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# THE HEART OF MEXICO

POLITICS! RELIGION! WAR!

SPAIN AND HER METHODS  
OVERTHROWN.

A LECTURE

BY

W. F. CLOUD,

First Sergeant Co. K, Second Ohio, Mexican War.  
Colonel Second. Tenth and Fifteenth Kansas, 1861-65.

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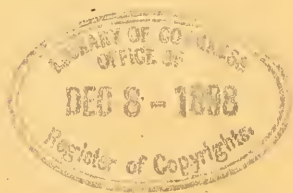
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# THE HEART OF MEXICO;

A Lecture by COL. W. F. CLOUD, of Kansas City, Mo.

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Of all countries on the globe Mexico, in many respects, must rank as the most wonderful. She is wonderful as to climate, soil, productions, topography and geographical location; but such themes will receive no mention at this time. Nor will her peoples be the subject of remark, notwithstanding the interest which attaches to their origin, their migrations, or the time when they first occupied their very peculiar country where the Spanish conquerors found them.

They were there, millions of them; they had an original civilization; they had political organization, prosperity and plenty. They were rich prey for the human-formed demons who despoiled them. While they had numbers and courage, and fought with desperate tenacity, they unfortunately lacked arms and military skill whereby to destroy their spoilers.

Whoever would "do" Mexico must climb. The country is very mountainous. Much of the land consists of elevated plateaus. The City of Mexico lies in a valley which is seven thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea.

Go to one of the coming six-hundred-story houses in this, the future great city (Kansas City); enter the elevator and go to the top; take a flying-ship, one of those birds of passage of coming generations, and sail off at that elevation eighteen hundred miles, a little to the west of south, and you will be able to step off at the Hotel Iturbide in the City of the Aztecs.

There, you are in that wonderful valley of volcanoes; by the graves of unknown nations; on the lava-covered soil where nature once poured forth her awe-inspiring flames, and, later, the brave Aztecan sung of greatness and of glory.

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IN that historic valley you are at the center of a population of 12,000,000. One-half of them are full-blooded Indians, about 4,000,000 mixed whites and Indians, 1,500,000 native whites, probably 200,000 Americans from the United States and 100,000 Europeans, 100,000 other foreigners, including Chinese, and some 100,000 mulattoes and negroes. Spanish is the recognized language, but a majority of the nation use the various Indian dialects of their ancestors. Nearly two millions speak the Aztecian tongue. This numerical preponderance of Indian and Mestizo asserts itself everywhere.

Go a few blocks eastward from the hotel where you landed and you are in the "Zocalo," the Grand Plaza. Way to the front stands the "volcan" Popocatepetl, 10,000 feet above you. To the left of that mountain rises Ixtaccihuatl, nearly as high, each with its crown of abiding snow and ice. Mountains circumvallate the scene. No street in the city in any direction which does not open to a mountain view in direct line. Lakes, as gems, bestud the verdant plain. Chapultepec rises in grandeur at the city limits. There, are the trees of mammoth proportions, under whose shade Montezuma rested in regal relaxation. There, are the pools where in royal state he took his baths.

On two sides of the Plaza are mercantile palaces. On your immediate front is the famous Halls of the Montezumas, now the National Palace. On your left is the Grand Cathedral, three hundred and eighty-seven feet long and one hundred and seventy-seven feet wide.

Two millions of dollars are represented in the structure and its adornments. Two hundred years passed while it was being erected. It stands on the ground once occupied by the great Aztec Temple and where unnumbered thousands were sacrificed to the war-god Huitzilopochtli, among whom were scores of Spaniards from the army of Cortez, who thus met a well-deserved fate.

Go up the towers, more than two hundred feet high, and you are in the very space where those victims shrieked

out their souls in the painful ordeal and agony of immolation, wherein the priests—through an incision in the side—tore out the hearts of the living, dying offerings.

Enter the Cathedral. You are filled with awe at its magnitude and magnificence. Ninety quadruple columns of colossal and symmetrical proportions support the arched ceilings nearly two hundred feet in height. It seems larger and larger, and higher and higher as you peer into its shadowy distances and try to penetrate the dreamy, glimmering spaces above. Music peals forth from some far off gallery. It falls upon your ear with the pathos of the agonies of all the past. In it you can hear the shrieks in their death-throes of the victims of the war-god in the years of Aztec dominion. You think of the Spaniards, of their Tlascalan, their Otomian, their Cempoalan and their Texcocan allies; of old and young, of prisoners of war and of voluntary victims who sought by personal sufferings and death to attain a happy eternity. Still the music rolls and peals out. Still in it you can hear, as "with your ears," the discord of torn and bleeding and of "broken hearts;" the wails of woe—the cries of despair from lost, lost souls.

But, while themes like these are deeply interesting, this occasion will be improved in presenting some of the thrilling and sanguinary struggles through which the people passed in their attainment of liberty, and by which the Republic of Mexico was established.

Out from one of the states of Mexico, Oaxaca, came two grand men. To them and their achievements this hour shall be dedicated.

Ninety-two years ago Benito Pablo Juarez was born. Twenty-four years later Porfirio Diaz first saw the light. These two men have greatly contributed to make the Nineteenth Century itself illustrious. Under their patriotism, genius and labors, the government of Mexico was changed from a THEOCRACY to a DEMOCRACY, the only instance of such a change in the history of the world.



Juarez was the pioneer reformer. He stands to Mexicans as Moses stood to the Israelites in Egypt, their leader and law-giver. As Cromwell stood to the Puritans of England, a national and political reformer who hurled into the air a thousand useless dogmas. As Washington stands to Americans, the first in the hearts of his countrymen, the benefactor of his people for all time. As Lincoln stands among humanitarians, a grand exemplar of emancipation.

Juarez came from the lowest rank of Mexican society. His childhood was spent in poverty, ignorance and squalor. He had no exemplar or instructor in the high order of work which fell to him. He had to learn by intuition, by experience. He thus learned and became the leader of his people, undaunted, self-poised, thoroughly prepared, confident. He was not a man of speeches, but of intense resolve and of intelligent persistent action. He rode on the cap-wave of a turbulent tide but made a safe landing. He was unheralded, unknown except by his works—but by his works is destined to become well known and immortal.

Three centuries before his day the Mexicans had endured and suffered the brutal and ferocious acts committed during the conquest by Cortez, which can be summed up in three words, "BLOOD AND ASHES." For three centuries they endured and suffered from the iniquitous and abominable system of oppression and tyranny established by those who followed the conquerors, a system of *robbery and slavery*. Immense territories had been depopulated, and millions of natives sacrificed by the cupidity and brutality of task-masters to secure revenue for the sensual and unfeeling monarch of Spain and his courtiers; for so long as revenue flowed freely into the royal treasury what did they care?

The adventurer, the official, the soldier and the priest had preyed upon the Indians. They had despoiled them of liberty and property. In greed and lust they had invaded and destroyed the family relation. Children had been sold



into slavery and men consigned to hopeless and lonely servitude in mine and field as laborers or as beasts of burden.

