

hua, their communication with the Republic and the outer world was entirely cut off, and they depended upon their legation at Washington to hear from the central, southern, and eastern parts of Mexico, from the United States, and Europe. All the mails for the Mexican government, including newspapers for President Juarez and his cabinet, had to be sent to Mr. Romero, the duties of the legation increasing thereby considerably, as it was necessary to keep an active correspondence with several Mexican generals in the field, and with friends of Mexico in France and other places in Europe and in South America. Besides this, and the regular functions of a minister, Mr. Romero has been charged with the purchase of arms and munitions of war, the chartering of steamers to carry to Mexico the war material, the printing of Mexican bonds and the negotiation of them in the market, and the making of contracts for several other purposes, the circulation of the official paper of the Mexican government, &c., &c.

"The appreciation by the United States government of Mr. Romero's correspondence, is shown by the fact that Congress has often asked the President in a special manner for Mr. Romero's letters, and the President has sent, out of 489 letters which Mr. Romero has addressed to the State Department, 371, in the following manner: of 1861, 27; 1862, 35; 1863, 21; 1864, 54; 1865, 115; 1866, 119. Total number of enclosures sent to Congress and published, 1,204.

"The total number of messages on Mexican affairs sent by the President to Congress during the time embraced in the preceding statement is 27, as follows: in 1862, 3; in 1863, 4; in 1864, 1; in 1865, 3; and in 1866, 16.

"EULALIO DEGOLLADO, JR.,

"Private Secretary.

"WASHINGTON, February 24, 1867."

## PART V.

### THE MEXICAN QUESTION FROM A FRENCH POINT OF VIEW.

#### CHAPTER I.

"MEXICO AS IT IS,—THE TRUTH," ETC. BY THE ABBÉ DOMENECH.\*

It will facilitate an understanding of our subject, to consider the statements and views of the author of this volume. Although, in the order of time, they will anticipate events in the narrative, and will make allusions to individuals and incidents that need to be described, still they furnish important incidental confirmation of the descriptions thus far given on other authority. The testimony from this source, in regard to the character of the "church," and of its organization, influence, and policy, will not be questioned. The work shows clearly the part the ecclesiastical power has taken in the revolutions and struggles of Mexico; and the animus it breathes towards the United States,—the government and the people,—if it reflects the feelings of the French Government and Foreign Powers, is, to say the least, suggestive.

The "Abbé Emmanuel Domenech, Senior  
The Chaplain of the Empire. Director of the press of the Cabinet of H. M.

\* "Le Mexique, tel qu'il est, La vérité sur son climate, ses habitants, et son gouvernement, par Emmanuel Domenech, ancien Directeur de la presse du cabinet de S. M. L'Empereur Maximilian, et ex-aumonier du corps expeditionnaire."



the Emperor Maximilian, and ex-chaplain of the expeditionary corps," published in Paris, in 1867, a work of 348 pages, entitled "Mexico as it is,—the truth respecting its climate, its inhabitants, and its government."

Mexico from a French point of view.

This volume professes to give to the people of France, and of Europe, a truthful account of the author's personal observation and knowledge of Mexico and its inhabitants. The first sentence is, "Since *our* intervention in Mexico, the published accounts in the European press, of the political situation of this Empire, are so contradictory, that it is impossible to distinguish the true from the false. The prejudices of some, the party spirit of others, the official or private interests of all, and inadequate and superficial information, have so distorted the truth that it cannot be seen."

OBJECTS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE ABBÉ DOMENECH.

"In my double career as a man of letters and a journalist, since 1856, I have so defended the Mexicans, that I shall not be suspected of partiality if, in this work, I speak of them less favorably. The truth must stand before sympathy."

Mexican character.

"The Mexican of to-day has his faults, which irritate and provoke us, and discourage his best friends. Nevertheless his faults, his vices, if you please, diminish enormously in their characteristic importance, if we compare the types of each class of Mexican society with corresponding classes in our old Europe. We are far from being perfect ourselves. Foreign literature, as well as our own, proves this enough by its exhibition of our faults. If we see motes in our neighbors' eyes, there are beams in our own. It is well for us, then, to be more modest and more reserved in our criticisms."

