. His manuscript was freely consulted by Herrera, and the reader, as he peruses the pages of the learned historian of the Indies, is unconsciously enjoying the benefit of the researches of Ondegardo. His valuable *Relaciones* thus had their uses for future generations, though they have never been admitted to the honors of the press. The copy in my possession, like that of Sarmiento's manuscript, for which I am indebted to that industrious bibliographer, Mr. Rich, formed part of the magnificent collection of Lord Kingsborough—a name ever to be held in honor by the scholar for his indefatigable efforts to illustrate the antiquities of America.

Ondegardo's manuscripts, it should be remarked, do not bear his signature. But they contain allusions to several actions of the writer's life, which identify them, beyond any reasonable doubt, as