

ing capital at *twenty millions* of dollars; nor is there any reason to suppose that it at all exceeds this amount.

In the present state of the country, the Clergy derive but little additional income from this capital; for the estates upon which it is secured have not yet sufficiently recovered from the effects of the Revolution to pay the interest upon capitals formerly advanced to their proprietors. Many have required, on the contrary, additional advances in order to resume their labours at all; and all have refused to admit the claim of the Bishoprics to the arrears due during the Civil war.

Upon this point the Clergy have, in most parts of the country, come to a sort of compromise with the proprietors; but in others, where, (as in La Puebla,) they have insisted upon the full extent of their dues, a great deal of bad feeling has arisen. The land-owners have refused to attempt to bring land again into cultivation, from which they could expect to derive no benefit; and the Clergy have been compelled, at last, to yield, by a threat of interference on the part of the Legislature.

Of the Tithes, nothing certain is yet known: they vary, of course, every year, as the agriculture of the country revives; but they do not yet produce any thing like their former amount; nor is it probable that they will. In the Bishoprics, upon the Western coast, (Durango, Guadalajara, and Valladolid,) I found a general falling off in the amount of the

Tithes complained of; and this not proceeding from the ruin of the great Haciendas alone, but from the dissemination of ideas unfavourable to the rights of the Church. In the extensive Diocese of Michoacán, (Valladolid,) the tithes, during the two last years, have not exceeded 200,000 dollars, in lieu of 500,000 dollars, which they averaged before 1808. This may be partly owing to the administration of the Church revenues having been long in the hands of the Cathedral Chapter, which can never possess an influence over the common people, equal to that exercised by a resident Bishop, supported by all the pomp, with which the great dignitaries of the church are surrounded: but it cannot be denied that there is a spirit abroad in Mexico, which will render it difficult for the higher Clergy to retain that affluence which they formerly enjoyed.

A more equal distribution, at least, of the wealth now engrossed by a few, will be one of the first consequences of the interference of the Congress in Ecclesiastical affairs; and it is highly to be desired that, in this respect, some reform should take place; for in many Dioceses, where the revenues of the Bishop amounted to 100,000 or 120,000 dollars, there were *Curas* (Parish priests) who vegetated upon a pittance of 100, or 120 dollars in the year.

The sources from which the incomes of the Parish priests are derived likewise require investigation, and reform.

No provision being made for them by the State,

their subsistence depends upon the contributions of their parishioners; which, in general, are regulated by custom, and not by law: they consist of marriage and baptismal fees and other dues payable on burials, masses, and other church ceremonies, most of which are very exorbitant, and produce a most demoralizing effect amongst the Indian population. For instance, in States, where the daily wages of the labourer do not exceed two reals, and where a cottage can be built for four dollars, its unfortunate inhabitants are forced to pay twenty-two dollars for their marriage fees; a sum which exceeds half their yearly earnings, in a country where Feast and Fast days reduce the number of *dias utiles* (on which labour is permitted) to about one hundred and seventy-five. The consequence is, that the Indian either cohabits with his future wife until she becomes pregnant, (when the priest is compelled to marry them with, or without fees,) or, if more religiously disposed, contracts debts, and even commits thefts, rather than not satisfy the demands of the ministers of that Religion, the spirit of which appears to be so little understood.

Throughout the Bishopric of Valladolid the marriage fees vary from seventeen, to twenty-two dollars: in La Puebla, Durango, and Mexico, they are from fourteen to eighteen dollars, according to the supposed means of the parties; and these enormous sums are extorted from the meanest parishioners.

The fees on baptisms, and burials, are likewise

very high. In the Mining districts, each miner pays *weekly* to the Church, half a real (a medio), in order to provide for the expenses of his funeral; and on the day of the *Raya* (the weekly payment), an agent of the *Cura* is always present to receive it. Thus twenty-six reals, or three dollars and two reals (thirteen shillings English money), are paid annually, by each mining labourer, in full health and employment, in order to secure the privilege of a mass being read over his body upon his decease. An Indian, who lives ten years under such a system, would pay six pounds ten shillings for the honour of a funeral; and yet would not be exempt from continuing his contributions, although the amount paid in one year, ought more than to cover any fees that could reasonably be claimed by the Church.

