

A simple, gentle, docile race was all but exterminated. It was as if the mountain ranges of the continent were one great altar, and the teeming millions of its valleys, the victims of the sacrifice.

The attempted repetition of the 19th Century. Here, too, in our own times, under our own eyes, the world has witnessed the performance of a drama in all its acts, to the final "exeunt omnes," which has thrilled the world.

The stage was our continent; Europe, Asia, Africa, and all America spectators. The plot was gigantic. Empires, kingdoms, and thrones were concerned. Kings, Queens, and Nobles, courts, cabinets and councils, armies and navies, were actors in the scenes. "The Great Powers," mighty and magnanimous, joined to crush again the aspirations of an enfeebled race, struggling at the work of self-culture, self-elevation, self-government and improvement.

The European Plot. But more than that, there was a mighty "arrière pensée" behind the scenes. The drama was a desperate game, and the end is not yet. It was the game of "all the Cæsars." It was the "Old World" defying the Institutions of the New. And if they had vanquished what they defied, the results in their vast proportions would have outstripped all the schemes that Popes, Emperors, or conquerors of past ages ever dreamed of. They would have changed the destiny of the new world, and an overwhelming reflex tidal wave of despotism would have rolled back over the nations of the old world.

Its end forever. But the drama is played. The game is a failure. The stage and the spectators remain. The actors are changed, and the great question now is, WHAT SHALL BE THE FUTURE OF MEXICO? The sequel of this volume, it is hoped, may throw some light upon

the subject, and indicate, at least, the line of policy, which the interests of Mexico and of the United States—of the American continents, and the cause of liberty, civil and religious, throughout the world, demand.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO.

Achievements of the Spanish Monarchy. 1200-1800. DURING a period of a little more than three hundred and fifty years, the civilization and Christianity of Spain "were illustrated to the nations of the old world," by three great acts in the drama of human history that will never be forgotten: the attempted extermination of the Moors; the persecution and expulsion of the Jews; and the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition.

During the same period, the strange spirit of the rulers and institutions of Spain has been exemplified by equally significant acts in the new world: the conquest of her colonies; the overthrow of the empires of the Montezumas and the Incas; the extermination of some fifty millions of the aboriginal inhabitants; and the establishment and administration of her colonial governments.

Spain, for the last six centuries of the Christian era, has borne upon her banner and carried round the world, the sacred "Christ-bearing" symbol of peace on earth and good will to men. How far she has manifested the spirit of the symbol, the facts of history record, and the verdict of mankind will tell.

Alfonso X. The Wise. 1256. In the 13th century, about two hundred years prior to the discovery of America, Alfonso X. was King of Spain. He was one of the most learned

men of his age. On account of his own attainments in literature, science and art, his writings in poetry and prose, in history, and jurisprudence, and his encouragement of men of learning, he was surnamed "The Wise."

His Code of Laws.

His father, Ferdinand III., in order to correct the evils of the local *fueros*, or privileges which were claimed by various towns and provinces, established a general code of laws for the whole kingdom. His son, Alfonso, carrying out this design, prepared successively two smaller compilations, entitled the "Mirror of all Rights," and the "Royal Charter," which were subsequently codified and promulgated in the celebrated body of laws, known as the "Seven Parts," from the number of portions into which it was divided. The materials for the work were taken from the Justinian Code, and the ancient laws and local institutions of the kingdom. The holders of *fueros* long and obstinately resisted the curtailment of their ancient privileges. But the code was finally established, and became the basis of Spanish Common Law. It is a treatise on legislation, religion and morals. It explains the mutual duties of a king and his people; the provisions of the laws and the reasons for their establishment. By the admission of Florida and Louisiana into the United States, this code has had its influence upon the legal system of our country.

Spanish translation of the Bible. 1270.

But the great act of his life and the crowning glory of his reign, was the translation of the Bible into the Spanish language, which he caused to be made, and which introduced a new era in the history of the language and of the country.

For more than six centuries Spain has had the Bible. She has repudiated its principles, extinguished its light among her own people, and played such a rôle among the

nations, as irresistibly to remind one again of the old Divine decree, that "the nation and kingdom that will not serve" Jehovah "shall perish,—yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted."

Pope Alexander VI. 1492.

In 1492, Pope Alexander VI. ascended the Papal throne. In 1494, he settled the conflicting claims of the kings of Spain, and of Portugal, in respect to the rights of discovery of the Indies, East and West, by a Pontifical decree.

The title-deed to North and South America.

