

RELIGION.

All Mexicans are born in the Catholic Church, that being the prevailing religion of the country; but there is no connection between Church and State, and the Constitution guarantees the free exercise of all religions.

While Mexico was a colony of Spain and for many years afterwards, the catholic religion was the only one allowed in the country, and anybody professing any other would expose himself to great hardships if he avowed that he was a dissenter, especially while the Inquisition was in existence.

The clergy became one of the principal pillars of the Spanish domination in Mexico. In the early part of the present century the Church was flourishing, and it was the high-water mark of clerical prosperity. The humble Mexican priests did the hard laborious work, while the Spanish-born ecclesiastics filled the great bishoprics and other great posts and lived at their ease, and the great convents in their most lucrative positions of control were practically in Spanish hands.

Huge convents occupied a considerable part of the site of the City of Mexico, Puebla, Morelia, Guadalajara, Querétaro, and other cities. The incomes of the convents were derived from endowments, amounting to a large sum. To support the high ecclesiastics, great sums were derived from tithes. The archbishop of Mexico had an income of \$130,000 a year; the bishops of Puebla, \$110,000; of Michoacan, \$100,000; and of Guadalajara, \$90,000. Meantime, the parish priests, who bore the brunt of Christian work among the masses, were living on very moderate sums. The Church erected in Mexico buildings which are remarkable for their dimensions and taste.¹

¹ Mr. Charles Dudley Warner in the Editor's Study of *Harper's Illustrated Monthly Magazine* for July, 1897, speaks in the following way of the church edifices in Mexico:

"Somebody of authority, by the way, ought to explain why Mexico has so many church edifices that go to the heart of the lover of beauty, and why the United States has so few that are interesting. Aside from the great Gothic monuments in Spain, Mexico surpasses Spain in interesting ecclesiastical architecture. It has more variety, more quaint beauty, more originality in towers and façades. The interiors are generally monotonous, and repetitions of each other. The Spaniards, in an age of faith, built churches, convents, monasteries, all over the country, in remote and unimportant Indian villages, and as far north as their patient ministers of religion wandered, even to the bay of San Francisco. In these edifices the Spanish ingenuity and enthusiasm prevailed, but they were largely executed by Indian builders and artists; and if there is Sarassenic feeling shown, there are also, especially in ornamentation, traces of that aboriginal artistic spirit which, long before the Spanish conquest, executed both in stone and in pottery singularly attractive work. Even within a hundred years of our own time Indian genius has been distinguished. Those who think that this genius is only exhib-

Not all the great dignitaries of the Church exhibited an unchristian selfishness, for many often spent their income in pious and charitable works, and in prosecuting missionary undertakings among the Indians of the remote distances.

The wealth of the Church was loaned out at a moderate rate of interest to landed proprietors, who formed the moral support of the Church among the laity and whose influence was prodigiously strong. The wealth of the Church was mostly in mortgages, while it held a large amount of real estate. In the City of Mexico and other places, the clergy owned a large portion of the real estate and held a great many mortgages, and, to its credit be it said, was not at all usurious, exacting only a fair rate of interest and being hardly ever oppressive in dealing with delinquent debtors.

After the Revolution which effected the independence of the country, the ecclesiastical life began to cease having many of the attractions it had before. While many men became friars from genuine inclination and vocation, not a few went into the religious life because it gave them support without hard labor, and because it was one of the best careers opened to young men at the time.

The nunneries sheltered a great many pious women, who effected some good as educators of the young, as almoners for the wealthy, and as nurses of the sick. There were abuses, of course, but on the whole the religious life afforded a refuge for many thousands of good women who felt drawn to works of charity and usefulness. Rich young girls were often over-persuaded to enter the convents, by avaricious and scheming priests, but such abuses are common to all religions. The Liberal party thought that the best way to destroy the Church influence in Mexico was to suppress convents, both of friars and nuns, because they

ited in bizarre forms, and in such small details of design and color as the potter can attain, should see at Querétaro the work of Tresguerras, architect, sculptor, and painter. Any modern architect, who is led away by straining after effect in a grotesque combination of distinct Greek styles with mediæval and early English, having no note of originality anywhere, could study with profit the simple elegance—as simple as the Old Louvre—of the Bishop's Palace in Querétaro, or the wood-carving in the church of the sequestered Convent of Santa Rosa. In my remembrance there is not, on such a great scale, any wood-carving in the world equal to it in freshness and largeness of execution and in beauty of design. It could not have been all done by the hand of Tresguerras, but it was all from his designs and under his superintendence. Of course, as to civic and ecclesiastic architecture, climate and lack of popular taste for the beautiful put limits upon our architectural work, but it is worth the while of the American architect to consider whether he cannot learn more from our sister republic below the Tropic of Cancer than he is likely to get from the well-studied structures of Europe. In many petty and poverty-stricken Indian villages are charming towers and curious façades which would be a most valuable education in the principles of taste to any American community."

were considered a nest of superstition, and they thought that the best interest of the country required to close them.