Saddened, oppressed and weighed down by conquest, mutilated by the sword of the conqueror and ground to the very dust and ashes of poverty by his relentless imposts and all-devouring avarice, poor and despised; degenerated from the rank which they held in the days of Montezuma, banished into the most barren districts where their efforts gained for them only a precarious existence, swarming the streets of the cities, basking in the sun during the day and passing the night in the open air, they afforded, during the centuries of Spanish rule, a sad and striking example of that general degradation which the government of Spain brought upon the natives of all the Spanish-American colonies.

Spain never gave the world a good example and never followed one. Her government, though a theocracy, was one of the most base and despicable dynasties that ever existed. Eminently a religious nation, her religion was but bigotry and it influenced men to deeds of direst cruelty. In the language of Senator Thurston, "Spain has set up more crosses, in more lands, beneath more skies, and under them has butchered more people than all the nations of the earth combined."

After three centuries of the misrule and the ruin of Spain, Mexican patriots, through the ordeal of suffering, blood and death, attained political independence. Their freedom from Spanish theocracy came later.

Here let me say that Spain's administrations in Cuba have shown no evidence of improvement or reform. She has been controlled by the same religion and bigotry, has maintained the same tyrannical policies and been represented by the same treacherous, inhuman, cruel and blood-thirsty minions as in Mexico.

Cubans have been struggling for liberty, religious as well as political. They would throw off the barbarism and curse of Spanish tyranny and theocracy. *They have succeeded.* Surely divine providence and America's mission of political evangelism will prove to be flat failures if Spain henceforth holds the "Pearl of the Antilles."

Generations of Mexicans followed generations, each retaining knowledge of the woes of their ancestors. Uprisings had been suppressed. Organizations prohibited and bondage more and more hopeless fastened upon them. But by secret and continuous narrations, each knew of their ancient liberty and happiness, their wealth, their political and domestic peace, their manhood.

Hatred toward their conquerors and oppressors had never died out in the natives. It descended as a sacred heritage, a heritage in which hope of deliverance, though not extinct, had well nigh turned to despair.

Juarez inherited all this animosity to Spaniard, to Spain, to soldier, to Priest. He deprecated the ill-advised efforts to force the methods of Spain and her religion upon the Mexicans by the use of arms. He knew that the religion of his ancestors was one of pure morals, honesty, temperance and education, in all of which it was superior to that of his day, when, by reason of the covetousness, duplicity and licentiousness of their teachers—dishonesty, falsehood and vileness prevailed among the masses. He knew that his ancestors were men of skill as artizans, engineers, mechanics and agriculturalists. He knew that they were record-keepers, that they preserved their civil, political and religious laws, tenets, histories and general literature by a method and style peculiar to themselves—by pictorial illustrations—being words, sentences and idioms in pictures, and that their knowledge of astronomy had attained such perfection that, at the date of the conquest, they had a more accurate calendar than had the astronomers of Europe. He knew that the priest—and the soldier at the instigation of the priest—had gathered together all the literature of his highly educated and civilized people into mountains of bound volumes and manuscripts and then had burned all to ashes in the name of the Christ of their religion. He knew that never did fanaticism achieve a more signal triumph than in this annihilation of so many instructive monuments to human ingenuity and learning. He knew that a few years after the conquest the priest by persuasion, by force and by fraud, had induced millions of the natives to profess

the religion of Christ; but he also knew that their faith remained essentially the same and that for want of education they knew but little of religion except its external forms, while in morals they had deteriorated. He knew that the torments inflicted in the inquisition were far more barbarous than those perpetrated by Aztec priests upon prisoners of war in the religious ceremonies in the Mexican temples, "*teocallis*," houses of God. He knew that the victims who perished in the inquisition were branded with infamy in this world and consigned to perdition in the next, while the Aztec priest devoted his offerings to the gods—thereby emobling them. He knew that such a death was at times voluntarily embraced as a sure passport to a happy eternity.

As an educated Mexican, Juarez knew that the government of his ancestors was an elective monarchy, and that the administrations of that monarchy tended to the happiness and prosperity of the people. He regarded the destruction of the Aztec government and the degradation and enslavement of its citizens as one of the greatest outrages written on the pages of the world's history—unjustified and unjustifiable upon any hypothesis.

Columbus having discovered the new world and brought it under the dominion of the Spanish monarch laid a tax upon the natives. This tax was to be paid quarterly and was excessively exorbitant. Many failing to pay were sent as slaves to Spain. Others offered time-service or labor as a substitute for gold, cotton and other products of the country. This was the beginning of that system of *repartimientos*, under which the natives were made the servants and slaves of the Spaniards. This system was adopted by Cortez and his associates in Mexico and it was carried to the utmost limit. There never was a thought that the Indian had title to his land, his liberty or the products of his labor. All, all belonged to the conquerors.

From the date of the conquest the clergy charged themselves with two lines of work. One was to see to the

spiritual welfare of the Indians and to that they devoted some of their time and had some success. The other was to secure as much as possible of the wealth of the country into the hands of the priests and the coffers of the church, and in the last named duty they had gratifying results. Notwithstanding losses consequent on war, in the beginning of the great struggle for liberty inaugurated by Juarez, the holdings of the church and ecclesiastics were \$500,000,000 in real estate and \$150,000,000 in cash and other personal property. The coffers of the church were full of mouldering money while the state treasury was empty.

During the eighteenth and the first part of the nineteenth centuries the incomes of the church arising from land holdings and clerical services amounted to thirteen million dollars annually, and the arch-bishop managed to keep the wolf of want from the door of his domestic domicile—wherein no wife could overtax his income by personal or social indulgence in dress, adornments, equipage or entertainments—by having apportioned as his share one-third of the gross amount, thus giving him the royal income of eleven thousand dollars for each and every day of his life as the representative of the meek and lowly Christ “who had not where to lay his head.”

But let two honest Spaniards—Don Jorge Juan and Don Antonio Ulloa—describe how the “Laws of the Indies” were executed; and the happiness they had secured for the Indians two centuries after the Spaniards began to fulfill their divine mission in the New World. These two gentlemen, while coming to America on a scientific mission in 1735, were privately commissioned to report generally about the condition of the country and the people, and in 1748 they submitted their “Noticias Secretas” (Private Report). We quote from the English translation published by Crocker and Brewster of Boston in 1851.