I do not fear being accused of an uncharitable spirit in these remarks, for I have heard many of the most enlightened of the Mexican Clergy deplore the existence of such a state of things, and admit, that the want of a moral feeling amongst the lower classes, is the natural fruit of a system, under which such abuses have been suffered to prevail.

One of the most distinguished members of a Cathedral Chapter, while lamenting, in a conversation with me, the debased state of the people of his diocese, used this remarkable phrase: "*Son mui buenos Catolicos, pero mui malos Christianos*;" (They are very good Catholics, but very bad Christians;) meaning, (as he afterwards stated,) that it had been

but too much the interest of the lower orders of the Clergy, to direct the attention of their flocks, rather to a scrupulous observance of the *forms* of the Catholic Church, than to its moral or spirit, from which their revenues derived but little advantage.

The Table No. I., annexed to this Section, presents a general view of the number of the Secular Clergy in the different Bishopricks in the year 1827.

No. II. contains a curious comparison, between the clergy of Old and New Spain, which Mr. Ramos Arizpe, from his long residence in the Peninsula, was well qualified to draw up; and by which it will be seen, that the number of *Prebends alone* in Spain, exceeds, by Nine hundred and ninety-six, the total amount of the whole Mexican Secular Clergy of every degree. Spain has Sixty-three Cathedrals, and One hundred and seventeen Collegiate Chapters: Mexico, Ten Cathedrals and *One* Collegiate Chapter: and the Church of Saragossa alone, in Spain, contains *Thirty-three* more Canons and Prebends than there are at present in the whole Mexican Republic.

The Table No. III., presents a statement of the number of Convents in Mexico: the Orders and Provinces to which they belong; the number of individuals contained in each; distinguishing those who have professed, during the last five years;—the Parishes, and Missions, under their charge, and the amount of their property both in lands and in capitals, lent upon mortgage.

No. IV. gives a similar view of the Six Colleges, de propagandâ fide, established in Mexico, Quērētārō, Pächūcā, Ōrízāvā, Zācātēcās, and Zāpöpān, with an account of the Indian Missions in the north, in which the Members of these Colleges are employed.

From the two last of these Tables, some very important inferences may be drawn.

In the first place, it appears that in the One hundred and fifty-six Convents and Colleges of Mexico, only two hundred and ninety-four individuals have professed, or taken the vows, during the last five years, out of five hundred and twenty-seven who assumed the habit, probably with an intention of professing; and that, at the present day, only ninety-two in all are serving their noviciate.

This may be regarded as no mean proof of the diminution of that mistaken spirit of religion, by which so many, who might have become useful members of society, were induced to shut themselves up in communities, many of which subsist entirely upon the contributions of the ignorant, or the religiously disposed, amongst their countrymen. It serves, likewise, to indicate that the charity of the former supporters of these Orders is cooling fast. The total amount of the alms received, by *all* the different Convents, in the year 1826, does not exceed 204,604 dollars; a sum, which, I am assured, the receipts of the Convent of St. Francisco in Mexico alone, frequently equalled in former times. The *métier* is

therefore becoming a bad one; and the number of noviciates will, of course, decrease in the same ratio as the inducements to enter upon a Monastic life.

It appears, farther, that the total amount of the capital possessed by the Regular Clergy of New Spain, computing the value of their lands, (*fincas urbanas y rusticas*) and of their capitals, by the annual produce as given by the table, (428,764 dollars)\* at five per cent interest, and adding the value of their consolidated fund, (649,735 dollars), does not exceed 9,225,015 dollars; a very moderate sum when compared with the immense wealth of the Monastic Orders in some parts of Europe, and particularly in Old Spain.