During our civil wars the clergy contributed large amounts to the support of the conservative governments, which it often established. It is thought that in 1853, General Santa Anna abandoned the Conservative Government, which he then presided over, because the Archbishop of Mexico did not give him all the money he required to carry on the war waged against him by the Liberal party.

The wealth accumulated by the Church of Mexico was used for the purpose of supporting the conservative governments, whose policy was to keep the statu quo, and was therefore opposed to progress of any kind. The Church became a very prominent factor in politics, and could upset and establish governments at its pleasure, fomenting the many revolutions which were constantly breaking out. It was thought necessary, therefore, to destroy the political power of the Church before we could establish and maintain peace, and that work was done by what we call our Laws of Reform, issued in 1859, which established a complete independence between the Church and the State, and were intended to completely end the domination of the Catholic Church in civil affairs in Mexico: the Church property was confiscated, so that even the houses of worship are now the property of the government; all convents of friars and nuns were closed, all religious ceremonies—such as processions and wearing a distinctive dress,—were ordered to be confined to the interior of the edifices; the cemeteries were secularized, and marriage made exclusively a civil contract. No religious instruction or ceremony is allowed in the public schools, and never is a prayer offered as a part of the program of a national celebration. In an article, which I published in the *North American Review*, of January, 1895, entitled "The Philosophy of the Mexican Revolutions," I dwelt especially on this subject, and to that article I refer the reader who may desire more detailed information.

The Liberals were not the first to dispose of the Church property and revenues, as the Spanish Government, under the rule of Godoy, in 1805 and 1806, to secure funds to form a redemption provision for the royal *vales* or credit notes, pounced on the property of the Church in Mexico, and that, later on, when the Mexicans rose in their war for independence, the royal authorities took another part of the Church's wealth to fight the patriots.

The bigoted Catholic element which used to be decidedly opposed to any liberal government and was always conspiring to overthrow it, has since the downfall of Maximilian, become satisfied that the condition of things has changed having accordingly changed their course, and now there are thousands of progressive catholics in Mexico sincerely devoted to their Church, who see only danger and eventual

disastrous defeat in the adoption of a program of reaction. They go with the times and support the administration of Gen. Diaz because, on the whole, it suits them, and manifests no hostility to their conscientiously held convictions. The pope's influence seems to be directed to assuaging ancient rancors, and to the calming of passionate resentments, which is a great deal better for the Church.

Protestantism in Mexico.—The Liberal party proclaimed as an inherent right of man, freedom of conscience and the free exercise of one's religion; but the question was really only a theoretical one, since excepting a few foreigners, no one in Mexico had any other religion than the Catholic. The clergy, the Church party, and all strict Mexican catholics were greatly opposed to the introduction of Protestantism, because protestants were looked upon as heretics whose purpose was to divide the Mexican people into different sects, disturbing their religious unity, which they considered a source of national strength, and ultimately aiding in what some Mexicans fear is the aim of this country, that is: the final absorption of Mexico. When the struggles between the Liberal and the Church party terminated in favor of the former in 1867, with the withdrawal of the French army from Mexico and the downfall of Maximilian, the time came to put into practice the principles of the Liberal creed, and protestant organizations in the United States sent missionaries to Mexico for the purpose of establishing and propagating the protestant religion there. The Mexican Government could not refuse to allow the missionaries the free exercise of the Protestant or any other faith, because that right was guaranteed to all men in our constitution, and also because it has been a principle for which the Liberal party had been contending during many years.