The report in part explains the many devices by which the priests relieved the Indians of what little sustenance they had succeeded in concealing and saving from the lynx-eyed and greedy corregidor, and states the yearly contribu-

tions, in kind, received by a curate "whose parish was not one of the most lucrative," namely, more than 200 sheep, 6,000 hens, 4,000 guinea pigs and 50,000 eggs. These were besides the payments in money. The churches were converted into factories, where the Indians, "after mass had been said, were shut in, just as at the mills, and their occupation could not be disguised because the noise of the frames or weaving rods could be distinctly heard from the outside. The Indians, of course, received no compensation for their labor. If an Indian died leaving some property, the 'curate became the universal heir,' collecting together live stock and utensils, and stripping the wife and children of everything they had. The method of doing it consisted in making for the deceased a sumptuous funeral however repugnant it might be to the views of the interested parties." The wretched condition of the Indians, says the report, is to be attributed to the vices of the priests, the extortions of the officials and bad treatment from Spaniards generally. \* \* It also happens that the young, not being able to labor, are, by the corregidor—or tax collector—made subject to tribute illegally; and fathers and elder brothers are bound, if they would not see a son or brother punished with the whip, to unite their efforts to help him earn the tribute money. \* \* "The Indian women specially are obliged to task themselves the whole year round in order to meet, by unremitting toil, the unjust demands of the corregidor." \* \* \* "Nor is the corregidor content with obliging those to pay who are exempt by law, it is often carried to such extent as to enforce the payment of a two-fold contribution."

"All these calamities are brought upon the Indians by their parish priests who, while they should be their spiritual fathers and their protectors against the unrighteous extortions of the corregidores, do themselves go hand in hand with the latter to wrest from the poor Indian the fruit of his incessant toil, even at the cost of the blood and sweat of a people whose condition is so deplorable that, while they have abundant means to enrich and aggrandise others, are destitute of a scanty allowance of bread for their own meagre sustenance.



Mexico, under Spain, was a government of the Viceroy, an autocracy, a theocracy. There were but two classes of citizens, the army and the clergy. The constant sound of the drum and the bell, from early morn to midnight, with ever exhibited show and parade in uniform and canonical robes testified to the dominance of military and spiritual power. The divine right of kings and officials was a religious tenet, a profound conviction. No one questioned it. This descended to the nation and ruled the people, whatever the form of government. It had been thoroughly ingrained into the brain of almost every man that the government had absolute right over him, that in some miraculous manner he belonged to the state and the church, the man with a sword and the man with a cross in hand; that the government owned the people.

True, Spain had ceased to rule, but the superstitious incubus remained. Though a republic, Mexico was strictly a theocracy; a government in which one particular church held jurisdiction over the souls and bodies of the people. The throne had disappeared, but the power behind the throne remained.

Filled with knowledge of all the past, and deeply impressed with truths of the present, Juarez stood as one inspired, as one selected by providence to do a grand work for Mexico. God in his wisdom seems to have ordained that his appointed and anointed leaders should come forth from the people whose wrongs they are to redress and whose rights they are to secure and protect.

Not as a soldier did the savior of Mexico come upon the field, but as a civillian, a man of education, a lawyer and advocate, as a statesman and patriot, as chief magistrate of the nation. Though not a military man, his physical courage equalled that of any son of mars. By his life, his principles and his political and executive actions he warred against the most skillful, conscienceless and experienced political and ecclesiastical power with which a Mexican could ever contend. His moral courage was therefore almost infinitely beyond the physical.

Benito Pablo Juarez was a pure-blooded Indian of the

Zapoteca tribe. He was born in an adobe house with a dirt floor, in the state of Oaxaca, on the 21st day of March, 1806. He became an orphan in infancy, his father having died just before and his mother soon after his birth. At the age of twelve he could only speak his native tongue and could neither read nor write. Being a penniless orphan, he toiled at boyish occupations among which was herding cattle. His industry and intelligence attracted the attention and enlisted the sympathy of a merchant who placed him in a seminary. He passed the course of study in that school with honor, when a religious zealot, noting his good qualities, proposed to provide for his education for the priesthood. While the youth appreciated the generous offer his honesty and patriotism forbade its acceptance. The times were very favorable for education in the politics of the country as ever since he began his studies there had been a continual series of pronunciamientos, outrages and revolutions and party zeal had risen to the grade of excessive heat. The country was in a state of general political and military excitement, and war was almost continuous. Juarez, early in his knowledge of these excitements and contests, had adopted liberal principles and had become the enemy of the ambitious and covetous priests. Under the influence of his very positive political principles he declined to study for the priesthood and decided to become an advocate or attorney at law. Availing himself of all means at his command he received the degree of bachelor of laws in 1832 and at the same time was elected deputy to the legislature of Oaxaca, his native state. Two years later he graduated and took rank as *abogado* or attorney at law.

Thus rapid was the elevation of this humble-born Indian boy, who, at the age of twelve years, nearly naked, worked in his native mountains and whose hopes at that time of acquiring education, position and fame were on a par with the cattle which he herded. Twenty-four years after this date he occupied the presidential chair and could use with energy and eloquence the language of which he knew not a single syllable at the age of twelve years.

During her first thirty-seven years of independence



Mexico had eight or nine distinct forms of government, fifty changes in the office of chief executive and more than three-hundred revolutions. These changes came from the army and the church or were the patriotic uprisings of the people to resist or overthrow usurping and oppressive administrations which had no better right or title to power than the will and ambition of the clergy or the military.

The mass of the people were educated to the conviction that they were the property of the state and the church. To resist the right of the state was treason and the penalty was death. To question the right of the church was heresy and the penalty was excommunication, ostracism, death and eternal perdition.

Thus mental slavery and entire subjection to the will and judgment of spiritual teachers was the secret of their self-abnegation. They not only consented to belong to somebody, but they yielded to the idea that they had no right to think or to express their thoughts. The inquisition had been abolished, but no liberty or enlargement had followed. The sword and the cross, still united, still held sway. The people did not realize or say that the army were robbers and that the priests were hypocrites and spoilsman, as well they might.

It was thus that Juarez looked upon them and knew them. But while he knew that superstition-inspiring dogmas, attitudes, gowns, forms of worship, show and parade do not constitute the genius of religion, are not the ends and objects of revelation, are not the culmination of the grace of God, he yet made no war upon tenet or ceremony. He was not a religious, but a political reformer. He would separate church and state. He would displace the priest from political control, would stop his spoils, make him subject to the civil law and tax his property. He would make the military subject to the civil power.

While thus disposed toward those factors in the weal and woe of the commonwealth, he yearned for the elevation of the people. He knew that the education of the poorer classes was almost entirely neglected and that it was the custom to regard the Indian as a being that did not belong

to the human race. He knew that of the four millions forming this class not four in a thousand could read and scarcely one in a thousand could sign his name.

He was saddened to know that their moral debasement was in keeping with their abject ignorance, and more saddened to know that they had sunk much lower in morals than when Cortez set foot on the soil of Mexico.

He knew that this ignorance, attended with a degrading superstition, were the chief shackles which bound them. Therefore he would introduce a system of primary education as the most sure means of their elevation and liberty. He would recognize and teach the equal political rights of each individual, though so to do had long been denounced by the clergy as a damnable heresy. He would unify all classes for their mutual improvement. He would encourage immigration and therewith the introduction of independent thought and free discussion.

