

tion, on the part of the Congress, to take measures for restricting Novitiates under a certain age, and thus gradually to reduce the number of Convents, by fixing, for each, a *minimum* of resident monks.

Abolition by any sweeping act, such as that which produced such fatal effects in Spain, is not, I think, to be apprehended;* but the present state of the Convents affords great facilities for moderate reforms, only forty-seven Convents, out of a hundred and fifty, containing more than Twelve friars, and thirty-nine being already reduced to less than Five.

It is much to be desired that the Congress may persevere in the prudent course, which it has hitherto pursued; for, in the States, unfortunately, the cause of reform has fallen into the hands of men, who, irritated at the abuses which have been committed under the cloak of religion, are inclined to attribute to the creed the faults of those who professed to teach it, and wish to fly, at once, from superstition to atheism. Throughout the Bishoprics on the Western Coast this feeling is very prevalent, and in Jalisco especially, it is a favourite axiom of the liberal party, that, until the present Church

* No one who has followed the course of events in the Peninsula during the years 1820, 1821, and 1822, will deny that the feeling of hostility towards the Constitution, which always existed, increased, in a tenfold ratio, from the day that the Cortes turned forty thousand monks and friars loose upon the country, on a badly-paid pension, to propagate their opinions amongst the lower classes, as the only means of avoiding starvation.

system be radically changed, the new institutions can never take a firm root.

Nothing can be more mistaken, in my opinion, than this idea, or less suited to the habits, and feelings of the people. It is by pruning, and weeding, and not by destroying both root and branch, that salutary reforms may be effected. For these, as I have already stated, there is ample room; but, if the changes proposed, do not exceed the establishment of a necessary degree of independence in the Mexican Church,—the equalization (or more equal distribution) of its revenues, and the diminution of those excessive Church, or Surplice fees, now exacted by the Parochial Clergy;—Mexican clergymen may be found, (and these, men of the highest respectability,) not only capable of directing, but desirous to introduce them, even at the expense of individual sacrifices, the necessity of which they acknowledge.

The vacancy of the principal Bishoprics affords an opening, which will probably be taken advantage of; and should the overgrown revenues of some of the Dioceses be cut down, and appropriated to the support of the poorer Parochial Clergy, I am inclined to think that the measure, in lieu of being opposed, would meet with very general approbation. At all events, a general coalition against it, (which might be dangerous) is not to be apprehended.

The Clergy are divided amongst themselves: besides the great leading distinction of Old Spaniards and Natives, the interests of the Parochial Clergy

are at variance, not only with those of the Convents, but also with those of the Cathedral Chapters; and this circumstance is particularly favourable to moderate reform. Beyond this point, I sincerely hope that no innovations will be attempted; for a National Church ought to be respectably supported; and if this be done, the Clergy will gain, in real and beneficial influence, all that they lose in an unnatural political importance, which they ought not to wish to retain.

I shall close this Section with a few observations upon the important subject of religious Toleration, which, in theory, at least, cannot be said to exist at present in Mexico. No sects of religion differing from the dominant religion, are tolerated; nor is the private, or public exercise of any other allowed. To be a Mexican Citizen, an outward conformity, at least, with the practices of the Roman Catholic faith, is required; although the facility with which letters of Naturalization have been conceded to American settlers, in the North, proves, that no very strict enquiry upon the subject is instituted. But there are no rights, or privileges, either civil or military, to which any Mexican subject, *publicly* professing any but the Catholic religion, could legally be entitled.

With regard to Foreigners, residing as such in the Mexican territory, but few concessions have yet been made; nor has it been found possible to establish, as a *right*, the public or private exercise of the Pro-

testant religion; although the wishes of his Majesty's Government upon this subject were complied with by Buenos Ayres, and, under certain limitations, by Columbia likewise.

In Mexico, the third article of the Federal Act rendered a similar compliance impossible. It becomes, therefore, interesting to enquire by what means New Spain has been thrown so far behind the Sister States of the South in point of rational toleration.

It is to the history of the Revolution that we must look for the causes of the difference, which now prevails; for, in 1810, it may fairly be assumed that superstition and intolerance were pretty equally disseminated throughout the Spanish Colonies in the New World. But, in Buenos Ayres, since the first declaration of the independence (May 1810), not a single Spanish soldier has entered the territory of the Republic: the intercourse with Foreigners has been constantly open, and constantly kept up; and it would have been hard indeed, if, in thirteen years, the minds of the people had not been prepared, by the gradual amalgamation of interests which has taken place, to entertain a more indulgent view of the religion of those Foreigners, than that which their former masters had laboured to inculcate.