For this advantage, Mexico, according to Mr. Ramos Arizpe, is indebted to the circumstance of never having received into her territory the Orders of the Basilians, and the Carthusians, or the Monks of St. Bernard, and St. Geronimo, who are all great proprietors in the Peninsula, and hold there, with immense estates, all the privileges of temporal jurisdiction. The only Orders established in New Spain are the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Augustines, the Unshod Carmelites, and the Merceda-

* Produce of houses in towns	-	-	216,002 dollars.
Of property in the country	-	-	129,723
Interest of capitals	-	-	83,039
			<hr/>
Total	-	-	428,764

rians, all of whom are prevented by the rules of their institutions from holding lordships with seigneurial rights, or acquiring property to any great extent; and consequently are much better calculated to become useful members of a Christian community. (*Vide Ecclesiastical Report of 1826.*)

Having taken a general view, in the preceding pages, of the situation of the Church of Mexico in 1827, it only remains for me to point out, a little more in detail, the effects produced by the Revolution.

The Constitution has vested in the President the right of conceding, or refusing, the *Pase*, or *Placet*, which may be considered as equivalent to the *Regium Exequatur*, without which no Bull, or even Indulgence, was allowed to circulate in the Spanish possessions of Ultramar. This right has been freely exercised; twenty-four only, of thirty-three Briefs and Rescripts transmitted from Rome, having obtained the Constitutional *Pase* in the year 1826. Of the remainder, four were referred to the Senate, and five rejected altogether.

One of these is the Bull of the 24th December, 1825, for the extension of the Jubilee, which has not been allowed to circulate, "Because it contains doctrines contrary to that of the sovereignty of the people, and in favour of the absolute power of Kings, identifying their cause with that of the Church." The other four are all Bulls in favour of the paro-

chial Church of Jalapa, which have been rejected in consequence of their being countersigned by the agent of the King of Spain at Rome. (*Vide Report.*)

In the Mandatory letters from Generals of the Monastic Orders, an entire change has also taken place. The Orders existing in Mexico were all, in their origin, branches of similar Orders established in the Peninsula, and dependant upon Generals residing there. On the declaration of the Independence, the Government, as a necessary precaution, prohibited all intercourse with the Generals, and this injunction has been hitherto complied with.

It is now the wish of the Executive, that the Mexican Provinces of Regulars should elect Generals, to reside in the territories of the Federation; but upon this point, nothing has been yet determined.

With regard to the interior discipline of the Convents, difficulties have occurred only in one instance. The Franciscans of Queretaro, were bound by the rules of their Order to observe what is termed *la Tripartita* in the choice of their Priors, who are elected every three years. By this rule, the election fell, for the first term of three years, upon a *Spanish* Monk, who had taken orders in the Peninsula; for the second, likewise upon a *Spaniard*, but one who had professed in Mexico; and for the third only, upon a Mexican born.

The Government naturally wished to do away with a distinction so unfavourable to Natives; but the Convent declared any change to be impossible,

as the regulation in question originated in a Bull of the Pope's, and was included in the fundamental rules of the Order. A reference to Rome direct was allowed them, in order to quiet their scruples; but the Pope, instead of returning a direct answer, referred the question to the Bishop of New Orleans (a Frenchman by birth), who, in a Pastoral addressed to the Monks, recommended the strict observance of the *Tripartita*.

This Pastoral was clandestinely introduced, but the Government having received information of the fact, ordered it to be delivered up, and the bearer (a Monk of the Order) to be severely reprimanded for having taken charge of it. The *Tripartita* has been since abolished, without any measures of rigour being resorted to.

I have stated in the first part of this Section, that serious inconvenience has arisen, both to the Clergy and the country at large, from the non-existence of a right of Patronage during the last five years. The Congress has, indeed, reserved to itself, by the 50th Article of the Federal Act, the privilege "of regulating this right throughout the Federation;" but, up to the present time, it has neither authorized the Executive to appoint Bishops, nor to concur in the appointments made by other bodies.

I am inclined to attribute this apparent timidity on the part of the Congress, to a prudent desire to allow the disadvantages of a dependence upon a Transatlantic Power to be brought home to the

Clergy of all classes before any step is taken to relieve them from its effects. This object is now attained: a feeling in favour of an independent National Church, has become very general; and, in the beginning of this year, motions were made in the Legislatures of Zacatecas and Durango, urging the Congress to assume the right of Patronage, *without waiting for a Concordat with the See of Rome*. I have little doubt that due attention will be paid to this recommendation in the sessions of 1828, if, indeed, it be not acted upon before the close of the present year.