Can anyone imagine a harder task than fell to Juarez as he thus undertook to revolutionize, to reverse, to educate, to rebuild? He was confronted with the army in full cooperation with the church. He had to contend with the incubus of settled methods of belief and action. He was face to face with a superstition which was pitiable. The people did not know what political, what religious liberty was. They had been taught that it was treason, heresy, sacrilege, to think a new aspiring thought or to do an independent act.

It has been said that Cromwell's soldiers learned politics upon their knees and received inspiration and courage direct from God in answer to prayer. Not so with the followers of Juarez. They imbibed principles of liberty, were relieved from superstitious fears, were enthused with courage and hope and were led to independent thought and act under the teachings of their daring leader and by their experience on the field of battle. The impulses of hatred and revenge which laid deep down in their minds were developed into fierce and sanguinary actions as opportunity offered, for

the lessons of oppression and extortion had been well learned in the centuries of hard, bitter, sorrowful experience. So they were ruthlessly applied when the people's turn came and their spoilers became victims.

As a leader Juarez captured the confidence, the love, the fealty of the multitudes. He offered freedom from the exactions and oppressions of the tax collector, the clergy and the rich proprietors of the lands. He assured political reform on principles, of liberty, equality and justice. Under his majestic, magnetic presence and guidance units of weakness were solidified into a mass of indivisible, unconquerable strength, and his final victory was a monument of glory, testifying to native Mexican patriotism, persistence and statesmanship.

It was an era of intense excitement. The great question of a *basic principle* of government was in final issue in Mexico. Should it be centralism or federalism, theocracy or democracy? That was the question.

The one man who for a third of a century had been the sanguinary representative of centralism was but recently driven from executive power. Seek to know the most notable man in Mexican history whose life and character stands out as the opposite to that of Juarez and you will find Santa Anna, a man who took a leading part in national affairs for more than half a century. He was among the patriots who secured independence from Spain in 1821. In 1823 he led a successful revolution against the Emperor Iturbide. In 1828 he resisted the seating of Pedraza who had been elected president and secured the installing of Guerrero. In the same year he revolted against Guerrero and aided in seating Bustamente. In 1829 he revolted against Bustamente and in 1832 overthrew him and secured the inauguration of Pedraza. In 1833 he was elected president and aspired to dictatorial authority. In 1836 he invaded Texas, was defeated and captured and while a prisoner was deposed from the presidency. In 1838 he fought the French army at Vera Cruz and regained popularity. In 1841 he headed a revolution against and overthrew Bustamente for the second time. In 1843 he was appointed provisional president and

in 1844 he proclaimed himself dictator. In 1845 he was deposed, sentenced to death, had official clemency and was exiled. In 1846 he returned to Mexico and was again elected president. In 1847 he commanded the army which fought General Taylor at Buena Vista. In the same year he fought General Scott at Cerro Gordo, Churubusco, Molino del Rey, Chapultepec and at the garitas of Belen and San Cosme. With the fall of the city he left the country. In 1853 he was recalled and elected president again. In 1854 he declared himself perpetual dictator and in the same year resisted a revolution. In 1855 he resigned and in hot haste fled from the country. In 1863 he offered his services to the French invaders but was rejected. In 1867 he headed a revolution against President Juarez, was captured and condemned to death but had executive clemency and left Mexico. In 1873 he returned under a general amnesty and lived in retirement until the 20th of June, 1876, when his mortal existence terminated in death. Although he possessed genius and had education equal or superior to Juarez, his patriotic professions were but a highway over which his ambition traveled to grasp at dictatorial and imperial power and authority. With unsurpassed opportunities to benefit his country none did it greater injury. In him the centralist church party always found a faithful and sanguinary leader and ally.

With the downfall of Santa Anna in 1855 the liberal or anti-church party first came into power. Alvarez was appointed provisional president. Juarez became a member of the cabinet and the famous and characteristic "Law Juarez" was promulgated. This law limited the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical tribunals and abolished the charters of the clergy and the army.

Alvarez resigned and Comonfort, his minister of war, succeeded him. Under his administration, in 1857, a new constitution was adopted in which the spirit of reform was crystalized into provisions conferring liberty in teaching, release from monastic vows, liberty of the tribune and the press, prohibiting corporations from owning real estate, con-

ferring upon the civil authorities the right to supervise ecclesiastical orders and discipline, declaring the ineligibility of members of the sacerdotal profession to the office of president or of deputies to congress and the very important feature that the Roman Catholic was not prescribed as the religion of the state.

Impelled by its innate and insatiable love of power and revenue, the church party arrayed itself against the new constitution and its new officers. A revolution was commenced with Zuloaga as leader. Comonfort made feeble resistance and then resigned and left the country. Zuloaga was made provisional president and occupied the capital. The new constitution was promptly annulled by him.

On the resignation of Comonfort the constitutional or liberal party recognized Juarez as president, he being in the line of succession as president of the supreme court, and he took the oath of office at Queretaro.

Thus in January, 1858, at the age of fifty-two, this Indian of Oaxaca became chief magistrate. The half-naked boy of the despised class, who forty years before had not the ability to read or write and could only speak his native tongue, had risen to power through the adverse conditions which could only exist in that age and that land.

When education enlarged his intellect, when official positions came to him by the will of the people and in a legal manner, when duty and opportunity led him on until he held executive power as president of the Republic of Mexico he had one and only one ambition. That was to right the wrongs of his people, and to accomplish that he smote the enemy persistently—though no rudeness or barbarity marked his acts. While brave and firm as the standard-bearer of the liberties of his country, he never exhibited spite toward his opponents. While he had abiding faith in his mission, he was not ostentatious in his triumphs nor harsh in the treatment of his enemies, nor did he ever exhibit heart-burning rancor. Anger and malice never in him caused reason to abdicate nor extinguish her torch. He bore sarcasm and insult with admirable resignation. He



was not diverted from the line of duty by slander and false accusation, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the government, nor death to himself. Believing that right makes might he performed his duty under the inspirations of faith and hope. He never wavered nor flinched, no, not even when at Guadalajara the rifles of a turbulent priesthood and treacherous soldiery were aimed at his breast. While desiring success he disdained to secure it by compromise. His whole character and policy is revealed in his favorite dictum—which almost runs parallel with the golden rule of Christ—"Respect for the Rights of Others is Peace." To attain direct results he swept away traditions and precedents. His conscience was his "egeria," his inspiration. Duty was his religion and when country was at stake he seemed to carry that religion to the point of heroic fanaticism. He faced every crisis without hesitation, determined not to yield one iota of his duties as trustee of the nation and to defend at all hazards the constitution, the honor and the independence of the republic. He moved on with a practical policy which was as fixed as the decrees of fate and as steady as the foot-steps of time. His tenacity to his trust sustained the republic during her darkest era—the struggle with the French army.

The United States was the first secular government ever formed in the world. Recollect that. Juarez reformed and reconstructed Mexico into the next. Recollect that too.