In Columbia, the case has been different in some respects, although in others nearly the same. A general freedom of intercourse with Europe was not, indeed, immediately established, but a numerous

corps of Foreign Auxiliaries joined, at a very early period, the Independent standard, and fought the battles of the Republic against the armies of Murillo. It was after more than one victory, in which this corps had taken a brilliant share, that the Congress of Truxillo, assembled under the auspices of Bolivar, framed the present Constitution. Gratitude to the army forbade, at such a moment, the insertion of an Article prohibiting the exercise of a religion, which a very important part of that army professed; and, at the same time, the certainty of its support, if required, encouraged the Columbian Legislators to avoid the insertion of a provision in the National Act, the disadvantages of which, at no distant period, it was easy to foresee.

In Mexico, none of these favourable circumstances occurred. The war of Independence, instead of enfranchising the people from the dominion of that blind system of superstition, which it had been the interest of the Spaniards, during three centuries, to keep up, had rather a contrary tendency. It was by appealing to the religious feelings of the people, and by inviting them to defend the rights of their Church against the pollution, with which they were menaced by a French invasion, that the leaders of the first Insurrection, in 1810, induced the lower classes to join the standard of revolt. The Virgin of Guadalupe, was declared the Patroness of all the Insurgents: her images were worn, and her name invoked by them, on entering into battle. Their

first leaders, too, were all priests; and although, as the struggle became more general, a more rational idea of the great object of the contest with Spain was introduced, it was still found necessary to keep up the fanaticism of the lower orders, as the strongest hold which their leaders could possess over their minds.

Foreigners kept almost entirely aloof from the contest. The struggle was decidedly amongst the Mexicans themselves; and, unfortunately, by that very portion of the community, which, instead of sharing in the feelings of hostility, entertained by the rest of their countrymen towards Spain, was induced by the recollection of the privileges which it had enjoyed under the Viceregal government, to set up the laws and institutions of Old Spain, as the best model for imitation. Purity of religion, was one of the *Three Guarantees* proclaimed by Iturbide and the army at Iguala; Union with Spain was another. The first rendered it impossible to omit, afterwards, in framing a constitution, a proviso which might not have been thought necessary, had it been omitted at first; and the second, by pledging the nation to adopt all such old Spaniards, as chose to remain in its territory, established a corps of observation in the very heart of the country, which examined most narrowly every act of the government, and lost no opportunity of exciting the prejudices of the people against it. If to these really difficult circumstances be added the total exclusion of foreigners

from the Mexican territory, until the year 1822, it must be admitted that it was not easy for the Mexican Congress, in 1824, to avoid the adoption in the Federal Act of the Religious article of the Spanish Constitution, of which the third article of that of Mexico, is, in fact, a transcript. The necessity of such a concession to the popular prejudices of the day, was, and is, bitterly lamented by the more enlightened Mexicans; and it is to time, and to the generalization of this feeling, that we must look for the removal of its cause. Much has been done towards it during the last three years. Foreigners have penetrated into every part of the Republic; and, as they have been the means of giving a new existence to the mining and agricultural interests, the prejudices formerly entertained against them, have subsided with wonderful rapidity.

In many of the States, (each of which frames a constitution in miniature, for its own special use;) the prohibitory clause in the religious article of the Federal Act, has been omitted. The right of sepulture, according to the forms of the Protestant church, which is secured to His Majesty's subjects by treaty, has not only been universally conceded, but burying grounds have been voluntarily assigned for the purpose by the local Authorities, wherever a resident foreign Consul is established. In many instances, the funerals of the more respectable individuals who have died, have been attended by a number of the natives, personal friends or acquaintances of the

deceased; and, although cases have certainly occurred, in which the repose of the tomb has been violated, I am inclined to attribute them less to fanaticism, than to cupidity, and to a mistaken belief that money was contained in the coffins, the use of which was little known amongst the Mexicans themselves.

With regard to marriages, considerable difficulties have arisen since the late influx of foreigners; nor can a Protestant yet contract marriage with a Mexican, otherwise than by professing his conversion to the Catholic faith. Between two foreigners, both of the reformed church, the marriage rite is allowed to be celebrated in the house of the Mission of the country to which they belong, and is registered as valid by the Mexican Ecclesiastical Authorities, on the transmission of a proper certificate. Such, at least, is the course which has been pursued in His Majesty's mission, and which may be regarded as a precedent for the subjects of any other power, similarly situated.

It would be an injustice to the Mexican government not to add, that in this, and every other question connected with religion, the Executive has shown the greatest attention to the complaints of foreigners, and has given them every protection, and every facility that it was possible, under present circumstances, to allow of. I know not one, but many instances, in which the personal influence, both of the President and of the Ministers, has been exerted

with the most beneficial effects; and I cannot but think that this example, seconded, as it is, by the wishes of all the better-informed Mexicans, both in the Capital, and in the States, will, very speedily, produce such a change in the feelings of the community at large, upon this subject, as will enable the Legislature by a national Act, to dispense with restrictions, which are completely at variance with the spirit of all the other institutions of the country.