French impartiality.

"Far from flattering the Mexicans, their country, and their government, I shall paint them in the most unfavorable colors, in order to show that I have not hesitated to explore and to study the most hideous plagues of this poor people. I shall speak of the past, because of its effects upon the present. I shall not pass over any of the complaints, whether just or not, which for two or three years have been made against Mexico. In acting thus, I hope to secure more consideration for my views, stamped always with the seal of a most rigid impartiality."

"I do not design to give a complete picture of the manners and customs of the Mexicans. I shall content myself with citing only those facts which have most impressed me, and which justify my conclusions."

A country of contrasts.

"The narrative will contain many apparent contradictions. Mexico being so singularly a country of contrasts, it will be difficult to bear constantly in mind the distinction in the classes of society to which my praises or censures relate. I shall confine myself as much as possible to facts, and allow them to speak for themselves."

"In this way I shall be the better shielded from the attacks of those who do not share my views. Every one will draw such inferences as he pleases from the picture, and form his own opinion of a country, so little known as Mexico."

The Chaplain's tour and objects.

"I left Paris in 1864, for the purpose of studying, in Mexico, the institutions of the new Empire, of sketching the political portraits of the new men, of comparing the Mexicans of the interior with those of the north and of the frontiers; and the Indian races with those of the United States."

"I regret that I am not able to correct all the prejudices, exaggerations, and errors which have been published



about Mexico, its inhabitants, its riches, beauty, etc., or to give the details of the number of its churches and convents, their architecture and ornamentation."

"My principle is, that *truth* injures only him who speaks it: it is often useful to those who hear it. My pen is my capital. I write as much from necessity as from inclination. Whether from conscience or from idleness, I shall not take pains to invent, but write only the truth. No one pays me to disguise or falsify it."

Design and importance of the Book. Such are the avowed objects, principles, and views of the author. How far his work corresponds with such an avowal, the sequel will perhaps show. When one in an important and responsible official position, *near two Thrones, addresses the Powers and people of Europe in behalf of a great movement, affecting the interests of modern civilization in both hemispheres*, for the express purpose of removing false impressions, and forming a correct public opinion throughout Christendom, and professes to have thoroughly investigated the facts, and to understand the whole history and philosophy of the subject, avows the most conscientious and sacred allegiance to truth and impartiality, and is fairly presumed to know more than he tells, the chief significance of the work arises from its "quasi authority," its chief importance from the nature, extent, and effect of the influence it is intended to exert.

The Book, not its author, judged. In this view it is not the *author*, but the *book*, of which we speak. As much as it is to be regretted that the Abbé were not better informed, and that he had not employed his pen in the service of humanity, in the promotion of the principles of universal justice and freedom, of the equal and inalienable rights of nations and of men, we disavow in the outset all intended personality in respect to the *author*, and confine ourselves to the ex-

amination and exhibition of the statements, views, and teachings of the *book*.

Its scope. What it says of *things* concerns us little. What it says of *men and principles*—of Mexicans, and races, of their character, condition, and rights; of Americans, of the United States, its government, laws, policy, and public men; of the plans and purposes of European powers in regard to the Western hemisphere; of modern civilization, of international intercourse, commerce, and *comity*, concerns all mankind. And to this only is our attention directed.

#### GENERAL CONTENTS OF THE BOOK.

The volume describes :

- Analysis of the Work. 1. The country its geography, physical features, climate, soil, productions, its unrivalled resources and capabilities, and its industrial and commercial interests.
2. Its population, its institutions, social, moral, and political condition, the different races and classes, the various political and ecclesiastical parties and interests.
3. The intervention, its origin, causes, and objects; its measures, and the principal actors in its history; the Empire, Maximilian, his court, cabinet, and policy; and the causes and consequences of the failure.
4. It omits altogether any account of the connection of the English and Spanish Governments with the enterprise, and ignores all their co-operation in it. From the French standpoint, it speaks of it as "*our intervention*."
5. It accords to the French Government the honor of this, the grandest enterprise of the century, and the absolute and indisputable right to direct and control it.
6. It gives no history of moral or military move-



ments or events, and but brief and passing allusions to the Belgian, Austrian, and French elements in the campaign.