A government in which every church has exactly the same rights and no more; in which every religion has the same rights and no more. A government whose constitution said "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof." There was little opposition to that principle in the United States.

For thirty-three years the constitution of Mexico had said "The religion of the Mexican nation *is and will be perpetually* the ROMAN CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC. The nation will protect it by wise and just laws and *prohibit the exercise of any other whatever.*"

It took heroism to propose the change from theocracy to democracy. In Mexico the church held the sword and was skillful in its use. The cross and the sword had marched hand in hand on the road to conquest. The cross and the sword had shared the rich spoils of Mexico. The cross had received large concessions of land and important privileges. The cross had controlled ecclesiastical courts and councils, the confessional and the Halls of Torment in the inquisition. The cross now had control of civil courts and their processes.

It required more than physical courage for Juarez now to attempt to wrest the sword from the powerful hands of the church. Recollect that also.

Juarez was inaugurated president in January. Zuloaga placed troops in the field to capture him and to break up his government. He fled to Guanajuata and then to Guadalajara. At the latter place he was captured and sentenced to death, but while he stood before the firing detail expecting execution, a friendly force made rescue and he was enabled to reach the city of Manzanillo on the Pacific coast. He then sailed for and crossed the Isthmus of Panama, took ship for New Orleans and thence for Vera Cruz, where, on the 4th of May, he was cordially received by the governor and other political friends. The city of Vera Cruz was a strong place sustained as it was by the Castle of Ulua and being the principal port of Mexico, the revenues there collected aided to secure funds to carry on the war.

When Juarez left the Pacific coast he disclosed his plans to no one. His appearance at Vera Cruz was therefore a great surprise to all. He took with him no army; so when he issued his proclamations the chief force behind him was the moral power which attached to the office of president under the constitution. But when it became known that he had established the government at Vera Cruz and needed military aid all the constitutionalists and liberals in the country united to his support. The result was a repetition of the grand, popular movement of 1810, when the multitudes flocked to the standard of Hidalgo and his cus-



After (" Biography of Diaz ") on 19th page, read:

The army of Juarez was reinforced by guerrillas from the mountains and the valleys. When defeated in one action they dispersed only to reunite on other fields. With no baggage-trains nor artillery they effected rapid and secret movements. With success their numbers increased and eventually by capture and by purchase they had the required munitions and secured final victory.

Let me say now, the greatest test of courage on earth is to bear defeat without losing heart and hope. That army is the bravest which can be whipped the greatest number of times and fight again. By this test the liberal army was pre-eminently a brave one. Defeated three times out of every four contests, it remained courageous to the end. The maxim of Juarez was, "Thus we go from defeat to defeat on to an ultimate victory."

It was a church fight. The church again in its history used the sword. The lines were closely drawn and all the horrors of fratricidal war, with its sanguinary reprisals, were perpetrated. It became a rule followed on all occasions to put to death all chiefs and other persons of influence who were so unfortunate as to be captured, and often privates from the ranks suffered the same fate.

It was a war for the life or the death of theocracy or democracy in Mexico, and it raged with all the horrors of religious wars and was the most sanguinary of all the inter-necine struggles in which Mexicans had ever engaged. The whole political heavens were lurid, were blood red with the passions of war. The clergy launched anathemas against Juarez and the liberal cause and published them broadcast. They used the pulpit and the confessional to excite the fears of the timid and to stir up the fires of fanaticism.

Zuloaga continued to occupy the capital and his military forces held most of the cities and strongholds of the country. Juarez at that time held only a part of the state of Vera Cruz. With this prestige, all political powers, including the United States, recognized the Zuloaga government.



cessors—though the circumstances were greatly changed. Then it was an uprising to overthrow the government, now it was to sustain the government and uphold the constitution. Then the leader was a self-appointed insurgent, was of vacillating disposition who when he had the city of Mexico in sight and at his feet, lacked the decision and force of character to secure the prize and establish his principles in the form of a new government. Now the leader was president of the republic, was a man of stubborn will, with clear perceptions and established policies.

The issues were joined, the war commenced. There was little money and less credit. The cause had to depend upon itself. Reprisals were made upon the rich proprietors of the haciendas, the clergy and the churches. The bummers of the Juarez army were worthy prototypes of that of Sherman a few years later. "Stimulated more and more by necessity the soldiers were not limited in their efforts to secure funds, from real estate, tithes and such sources, but boldly possessed themselves of the ornaments and sacred images and vases from the altars. At first this caused no small fear at the crimes which had been perpetrated, imbued as the people had been from their childhood with superstitious reverence, and a cry of horror was raised and divine wrath threatened as a consequence of the sacrilege. However, as heaven inflicted no vengeance, the people little by little had their fears dissipated. The profanations furnished supplies and also served to dispel the odor of sanctity which surrounded the sacred temples." (Biography of Diaz.)

Confronted by these desperate conditions. Actuated by his sense of justice and equity. Convinced of his duty—and seeing his opportunity—to save the constitution. Regardless of the enormous value of the property involved. Ignoring the prestige of possession and the rights of ownership, and assured that the time for heroic treatment had come Juarez, on the 12th day of July, 1859, performed the most decisive act in the history of the republic by flashing out before the world his brilliant, blazing sun of EMANCIPATION, his decree nationalizing the property of the church,

enlarging the bill of rights of the people and limiting the power of the clergy.

As in the proclamation of Lincoln, issued three years later, emancipating slaves in the United States, theories were hurled into the air. Rights of ownership, vested rights and prestige of possession were reviewed, defined and construed in the courts of the higher law. War, national exigencies and equity in each case justified the acts. Theories were made to accord with realities. Statutes of liberty and of right eventually took the place of those of force and fraud in the fundamental law—for, pile statute upon statute till you reach the skies, a human being cannot, thereby, be transformed into a chattel, nor can the robber, the thief and the spoilsman acquire equitable title by the lapse of time. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day."

The decree devolved upon the nation all the vast properties of the church and the clergy, both regular and secular. It separated church and state. It conceded to all religious sects the right to teach their doctrines freely. The clergy were restricted to voluntary compensation and the church was prohibited the right to own real estate. It also dissolved absolutely all religious orders and communities and declared marriage to be a civil contract.

The decree was based on the fact that the clergy had been the principal supporters of royalty in the war for independence, and since that time had been the most powerful enemies to liberal principles and that they had promoted the present civil war with the object of retaining supremacy over political as well as religious affairs. The decree was issued not only as a war measure, but as a means to correct and control the many evils which existed and it greatly assisted the liberal cause.

Juarez thus became the pioneer of emancipation in the western continent. In this contention for law and order against revolution and the monopoly of a wealthy, domineering class Mexico anticipated the United States more than three years. The pure patriot and wise statesman Juarez stood as firmly for his country at that time as did

Lincoln for his in 1861, and the final results in Mexico in the success of the National cause was not less to the benefit and glory of that nation than was the victory for the constitution, law and order and the overthrow of a domineering, revolutionary class in the United States in 1865.