He divided the undiscovered regions of the earth, by an imaginary line of longitude, running through the Atlantic Ocean, from pole to pole, 370 miles west of the Azores. He gave to the Portuguese, unlimited sway over all the countries they might discover to the East of this line; and pledged himself to confirm to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, the right to every isle, continent and sea, where they should plant their flag in the Western Hemisphere. Hence, in every picture or engraving of the landing of Columbus, the first act in the scene is the planting of the flag of the Spanish crown.

Under such a charter as this, Ferdinand and Isabella, and their successors, held all their vast possessions in America as their own peculiar personal property, under their own absolute, irresponsible control, in all matters whatsoever, temporal and spiritual.

Pope Alexander granted to Ferdinand personally all the titles belonging to the church. Julius II., his successor, confirmed these grants, and added all the benefices, dignities and offices, claimed by the "Holy See," as her share of the spoils of the conquered.

The Pope to the King.

The "King of Spain," therefore, was the supreme head of church and state in the colonies; holding by deed direct, from Peter's successor, the Roman

Viceroy, the fee simple of all the territory, together with the temporal dominion of one half of all the undiscovered regions of the globe, and as his personal possession all the "right, title and interest" His Holiness could convey, in the souls, bodies and estate of any discovered nations. The continent, isles and people, body and soul, labor, fortune, conscience and life, were his.

The Spirit of
Discovery and
Exploration.

The expeditions which Spain sent from her shores to plant the standard of her empire in the New World, were imbued with feelings of religious fanaticism, to an intensity it is now hard to conceive. Stimulated, besides, with the thirst for gold, they spread devastation wherever they marched, and inflicted on the simple natives tortures and sufferings, differing little, except in duration, from the pains which the priests, who always accompanied the expeditions, announced as awaiting the wretched victims in another world. These priests also insisted upon the blindest submission in spiritual matters, which, it was not unreasonably expected, would secure civil dependence.

The Conquest
a Crusade.

Michel Chevalier, in describing the religious element in the expedition of Cortez, for the conquest of the New World, called it a "Crusade,"—a holy war against the infidels. To make them confess the faith, was an incomparable merit. In such a cause, it was a little matter that they gave unbridled license to their passions,—that they were licentious, covetous, and bathed themselves in blood. "Every sin would be atoned by so good a work."

The spirit of the old Spanish Crusades against the Moors, was a living fire in the camp of Cortez. The authority of the Church, and the commands of the Emperor, imposed it as a paramount duty to convert the infidels.

Every soldier considered himself an apostle;—bound to convert, as well as to conquer the heathen. They were to invade and possess their country, to occupy their cities, to take away their treasures, to ravish their daughters, to exterminate the resisting, and by all means, to convert and baptize the rest.

Military
Christianiza-
tion.

The military and the missionary work were both inspired by an enlightened zeal for the lands and the gold of the Mexicans, and the saving grace of a holier zeal, for the souls of those they did not destroy.

In pursuance of such a mission, these propagandists of the Christian faith, the moment a city was taken, rushed for the treasures of their idol temples, overthrew the altars and images of paganism, appropriated to themselves the consecrated ornaments and vessels of barbaric gold, erected an image of the Virgin in the place of a heathen idol, and commanded the astonished natives to fall down and worship their God, who was mightier than the gods of Tenochtitlan. The poor, defenceless natives were compelled to bow down and worship the image of the Virgin, and accept the rites of the Church.

The Pagan
and the Chris-
tian Idol.

Missionaries sent over by the king did not stay to acquire the language of the natives, and to explain to them the truths and doctrines of Christianity, but proceeded at once to administer baptism and the sacraments, punishing apostates with the tortures prescribed by the Inquisition. Such was their zeal, that a single priest would baptize his thousands between the rising and the setting sun.

Baptismal
Conversions.

Peter, of Ghent, a Flemish monk, writing from Mexico, 1529, said, that he and "another Missionary had converted *Two Hundred Thousand* Mexicans, their ordinary day's work being from *ten to twenty*

thousand souls." A few years after the conquest, the monks reported the number of converts as amounting to FOUR MILLIONS.

But such conversions are seldom permanent; and it was soon discovered that multitudes had consented to accept the rites of the Church on compulsion, or in order to conciliate their conquerors, but with reservations in favor of their own, ancient gods.

Paganism and Christianity. "The indifference of the Mexicans," says Dr. Young, "in relation to the mysteries of the new religion, was so great, that the priests found it absolutely necessary to permit them to retain a portion of their original superstition, and to connive at the amalgamation of holy rites with pagan ceremonies, confounding the exalted doctrines of Christianity with the absurd and gloomy fancies pertaining to the Aztec mythology."^{*}

Opinion of Humboldt. Humboldt says, "The introduction of the Romish religion had no other effect upon the Mexicans than to substitute new ceremonies and symbols for the rites of a sanguinary worship. Dogma has not succeeded dogma, but only ceremony to ceremony. I have seen them, masked and adorned with tinkling bells, perform savage dances around the altar, while a monk of St. Francis elevated the Host."