7. It dwells especially upon the character of the Mexicans—their political, civil, religious, social, and domestic institutions; the “church party,” their interests and policy; and the troubles and revolutions of the last forty years.

8. It represents the bulk of the population as divided into *three classes*—the first, the clerical or conservative party; the second, the radical republican reform party; and the third, an intermediate one, the liberal party, vibrating between the other two.

9. It declares that nine-tenths of the entire population adhere to the clerical party, embracing all the intelligent, wealthy, and respectable portion of the community; that it embodies the only sound principles of government, law, or order, and that its ascendancy is essential to the preservation of the existence of the nation, and of its prosperity in all that concerns the welfare of society.

10. It declares that the fundamental principle of Monarchy is the only form of government for Mexico, and is the distinctive rallying point of this party; that it is inwrought in the very constitution of the Mexican mind, underlies all the national traditions, and is supported by an overwhelming majority of the people.

11. That the movement for the establishment of a monarchy, with a foreign Prince upon the throne, originated with this party; was submitted to the Courts and Cabinets of Europe many years since; that the intervention was the result, and this same party called Maximilian and placed him on the throne.

The sixth chapter is devoted to the “religious condition of Mexico, the clergy, false religion, superstition, reli-

gious ceremonies, the fair of the dead, and the sale of the ecclesiastical property.”

The eighth treats of the intervention, the opposition of the Mexicans, the consequences of its failure, and the monarchists.

The eleventh discusses the political parties of the country.

The twelfth is an exposition of the author's views of the relations of the Mexican question to the future of Europe, and of France in particular. Entirely in the interest of the intervention and the Empire, *it professes to enlighten Europe in respect to the character, the real issues and interests of the conflict.* It exhibits also the author's views of Mexican and American public sentiment and policy.

#### CONTENTS OF CHAPTER XII.

The titles of this chapter are, “The Mexican Question, little understood in Europe. Summary statement. American policy. Tactics of Mr. Seward. The Monroe doctrine, its origin, application, and consequences. Opinions of American writers opposed to the Monroe Doctrine, and to the policy of Mr. Johnson. French opinions of the Mexican Question. Embarrassment of the United States on account of this Question. Opinions of Mexicans upon the actual situation. The importance of our expedition to the future of our commerce, and of our influence. Conclusion.”

The whole animus and influence of this volume are entirely in character with the assiduous and persistent efforts of the interventionists, by the daily press, pamphlets, and volumes, *to mould public opinion in France, and in Europe, unfavorably to the character and rights of Mexicans and Americans, and to justify and strengthen*



the policy and the acts of that foreign combination, naval, military, political and ecclesiastical; to overthrow the institutions of this continent; and to transplant here, in order to perpetuate at home, the European system of civil and religious despotism.

The signal failure of the scheme, and the reaction which has already begun to "plague its inventors," render it perhaps not less desirable that Americans should understand what the enemies of free institutions have been doing, and who are their real friends abroad.

Mexican estimate of the Work. It is not surprising that a Mexican gentleman, high in official position and in the confidence of his countrymen, characterizes the work as "a libel against Mexicans, that shows the disposition of the French (the author a French Abbé) against the Mexican patriots, and their despoilment in consequence of their failure. It is written in the interests of the bitterest Church partisans."

#### CHURCHES AND CONVENTS.

Mexico a monastic state. "Mexico," says the Abbé, "under Spanish rule, was eminently a monastic State. Not only three-fifths of the cities were occupied with convents and churches, but there were convents, like that of San Francisco at Mexico, and that of Santa Clara at Queretaro, which occupied a large part of the city. I do not speak of the fabulous riches of these churches. I think it right that the temples of God should be better adorned than the apartments of a stock-broker. But is it not a lie to God and men, to make a vow of poverty, and then live in the midst of abundance and comfort, as the ecclesiastics of all Spanish America do?"

The Churches. "Much has been said of the splendor of the Mexican churches, and of their immense riches.