While it may truly be said that Juarez is the Lincoln of Mexico, it may quite as truly be said that Lincoln is the Juarez of the United States. Lincoln in 1858-60 was talking against the system of American Slavery and its extension. He had no plan if even a hope of its utter extinction. He proposed no such plan nor expressed such hope. Those years saw Juarez emancipating his people of Mexico from the serfdom in which they were held by priests, tax collectors and domineering soldiers. He was accomplishing the cherished wish, plan, hope and ambition of his life. Each of these grand men proclaimed emancipation at the age of fifty-three.

Juarez stood as an emancipator from the beginning of LA LUCHA POR LA LIBERTAD, (the struggle for liberty.) That was the issue made for him and made by him and so known and considered by friend and foe, and on that issue the war was fought to a finish.

Nor were principles of reform new to his faith and practice. In the first years of the republic he was a leader in the "progressist party." That party worked for liberty of speech and of the press, the repeal or abolition of the ecclesiastical and military statutes whereby the church and the army controlled the state; the suppression of convents and monasteries as institutions which corrupted the public morals, and the making of marriage to be a civil contract. As a member of the cabinet of Alvarez and the advisor of Comonfort he led in each and every reform established.

The stand thus taken by Juarez to dispossess the church of property, revenue, influence and power was not the result of any change in his religion. He was born and reared, lived and died in the pale of the church. He never apostatized nor was he formally excommunicated. He had no assistance in the way of counsel from a protestant, nor were his acts the result of any conspiracy against the church.

He knew that the vicious greed for wealth and power, inherent in all corporations, was fully developed in the Roman Catholic church and clergy; that in Europe they had made and destroyed kingdoms and empires by the exercise of their well-known world-wide claim to temporal power; that they had acted on that claim in the political affairs of Mexico and that they were making the fight against him on that claim. He knew the vast wealth which had accrued to the church in Mexico and he knew that all the property in its hands would be used to crush him and to overthrow the constitution. He knew that the equitable title to all the lands and the usufruct of the same was still in the people who for centuries had been wronged and robbed. Therefore he issued his decree.

Had Lincoln issued his emancipation proclamation coincident with his first call for military aid and as a *basic principle of action* the cause of the Union must have failed and the Confederacy have been established.

Juarez daringly led popular sentiment. Lincoln carefully moved with the popular tide.

In the American revolution there were many Washingtons. In this struggle for liberty in Mexico all depended upon Juarez; he was the chief standard-bearer. Had Washington fallen others could have been found to take his place; he was one of many. Had Juarez fallen the cause of liberty must have failed; he was many in one.

The assassination of Lincoln during any year of the war of the rebellion would have developed other patriots and other statesmen who would have carried his work to final success, as was done when he did fall. Juarez was the embodiment of his cause; all depended on his life. Amid all the lurid passions of the times his figure stood like the sturdy oak resisting the concentrated fury of theocracy. His fall would have ended democracy in Mexico. He was the right man in the right place at the right time.

It can hardly be denied that had England, France and Spain not only acknowledged the confederacy but had sent armies to fight its battles the Union must have been dis-



rupted, Juarez contended successfully against the military and moral power of those nations.

While a due regard to the truths of history acknowledges the moral influence of the International policy of the United States and its exhibition of military force on the Rio Grande as a counterpoise to Europe, it still must be admitted that the diplomatic genius displayed by Juarez was a paramount power in presenting the intricate issues involved so properly and persistently that the rights of sympathizing and reinforcing friends and the palpable wrongs of the offending nations stood, respectively, approved and disapproved in the high court of public opinion.

The first era of LA LUCHA POR LA LIBERTAD passed. The result was victory for Juarez and the constitution. On the first day of January, 1861, he entered the capital as chief magistrate. He was elected president under the forms of the constitution and proceeded to reorganize the country on the lines of his proclamation and for more than a year he held his way with dignity and success. As far as Mexicans were concerned his triumph was final.

But his victory was not as yet complete. He was destined to meet the most terrific storm that ever assailed the republic. All political powers but the United States, then engaged in her own most desperate struggle for existence, hated the Republic of Mexico and despised President Juarez and his political principles. Europe in unison conspired against him. England, France and Spain made an armed invasion. The Empire of Austria, the Kingdom of Belgium and the Pope of Rome co-operated and gave sympathy. Troops from abroad and at home drove him a thousand miles from his capital and occupied the country. The officers and the functions of the Republic were supplanted by a Monarchy with the Archduke Maximilian on the throne. But the statesmanship, the diplomacy, the patriotism, the patience and the good sense of Juarez, in spite of foreign hate, armed intervention and domestic enemies triumphed over all.



Ah, the sad and inglorious fate of Maximilian. An Austrian Archduke, educated and traveled, selected by the wily and intriguing Napoleon III, to occupy the throne as Emperor of Mexico, he took his place as such; becoming thereby but a puppet in the hands of that strategic meddler in the affairs of Europe and America.

The *protége* of the Pope, Blessed by him and instructed in the *basic principles* of the HOLY SEE. "*Great are the rights of nations and they must be heeded, but greater and more sacred are the rights of the church.*" Delegated to establish an empire in antagonism to a republic, and later by special legate charged to secure "*The exclusion from the Mexican empire of every form of religion but the ROMAN CATHOLIC. The independent sovereignty of each bishop in his own diocese. The absolute control of schools and education and THE IMMUNITY OF THE CHURCH FROM ANY INTERFERENCE OF THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES*" the newly fledged potentate, overburdened with inconsistent and impossible instructions and injunctions sailed for and entered his empire.

Weak and irresolute, temporizing when possible and compromising when compelled to act, dreaming of a kind of democratic imperialism, bored with the practical details of government, formulating neither fundamental nor statutory laws, assuming power as an absolute sovereign, neglecting a financial system, depending upon the French general for a policy and on the French army for support, affable to all political factions but failing to secure the support of any, leading a gay life with his suite at the capital, enjoying his imperial income as a spendthrift who after suffering much from want suddenly enters upon a fortune—he passed the time from June, 1864, to the same month in 1867, when under sentence of death as the decree of a military court he stood up in the presence of an immense multitude on the *Cerro de las Campanas* (hill of the bells) at Queretaro to meet his fate.

True, a most terrible fate, but inflicted substantially in accord with his own "October decree" wherein, when deeming his government established, he said "that armed resistance to his authority would not be considered war but

as acts of bandits, that all such offenders should be tried by courts-martial, that the guilty should be summarily executed and that to prisoners in arms no quarter would be granted."

On trial of the emperor the prosecution successfully demanded the application of the spirit of his own decree, by which distinguished Mexicans had died, and his doom was sealed.

Nor were pleas for clemency, made by governments and individuals, of avail. The grim singleness of purpose which had made Juarez great and admirable in all his past official history, and which had caused him to hold the welfare of the state as supreme, to the disregard of personal interests, maintained control now when mercy to the individual meant injustice to the commonwealth.