But we went, then, further than allowing the Protestants the free exercise and preaching of their religion, and as I am in a measure responsible for that step, I think it proper to give my reasons for the same. My opinion has never been favorable to missionary work, because although I recognize that some religions have higher moral principles than others, I think that on the whole they are all intended to accomplish the same purpose, that all are good, when practised in good faith. It has always seemed to me that Christian missionaries sent to heathen countries would be looked upon in the same manner as would be heathen missionaries sent to Christian countries. But even supposing that it should be proper and desirable for the Christian religion, on account of its high morals and principles, to send missionaries to heathen countries for the purpose of converting them to Christianity, that principle would scarcely hold good in Christian countries of different denominations, and Catholicism is a Christian religion—whatever abuses it may have committed,—and I think the natural tendency

of all religions when they are predominant is to absorb and misuse power; but that Protestants should send missionaries to a Catholic country seems to me inconsistent. In principle, therefore, Mexico is hardly the proper field for Protestant missionaries, notwithstanding that there is a great deal of room for improvement there, in so far as religious matters are concerned.

After having witnessed the terrible consequences of religious intolerance and political domination of the Catholic Church in Mexico, I was of course greatly impressed with the condition of things existing in the United States, where all religions are tolerated and none attempts to control the political destinies of the country. I thought that one of the best ways to diminish the evils of the political domination and abuses of the clergy in Mexico was to favor the establishment of other sects, which would come in some measure into competition with the Catholic clergy and thus serve to cause it to refrain from excesses of which it had been guilty before. When, after having lived for ten years in the United States, from 1859 to 1868, I returned to Mexico and took charge of the Treasury Department there, just at the time when the religious question was being solved, I, therefore, favored the establishment of a Protestant community as planned by Mr. Henry C. Riley, since made a Bishop, a gentleman of English parentage, born in Chili, who had been educated in London and New York and was graduated with high honors at Columbia College, New York, who spoke equally well English and Spanish, and eagerly desired to establish a Mexican National Church in competition with the Roman Catholic, in which undertaking, I understand, he used his own funds. He proposed to buy one of the finest churches, the main church of the Franciscan convent, which had been built by the Spaniards, located in the best section of the City of Mexico, and which could not now be duplicated but for a very large amount of money; and with the hearty support of President Juarez, who shared my views and who was perhaps a great deal more radical than I was myself on such subjects, I sold the building which had become national property after the confiscation of the Church property, for a mere trifle, if I remember rightly about \$4000, most of that amount being paid in Government bonds which were then at a nominal price.

The magnificent building sold to Dr. Riley's community was bought recently by the Catholic Church to restore it as a Catholic temple, for the sum of \$100,000, as I understand. My assistance was rendered to the Protestant cause for the reasons that I have stated, and not because I had adopted the Protestant faith; therefore the action of the Mexican Government in the matter at the time I speak of, was all the more praiseworthy. Dr. Butler bought about the same time another part of the same convent of San Francisco, where he established a Methodist Church in a very creditable building.

It is true that a great many Mexicans, namely the Indians, do not know much about religion and keep to their old idolatry, having changed only their idols, that is, replaced their old deities with the images of the Saints of the Catholic Church, but it would be difficult for the Protestant missionaries to reach them. The Spaniards labored zealously to make the natives adopt the Catholic religion, and although they succeeded wonderfully, it was a task too difficult to fully accomplish in the three centuries of the Spanish domination in Mexico.

I do not think that the American Protestant missionaries in Mexico have made much progress, and I doubt very much whether Mexico is a good field for them; but they are satisfied with their work, and they think that under the circumstances, they have made very good progress.

The number of Catholic churches and chapels in the country was, in 1889, 10,112, while the number of Protestant places of worship was 119. On August 12, 1890, there were in the municipality of Mexico 320,143 Catholics and 2623 Protestants.

The American missionaries, and especially Dr. Riley, whom I consider a very benevolent and unselfish man, have established Protestant schools and asylums for children, spending considerable money in maintaining such institutions. Of course poor parents were glad to send their children to the Protestant schools and asylums when they could not afford to keep them at home or send them to more desirable places, and these Protestant institutions were of a very benevolent character and worthy, therefore, to be encouraged. Parents in such cases declared themselves to be partial to Protestantism, but only for the sake of having their children accepted in the Protestant schools and asylums, and this made the Protestants think they were making a great many converts.

Now and then a Catholic priest would renounce Catholicism and accept Protestantism, and such occurrences were always considered as great triumphs for the Protestant cause, but although in some instances such changes have been made in good faith, in others they were made for selfish purposes, and they never had any great weight with the community.

I have no prejudice against Protestantism; on the contrary, I admire greatly many of its principles, and in speaking on this subject I consider myself perfectly impartial and unbiassed.