No. I.

General Table of the Secular Clergy in the different Bishoprics of Mexico in the year 1827.

BISHOPRICS.	Number of Secular Clergy.	Number of Parishes.
Mexico	482	245
Guadalaxara	611	135
Puebla	907	241
Oaxaca	364	124
Valladolid	500	122
Yucaten	357	99
Monterrey	145	57
Durango	184	64
Sonora	54	65
Chiapa	73	42
Total...	3,677	1,194

No. II.

Spain.	Churches.	Canons, &c.	Mexico.	Churches.	Canons, &c.
Cathedral	63	2709	Cathedral	10	168
Collegiate	117	1750	Collegiate	1	17
Total	180	4459		11	185

The whole secular Clergy of Mexico, including Canons and Prebends . . . 3463

Excess of Canons and Prebends alone in Spain . . . 996

The Church of Saragossa in Spain has Canons, &c. . . 149 } 253
That of Toledo . . 104 }
Mexican Canons, &c. in all . . . 185

Excess of two Churches alone in Spain . . . 68

TABLE No. III.

General Table of the Provinces and Orders of the Regular Clergy of Mexico; the number of Convents, and of individuals in each, distinguishing those who have professed during the last five years; the Curates and Missions served by them, with their Property in Land, Money, and annual charitable Contributions.

Provinces.	Situation of convents.	Num. Indi-ber of vidu-con-vent, each.	Have taken the habit in five years, time.	Have professed in noviti-ate, in same time.	New Curates.	Missions.	Pro-erty land, ed ex-ates.	Its pro-duce, date.	Pro-erty in towns.	Its annual produce.	Floating capitals.	Annual returns.	Conso-lidated fund.	Charita-ble contri-butions.	
DOMINICANS.															
Santiago de Predicadores . . .	Mexico	16	123	15	3	6	18	6	16855	321	35741	68010	3451	74825	6755
S. Miguel de los Sios, Angeles	Puebla	6	42	4	4	0	0	6	4060	112	12907	34204	1710	13079	400
S. Hipolito Martir . . .	Oaxaca	5	50	13	11	2	9	19	9692	137	11811	96107	4655	153366	14400
S. Jose de las Chiapas . . .	Ciudad Real	4	44	7	7	0	0	11	9838	1	72	11320	566	00000	1634
FRANCISCANS.															
Santo Evangelio . . .	Mexico	20	320	64	47	7	30	00	0000	1	2724	188736	3136	48315	48300
San Diego . . .	Id.	14	212	52	17	13	3	00	0000	1	106	110625	5531	69115	20737
San Pedro y San Pablo . . .	Queretaro	15	162	86	33	9	3	00	0000	0	000	269259	13462	53384	17297
S. Francisco de los Zacatecas	Potosi	11	125	20	12	8	4	19	00	0	000	225646	11363	59774	23972
Santiago Ialisco . . .	Guadalajara	7	123	28	17	1	23	00	0000	87	1659	34587	1711	30539	86371
San José de Campeche . . .	Merida	1	61	00	00	0	3	00	0000	00	000	33763	1668	3963	9930
AUGUSTINS.															
Dulce Nombre de Jesus . . .	Mexico	11	143	49	18	12	2	00	17	8106	63231	179234	8644	0140	13795
S. Nicolas de Michoacan . . .	Salamanca	11	92	34	28	4	2	00	43	34702	15144	162165	7768	49720	12021
CARMELITES.															
San Alverto . . .	Mexico	16	224	50	19	11	0	00	27	43655	35960	272555	13553	63420	6214
MERCEDARIANS.															
San Pedro Nolasco . . .	Mexico	19	192	40	26	14	0	00	19	2755	36586	134426	5801	29095	2228
150	1918	462	247	87	40	106	139	129723	1719	216002	1819231	83039	649735	204604	

No. IV.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE SIX MEXICAN COLLEGES DE PROPAGANDA FIDE.

COLLEGES.	Number of religions.	Took the habit in five years.	Professed in that time.	Now serving noviti-ate.	Number of Missions.	Where.
San Fernando of Mexico . . .	66	7	6	00	21	Alta California.
Santa Cruz, Queretaro . . .	56	0	0	0	9	Sonora.
San Francisco, Páchucá . . .	42	10	9	1	9	Cóhahuila y Támáulipás.
San José, Orizava . . .	35	7	7	0	0	
Nuestra Señora de Guádalupé, Zacatecas . . .	83	18	11		22	Las Taráhúmarás y Texas
Nuestra Señora de Zápópan . . .	25	23	14		0	
	307	65	47	5	61	