Should Maximilian live his cause would also survive and give occasion for foreign and domestic uprisings for his re-enthronement; a dangerous precedent would be established and encouragement given for other foreign intermeddling in the affairs of Mexico—dictating her policies and pursuing the debt created by the intervention and the empire. So declared Juarez and the ill-starred Maximilian stood to meet his fate. Addressing the soldiers and the surrounding throng he said: "Mexicanos, I die for a just cause, the independence of Mexico. God grant that my blood may bring happiness to my new country. *Viva Mexico.*"

The volley was fired only to bring him wounded to the ground, writhing and groaning in agony. An officer by a shot from a pistol gave him the *golpe de gracia*—the blow of mercy and ended his mortal existence; the spirit of Maximilian entered the shadows.

Prompted by pride he left as his last words to his mother, the one living person nearest his heart, "Behold as a soldier I have performed my duty." Friends in the spirit of kindness had given him the false information that his beloved Carlote, his wife, was dead and he cheerfully faced death, enthused with the hope of a happy reunion

with her immediately beyond the sad and painful ordeal of execution. His last hours might well have been saddened by the perfidy of Napoleon III., who in violation of treaty stipulations had withdrawn his troops and the heartless indifference of Pope Pius IX., each of whom resented Carlote in her appeals for aid, though made upon her knees and with dramatic tears and soul-thrilling entreaties.

After more than a thousand battles and skirmishes and the sacrifice of more than forty thousand lives the usurping emperor and the invading armies disappeared from the field and Juarez again triumphantly entered the capital as chief magistrate of the fully established Republic.

The shadow which all thrones and potentates had thrown over Mexico from the beginning was a pall of oppression, superstition and bonds. Liberty, relief came from truth and right and not by the will or consent of Popes, Emperors, Kings or Generals. Right in this case was might. One man and God was a majority, a paramount power against thrones and dominions.

In this grand contention Juarez did not do what others thought ought to be done but what he thought should be done. All that he wanted done was finally accomplished. What chief in history parallels him? For five years no congress held sessions to give him legislative aid; no courts issued decrees nor gave verdicts; his cabinet was limited to a few personal friends and advisors who shared his retirement and adversities; the republic had apparently ceased to exist.

But way beyond the accident and incident of his displacement from executive power, beyond policy, intrigue, compromise and war he saw and patiently waited for the end. Strong of faith and assured of the dissolution of the so-called empire, of the triumph of his principles, of the constitution and of the Republic he listened with stoical indifference to the alarms which discouraged and dispersed many of his followers.

Returned, on the death of Maximilian, to the capital and the undisputed tenure of the Presidency, Juarez was, in time twice reelected to that high office.

Nothing discloses real character like the use of power. Most men can stand adversity but if you wish to know what a man really is give him power. This is the supreme test. It is the glory of that great man that having almost absolute power he never abused it. His administrations were marked by patriotism, personal probity and self-abnegation. His chief ambition was to reconstruct the political affairs of the country and to that work he devoted himself.

With the final constitutional amendments in process which were to place the principles of his decree of emancipation in the fundamental law he retired to rest on the 18th of July, 1872.

In the night he had an attack at the heart and in spite of the sympathy of friends and of the physician's skill, one hour before midnight this grand man exhaled his last breath. His life—his character—fully rounded out in excellent development had reached the meridian—the zenith. It went out like the paling of the morning star in the pure light of the rising sun, or the refulgent glory of a perfect day. In the language of Sr. Mariscal, minister of relations in the cabinet of President Diaz on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Juarez, "Like another Moses he had lead his people out of the house of bondage and across the sandy desert they were fated to traverse. He released them from the serfdom in which they were held by priests and a pernicious class of soldiers. He freed them from those tyrants, from those infatuated Pharaos. He saved them from appalling oppression but after all his weary migrations he was not granted to reach the promised land. He was barely able to see it from afar on his triumphal return to the capital: just as the dying leader and law-giver of the Hebrews caught a glimpse of Palestine from the heights of Mount Nebo."

The patriotism of Juarez was unquestioned and dis-

interested. It embraced all the interests of the state. In the interest of the commonwealth he fought one of the world's greatest battles. The results of the victory which crowned that conflict will enure to the benefit of Mexico for all time. Such revolutions never go backward. In Mexico as in Europe liberty from priestly control will prove to be perpetual.

To select from the many illustrious names which abound on the pages of Mexican history that man whose life and whose character best exhibits the possibilities offered to youth of brain, honesty and industry, even in peculiar Mexico, who in early life was taught firmness and stability by the motionless, snow-capped mountains; quietness and placidity by the lakes within the valleys; patriotism by the sorrows of his despoiled kindred, and ambition by the bright stars shining over his head; the one whose life was a benediction; the one whose name is tenderly enshrined in every heart and lovingly voiced by every tongue; for such a one go to the adobe hut, the home of the lowly Indian, and select the child of poverty and orphanage, the youth of advertity and toil, the student of diligence and promise, the man of virtue and integrity, the champion of law and liberty, the emancipator of his nation from the curse of ecclesiasticism in politics—Benito Pablo Juarez.

In the *Panteon de San Fernando*, in the City of Mexico, I stood by a noble marble mausoleum, the resting place of the LINCOLN OF MEXICO. Upon a dais rests a sarcophagus containing his mortal remains. On the top is his recumbent statue of marble—cold in death; over which a seraphim with over-shadowing wings stoops, and with sad and sorrowful countenance testifies a nation's grief at the mortality of her noblest citizen, the grandest man in whose veins ever coursed pure aboriginal blood.

Well may the people mourn his departure. Well may they cherish his memory. Well may his tomb be a mecca where with daily visit and daily decoration citizens of Mexico testify their love and receive new inspirations of



patriotism. Well may the fallen champion of liberty there rest and abide the verdict of history which will surely make perpetual record of his worth and work—his hard, his successful work of reform. He had carried on his soul a load of care—a mountain of woe, as he witnessed and felt the sorrows of his people, as he contended with priest and soldier, with church and insurgent army. He had experienced the exuberance of joy attendant upon the overthrow of insurgent armies, his return in triumph to the capital and the reorganization of the Republic on principles of liberty, justice and equality. But again had the load of woe been placed upon his soul when Napoleon III. and his European fellow-conspirators against liberty and democracy landed their armies in Mexico, occupied the capital and sent him as a fugitive away from his rightful executive jurisdiction. For five years he wandered—a president unseated. But his abiding faith in his mission sustained him. With dignity he worked and waited. Never in all the ages was there more dauntless courage, more stubborn will or clearer political perceptions. Nothing in all American history or biography compares with it. He was a man with a single purpose using his unsurpassed opportunities. Mexico alone could have produced such a man or offered such grand opportunities. No statesman ever dictated more successfully affairs of State. Nor Cromwell, nor Washington, nor Lincoln paralleled him in hazardous, perilous issues nor surpassed him in glorious beneficent achievements.