In February, 1888, the Evangelical Assembly, representing the various Protestant denominations and Evangelical Societies conducting missionary operations in the Republic of Mexico, was held in the City of Mexico. They claimed that, notwithstanding the difficulties of language and climate and the other obstacles with which they had to contend, they found that they had over 600 congregations, 192 foreign and 585 native workers, over 7000 in the day schools, and about 10,000

in the Sunday-schools, 18,000 communicants and a Protestant community of over 60,000 souls. Ten small publishing-houses are turning out millions of pages each year, and their church property is valued at nearly a million and a quarter dollars in silver.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION.

Mexico was the largest and richest American colony of Spain, and for this reason it was called New Spain. The City of Mexico grew during the Spanish rule to be larger than Madrid, the capital of the Spanish Kingdom, the population of the country being estimated in 1810, just before the independence movement began, at 6,122,354; while the public revenue of the whole colony amounted to the very large sum of \$20,000,000 yearly, the only exports of the country being silver and gold, and commodities of great value in small volume and weight, such as cochineal, vanilla, indigo, and a few others.

Mexico accomplished her independence in 1821, and since then has had two Federal Constitutions, both modelled after the Constitution of the United States; two Central Constitutions, which organized the country into a centralized republic, and two ephemeral empires, one under Iturbide, lasting ten months, from 1822 to 1823, and the other under Maximilian, established by French intervention, lasting from 1864 to 1867.

Mexico is now organized, under the Constitution of the 5th of February, 1857, with its several amendments, into a Federal Republic, composed of twenty-seven states, two territories, and a federal district, and the political organization is almost identical with that of this country. The powers of the Federal Government are divided into three branches—Legislative, Executive, and Judicial. The Legislative is composed of a House of Representatives and a Senate; the members of the House are elected for two years and the senators for four, the Senate being renewed by half every two years. Representatives are elected by the suffrage of all male adults, at the rate of one member for every 40,000 inhabitants. The qualifications requisite are to be at least twenty-five years of age and a resident of the State; and for senators thirty years.

The Executive is exercised by a President elected by the electors popularly chosen, who holds his office for four years, without any provision forbidding his re-election. He has a cabinet of seven members, namely: Secretary of Foreign Affairs, of the Interior, of Justice and Public Instruction, of Fomento, which means promotion of Public Improvements, and includes public lands, patents, and colonization; of Communications and Public Works, of the Treasury, and of War and Navy. No Vice-President is elected, but by an amendment to our Constitution, promulgated April 24, 1896, in the per-

manent or temporary disability of the President, not caused by resignation or by leave, the Secretary of State, and after him the Secretary of the Interior, shall exercise that office until Congress elects a President *pro tempore*. In case of resignation, Congress, accepting it, elects a President *pro tempore*, and in case of leave the President recommends to Congress the person to fill that office.

The Federal Judiciary is composed of a Supreme Court, consisting of eleven Judges, four substitutes, one Attorney-General, and one Fiscal, chosen for six years; three Circuit and thirty-two District Courts.

The States are independent in their domestic affairs, and their governments are similarly divided into three branches: the Governor, the Legislature, and the State Judiciary.

As we adopted the federal system rather to follow the example of the United States than to suit the conditions of Mexico, that system did not work with us so easily or so satisfactorily as it works here; and the tendency is rather to centralization and to the increasing of the powers given by the Constitution to the Federal Government. In the article above mentioned published in the *North American Review*, for January, 1896, entitled, "The Philosophy of the Mexican Revolutions,"¹ I dwelt particularly on the results of our having copied almost literally the political institutions of the United States, and gave a general idea of our political condition.

Political Division.—When the federal system was established in Mexico, in 1824, each of the old provinces under the Spanish rule was organized as a State, and our Constitution of October 4, 1824, enumerated nineteen States. After the war with the United States we lost Texas, New Mexico, and California; but since then as I stated in the chapter on population some of the larger States have been divided into two, or even three States, as was the case with the old State of Mexico, out of which were formed the three present States of Mexico, Hidalgo, and Morelos. Our present Constitution, of February 5, 1857, enumerates twenty-four States; but we now have twenty-seven.

The tabular statement published above, under the head of "Population," shows the number of States which form the Mexican Confederation, their area, population, and capital cities.