But all that, is only a story which demonstrates the pious liberality of the Spaniards, and the rapacious sacrilege of the liberal Mexicans. These last have stolen that which the others had given."

Wealth and pillage of the Church.

"In the late revolutions, the Mexicans have taken away more than two hundred millions of value, in gold, silver, and precious stones, which the Spaniards had accumulated in their churches since the conquest!"

"The Cathedral of Mexico possessed a massive silver lamp, so large that three men entered within, to clean it. The liberals have cleaned it out, so thoroughly, that nothing of it is left. It would take a long list to enumerate the objects of historic interest of this kind, which have in like manner disappeared."

"If the country has profited by considerable sums thus produced by the plunder of the churches, it is sad to see a nation obliged to resort to such extremities, to relieve its finances. But as it is only a few individuals who have enriched themselves, by these precious spoils, it is right to condemn such acts of vandalism. To-day there are only the ruins and fragments of the profusion of former splendors."

"The Mexican loves his dollars, and keeps them. He has taken or destroyed the heritage of the Spaniards; he has restored nothing, improved nothing, even in a religious point of view. The 'votive offerings,' which even in Europe, have sometimes considerable value, are limited in Mexico to microscopic objects in silver, bought at the maker's for two or three francs."

#### MEXICANS NOT CATHOLICS.

Mexicans not Catholics.

"Besides, the Mexican is not a Catholic; he is simply a Christian, because he has been baptized.



I speak of the masses, and not of numerous exceptions to be met with, in all classes of society."

"I say that Mexico is not a Catholic country:

"I. Because a majority of the native population are semi-idolators.

"II. Because the majority of the Mexicans carry ignorance of religion to such a point, that they have no other worship than that of form. It is materialism without a doubt. They do not know what it is to worship God in spirit and in truth, according to the Gospel.

"III. Because the clergy themselves, in general, have little education, know very little of Theology, and appear to be ignorant of the canonical laws, and of the decrees of the Councils."

Absence of  
Christian vir-  
tues.

"Charity and humility are the very foundations, the touchstone of Catholicism. The Mexican professes but little enthusiasm for these virtues, notwithstanding that, without them, Catholicism becomes a sheer human religion, making Divinity only a pretext and motive of action, but stricken with sterility, rejected of God."

Simony and  
concubinage.

"If the Pope should abolish all Simoniacal livings, and excommunicate all the priests having concubines, the Mexican clergy would be reduced to a very small affair. Nevertheless, there are some worthy men among them, whose conduct as priests is irreproachable."

Some good  
priests.

"Notwithstanding the bad examples of the fraternity, the number of good priests is not so small as has been reported. From Vera Cruz to Mexico, at San Luis Potosi, and at Durango, I have seen those of whom nothing but good could be said, and whose conversation has been instructive to me. Their want of education and

culture, their merely local ideas, render them little esteemed by those accustomed to the French clergy, whose apostolic walk and conversation edify all the world."

#### CHARACTER OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

Frankness and  
impartiality.

"On the religious question, I shall use the same frankness as in the political, moral, and material, which make Mexico a peculiar country, unlike any other. I shall not conceal the evil which is reported, nor that which I know, in order that I may have the right to correct the exaggerations of the malevolent, of the hasty, and of partisan faultfinders.

"In all questions, it is not enough to relate the evil and the good, to establish the facts which reveal the actual situation, little understood. It is necessary to show the remedy. I shall show it."

Character of  
the Priesthood.

"In all Spanish America there are found, among the priests, the veriest wretches—knaves deserving the gallows—men who make an infamous traffic of religion. Mexico has her share of these wretches. Whose fault is it? In the past it has been Spanish manners—climate. In the present it is the Episcopate. If the bishops had good seminaries, where pupils could receive a sound and serious education; if the bishops had more energy; if they were more cautious in the choice of candidates for the priesthood; if they required others to observe, and *observed themselves*, more scrupulously, the canonical laws of the church, they would not see the disorders of which they are now the first to complain."

"Notwithstanding the decrees of the Council of Trent, pastoral visits are scarcely known in Mexico. I know they have been difficult and dangerous since the indepen-