The long interregnum which has taken place in many of the Bishoprics, has facilitated the introduction of some very useful reforms; but it has encouraged, at the same time, a spirit of innovation, on the part of some of the States, which, but for the intervention of the General Congress, would have been carried very far. In Guadalajara, for instance, the State Legislature decreed the confiscation of the whole of the Church property in that State, pledging itself to make a suitable provision for the Ministers of Religion at the public expense. This project was even sanctioned *as an Article of the Constitution of the State* (the 7th); but the Clergy, having refused to take the oath upon such terms, and resisted, by a threat of excommunication, an attempt on the part of the Civil Authorities to oblige them to submit, the question was referred to the General Congress, which, on the 22d of December

1824, issued a Decree "prohibiting the States from taking any measures calculated to diminish the revenues of the Church, without the full concurrence of the Ecclesiastical Authorities, until the time should arrive, at which the General Congress should think it expedient to enact a law for the regulation of the right of Patronage throughout the Republic."

This measure, although it has been much criticised, was undoubtedly productive of the very best effects, as it put a stop to encroachments on the part of the States, for which the country was by no means prepared, and yet left the door open for all necessary reforms, wherever there was an attempt to exercise Spiritual jurisdiction, in such a manner as to affect the rights and privileges of any other class of citizens. For, it is to be observed, that the Decree, while it prohibits any attempt to trench upon the revenues of the Church, does not prohibit the interference of the States *with regard to the mode in which these revenues are collected*.

Advantage has been taken of this opening, in almost every part of the Federation, in order to abolish the Tribunal de Haceduria, or Court of Tithes, before which all cases connected with the collection of tithes were brought and decided, in *dernier resort*, by the Canons, who were thus both parties and judges in their own cause. The mode of abolition has varied in the different States. In Durango, the right of decision is vested in the Supreme Tribunal of Justice: in Valladolid, San Luis Potosí, Guana-

juato, and Jalisco, Mixed Courts have been established, the shades of difference between which it would be unnecessary to point out: but in all, the spirit is the same; and the determination to allow of no extension of Spiritual jurisdiction to civil cases has been equally asserted.

This step has not been taken without much resistance on the part of the Chapters; and, in Guadalajara, the Canons have gone so far as to declare, "that they will give up their claim to any portion of the Tithes, and subsist entirely upon the alms of the faithful, rather than allow one of their number to become a member of the Mixed Court." But as the Congress, up to the period of my departure, had refused to interfere in the question, and has not, I believe, done so since, the measure will be gradually carried into execution in all the States, and will, I doubt not, be in full effect in most, before the end of the present year.

The sums left at the disposal of the Cathedrals for Obras Pias, or charitable institutions, have furnished another source of contention in many parts of the Republic. These sums constitute, as we have seen, a part of the general funds of the Clergy, and many of them have, undoubtedly, not been employed according to the intentions of the testator.

In Durango, copies of the original wills of two individuals, who bequeathed to the Church, funds for the express purpose of endowing schools, having been procured, the State Congress has demanded the

restitution of a capital, which has been allowed to remain thirty years unemployed, or, at least, unappropriated in the manner prescribed. The Chapter refused at first to listen to this demand; but finding no very great disposition on the part of the General Congress to interfere, it has avoided bringing matters to an extremity by advancing the money required by the Government, for projects of public utility, as a loan.

In Guadalajara, the Canons, to avoid being called to a similar account, have commenced very extensive repairs in the Cathedral, all of which the fund of Obras Pias is destined to defray. In other States various other precautions have been taken; and the necessity for these, on the part of the Church, has led to a great deal of jealousy, and bad feeling, between the Ecclesiastical and Civil Authorities, which has been not a little increased by the circumstance of so many of the Canons being old Spaniards, against whom, individually and collectively, a decided spirit of hostility prevails.

What I have said of the growing interference of the States in the affairs of the Bishoprics, is equally applicable to the Monastic Orders. There is no national act, that vests, either in the Chambers, or in the Executive, or in the State Congresses, any *legal* right of control over them, nor is any such control exercised at the present moment, except in those general regulations, which I have already pointed out: but there are evident indications of an inten-