The Mission of the Conquerors. All the great enterprises of conquest and crusade in the age of Cortez, were imbued with a kind of religious enthusiasm. Any act of aggression, inhumanity or barbarism, was sanctioned, if done in the name of religion. Under the banner of "the Cross," the zeal of the vilest men could be roused to almost any work of diabolical crime. The cry, "in hoc signo vinces,"

^{*} Compare with the statement respecting the policy of the early Church, A. D. p.—64.

would rally an army of followers to overrun and devastate the fairest provinces, to capture, sack, and burn defenceless cities, to obliterate a nationality by the sword, the torture and the stake. The age of conquest and discovery was one of singular mixture of pretended love and zeal for God, and actual hatred and murder of men. Every description of wrong and outrage, under the garb of religion, was tolerated. Adultery, incest, murder, perjury, and unmitigated despotism in kings, popes, and queens, were winked at, if they were only "Defensores Fidei." The whole family of the priesthood, Pope, Cardinal, Bishop, and Priest, under the most solemn vows of celibacy, were quite exempt from discipline or censure, however numerous were their sons and daughters. It was no mere fling of the wits that the priests were all "Fathers," and the Pope, "The *Holy* Father."

Pope Alexander VI. Pope Alexander VI., Roderic Borgia, of Valencia, Spain, had during his cardinalship, four illegitimate children, by his mistress Vanozia. His pontificate has been said to be the blackest page in the history of modern Rome. His public policy and his private life were equally strangers to morality and religion. Historians agree that "no name in history is stigmatized with greater infamy—his court a school of licentiousness and falsehood, where crime was reduced to a system, and oaths and compacts afforded no obligation or security."

Testimony of historians. "The ecclesiastical records of fifteen centuries," says Dr. Waddington, "contain no name so loathsome, no crimes so foul as his. While the voice of every impartial writer is loud in his execration, he is, in one respect, singularly consigned to infamy, since not one of the zealous annalists of the Roman church has breathed a whisper in his praise."

On one occasion, this prodigy of vice gave a splendid entertainment, within the walls of the Vatican, to no less than fifty public prostitutes, at which entertainment, deeds of darkness were done over which decency must throw a veil. And yet this monster of vice was, according to papal claims, the legitimate successor of the Apostles, and the "Vicar of God," upon earth, and addressed by the title, "His Holiness!"

It is less than three centuries since Alexander VI. conveyed to their Catholic majesties of Spain and Portugal our whole continent from the pole to the cape, not excepting the United States and Mexico. And Catholic powers, it would seem, to this day claim their right of possession under the grant.

The character and manners of the Kings, Popes, and Priests of Europe, were transferred to Mexico. There were, undoubtedly, good men in the pale of the church;—as godly and noble souls as ever contended for truth and righteousness. But the whole spirit and life of the age were characterized by deeds of darkness, shame and death. A cry arose from all Europe for "Reform," everywhere, in the Vatican at Rome, in the Palaces of Kings, in monasteries and convents, and among the professedly celibate ecclesiastics of every order and name. The "Roman Church" is as much indebted to the Great Reformation of the 16th century, for the reform in the lives and manners of its clergy, as Protestantism is, for its purer faith. But the Reform, either in faith or manners, never crossed from Spain to Mexico.

PART II.

MEXICO UNDER THE DOMINION OF SPAIN. 1520-1808.

CHAPTER I.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE VICEROYS.

Colonial
policy.

As soon as the Spaniards had plundered the wealth of the empire of the Aztecs, they turned their attention to the government of the colonies they planted. The King granted almost regal and absolute power to the Governors and Viceroy's entrusted with the establishment of the first governments. This power was so abused that he was soon obliged to curtail these privileges.

Repartimi-
entos.

As early as 1495, the germs of the colonial system of oppression and slavery had fairly taken root. The first seeds were the Letters Patent from the "crown," authorizing the officers of the colony to partition the *lands* of the Indians among their conquerors,—called *repartimientos*. The second plant, was the inauguration of the system of *tribute*. Every Indian, old and young, from the highest cacique down to children of fourteen years of age, was compelled to pay tribute. Children over fourteen, near any of the mines, were obliged to pay, every three months, a little bell full of gold; all others, a certain amount of cotton. Next came the requisition of *service* from the Indians, ex-