Army and Navy.—During our civil wars, and for some time later, we had to keep a very large standing army, and our army acquired recently a very high degree of discipline and efficiency. The Liberal party always favored the reduction of the army, while the Church party favored a large army, as our old regular army, on the whole, took sides with the Church. Soon after the restoration of the Republic, in 1867, the Mexican army consisted of: Infantry, 22,964; engineers, 766; ar-

¹ This article will appear in this volume under the head of "Historical Notes on Mexico."

tillery, 2304 ; cavalry, 8454 ; rural guards of police, 2365 ; gendarmerie, 250 ; total, 37,103 ; and was commanded by 11 Major-Generals, 73 Brigadier-Generals, 1041 Colonels, Lieutenant-Colonels, and Majors, and 2335 Commissioned Officers. The total fighting strength, including reserves, is stated to be 132,000 infantry, 25,000 cavalry, and 8000 artillery. Every Mexican capable of carrying arms is liable for military service from his twentieth to his fiftieth year.

Notwithstanding that General Diaz is himself a soldier, he has followed the policy of the Liberal party of reducing the army as much as possible, and in his report of November 30, 1896, in which he informs his fellow citizens of his results of his sixteen years administration, he gives the following figures, showing the reduction he has been able to accomplish in the army since 1888 :

The army had, in 1888, according to President Diaz's report, the following personnel :

Major-Generals.....	16
Brigadier-Generals.....	84
Commissioned Officers.....	1,205
Non-Commissioned Officers.....	2,566
Soldiers.....	29,367
Total.....	33,238

In 1896 the personnel had been reduced in the following numbers :

Generals.....	24
Commissioned Officers.....	166
Non-Commissioned Officers.....	299
Soldiers.....	8,170
Total.....	8,659

The Mexican navy is now in its inception, as it consists of a fleet of two dispatch vessels, launched 1874, each of 425 tons and 425 horsepower, and severally armed with a four-ton muzzle-loading gun, and four small breech-loaders. A steel training ship, the *Zaragoza*, of 1200 tons, was built at Havre, in 1891 ; four gun-boats are building, and a battle-ship and cruiser are projected ; five first-class torpedo-boats have been ordered in England. The fleet is manned by ninety officers and five hundred men.

EDUCATION.

In 1521, the City of Mexico fell into the hands of the conquering Spaniards, and exactly eight years after that event there was established in the City of Mexico the College of San Juan de Letran, for giving secondary education to intelligent Indians as well as to the sons of the

invading race. Thus, ninety years before the landing of the Pilgrims, the City of Mexico had its "Harvard."

Universities Established by the Spanish Government.—The first viceroy of New Spain, as Mexico was called then, fourteen years after the conquest, petitioned the King of Spain to permit him to found a university in Mexico, and, anticipating from his knowledge of the good-will of the Spanish-rulers that the desired permission would be given, the viceroy took the responsibility of establishing certain classes in the higher learning, a fact which does not support the commonly held theory that Spain has always been the enemy of education and of popular enlightenment. Owing to the slow means of communication in those days, and the legal steps necessary to be taken in the mother country, the university was not formally established until 1553, or eighty-three years before Harvard College was opened. The great event of setting on foot the university came under the enlightened rule of the second viceroy, Don Luis de Velasco, who did so many great things for Spain's new dependency.

Later on, in 1573, there were founded in Mexico the colleges of San Gregorio and San Ildefonso, the latter still open, but modernized into the national preparatory school, a really great institution in that city of many schools. A few years later, long before the 17th century had dawned, came the founding of two more colleges and a divinity school, so that in the first sixty-five years of Spain's control in Mexico no less than seven seats of the higher learning had been established on secure foundations.

No wonder that Mexico's capital became known as the Athens of the new world, producing men of great learning, such as Don Juan Ruiz de Alarcon and such notably erudite women as Juana Inez de la Cruz. The extensive library of "Americana," belonging to Don Jose de Agreda, of that city, containing over 4000 books, many of them invaluable, attests the literary, antiquarian, scientific and artistic activity of the Spaniards who planted there in a short space of time so much of learning and such vast institutions dedicated to the instruction in all the higher branches of knowledge.

At the outset the University of Mexico gave instruction only in mathematics, Latin and the arts. Medicine and surgery were not esteemed highly during the middle ages, and it was not until long after the revival of learning in the Renaissance that the physician came to be considered as a true man of science. So it is not to be marvelled at that the University of Mexico waited until 1578 to establish a chair of medicine—the first in the new world discovered by Columbus. The first chair of medicine was a morning class, and a single professor carried his students through a four years' course unaided. In 1599, a second medical professorship was added ; in 1661, anatomy and surgery