Shall we call it divine retribution? Shall it be regarded as testimony to the truth of the maxim "The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small?" The church was defeated, the foreign armies departed ingloriously, the Austrian was executed, Juarez returned to and retained the presidency to the day of his death; theocracy gave place to democracy and the Republic of Mexico is established. The imperious Spaniard was finally out-classed and over-mastered, and his methods overthrown by the Indian of his abhorrence and detestation. Mexico is regenerated and has assurance of a bright and glorious

future freed from the *Spain-cursed* past. So mote it be. So will it be in Cuba.

Let it not be said that this man and his works are unduly extolled. He revolutionized a nation and changed its basic principle of government. He gave his people liberty, equality and education. He defeated armies and political powers, domestic and foreign, including Pope Pius IX., who vainly launched anathemas, issued canon laws and sent a *nuncio* as his representative to give orders, point out lines of action and fix on objective points. For a quarter of a century the Vatican maintained opposition to the reforms established and only in 1897 did it surrender to defeat and fall into line.

It seemed to be the will of God that the very idea of slavery should be obliterated in American history and that Lincoln should be his agent to effect that gracious and righteous achievement. So it seemed to be the will of God that the priest should cease as a dominant power in the political life and history of Mexico and that Juarez and Diaz were designated as his agents to consummate that beneficent end; witness this from the "Associated Press:"

"President Diaz Triumphs. The Papal legate orders Catholics to obey the Reform Laws in Mexico.

"MONTEREY, Mexico, January 16th, 1897.—Ever since the enactment of laws in Mexico regulating the Catholic church the ecclesiastical officials have opposed enforcement. Six months ago Archbishop Averfidi was sent to Mexico to investigate and now he has issued instructions that the laws must be strictly obeyed and that the church must support the Diaz administration."

"The old order changeth yielding place to new.  
And God fulfills himself in many ways."

Possibly, however, it is but the adoption of the policy of an eminent Hibernian business man and *whilom* politician, in a prosperous western city, (now deceased) when in speaking of active and uncontrollable oppositions he would say, "If you can't beat 'em, jine em."



With the fall of Maximilian and his empire the church party also fell, and though Juarez did not live to see the regeneration of the country in all its fulness it came in due time. Processes had been commenced in his life which were completed by Lerdo, his immediate successor, and the reforms foreshadowed in his decree of emancipation were enacted into the constitution in 1873.

By those amendments there is an absolute separation of church and state, congress is prohibited to make laws establishing or forbidding any religion. Matrimony is made to be a civil contract. The church can neither acquire or own real estate. A simple promise to speak the truth or perform official duties is substituted for a formal religious oath. All religious societies are prohibited, and all who had made obligations of service to such orders were absolved from fulfillment.

The church had allied itself with royalty, with Iturbide, with centralism, with Santa Anna, with Zuloaga, with Miramon and finally with the French invaders and the empire of Maximilian in its determined and sanguinary efforts to maintain control of the government and the wealth of the country. Each and every one of them had failed and in the re-action the church and clergy have lost rights and privileges in Mexico which they have in other countries.

The suppression of religious orders is not in the line of persecution, but is the exercise of wise political precautions, for from within their secret councils came intrigues, conspiracies and revolutions.

Juarez rescued the Mexican nation from the incubus of Spanish theocracy and behold what a quarter of a century has produced. "In the space of five *lustres* Mexico has been transformed. At death Juarez left behind him an impoverished country, whose broad expanse was continuously wasted by the torch of war; a country whose boast of wealth seemed like a cruel irony, without money at home, and credit, nay even hope of credit abroad; whose foreign trade was insignificant; whose agriculture and manufactures were

in the rudimentary stage; where even the mining industry was restricted and which had just enough railway mileage to enable its inhabitants to say they knew what a railroad was." (Mariscal.)

Today Mexico is a grand country, with a grander future assured. With a disadvantageous financial system, based on silver alone, her wisely conducted revenues are sufficient to keep her bonds at par, and above it, in Europe. Her railway system amounts to twelve thousand kilometers—say seven thousand four hundred miles. These with canals and a complete telegraph system, facilitate business and research. Development of material resources offers field for safe and profitable investment. The revolutionist and bandit have passed, giving security to commercial enterprise and travel. Asylums, sanitariums and hospitals take the place of imposing and costly church structures, show and parade. Free schools, with compulsory attendance, wherein no priest can direct or teach, are preparing her on-coming citizens for an intelligent exercise of the elective franchise.

In 1866 only about 16,000 Mestizos and half that number of Indians attended public schools, in 1876 the numbers were respectively 129,000 and 74,000, and in 1891 235,000 and 170,005, while the per cent. of increase continues annually. The decrease of crime has been almost in direct ratio to the progress in education. Grave offences are few in number and becoming fewer every day.

Mexico stands today, not the peer, but the superior of the United States in the matter of the enforcement of criminal statutes. She has no jury system and thus avoids that very abominable possibility for corrupt control of the methods and ends of justice. Neither, wealth, family or political influence, nor official positions can thwart justice by the interminable delays, changes of venue, new trials, continuances, stays of execution, and questionable decisions that obtain in some of the United States; establishing the conviction that the laws and the processes of justice—in

their easy perversion—give protection to criminals, specially when money is at the command of the offender.

In this administration of prompt justice and in the matter of protest against clerical meddling in civil, political and educational affairs that much unknown and misinterpreted nation stands as an example to all the world beside.

Whoever may truthfully be the Washington of Mexico, whether Hidalgo or Iturbide, it must be conceded that Juarez well represents Lincoln, while for our most capable and successful soldier and able statesman, Ulysses S. Grant, none can compete as the parallel but Porfirio Diaz, the present chief magistrate of Mexico. Like Grant, he fought his country's battles upon field after field with unswerving loyalty to constitution and president, refusing a very seductive offer from Bazaine of place, which promised promotion to imperial rank and power, as Maximilian's star was becoming obscured and Napoleon III. wished to substitute a Mexican for the Austrian on the throne. Like Grant, Diaz, by choice of his fellow-citizens was exalted to the presidency. For more than twenty years he has shaped the laws and policies of the republic and guided it to an established domestic and foreign credit.

Grant administered affairs of state on principles and by processes established in the years of American history and experience. He filled the office of president with credit but left no special evidence of his administrations in the form of new and valuable principles or statutes.

Diaz and his administrations will be perpetually impressed upon Mexican history by reason of new laws, new methods and new and valuable principles originated, developed and established by him. Much that Juarez left unfinished Diaz has completed in the letter and spirit of reform. Where Juarez laid down the work Diaz took it up, uniting in a common brotherhood all classes of the nation and initiating the grand intellectual evolution which recent years have witnessed and which demonstrates the superiority of a Republic to a theocracy as a basic principle of government. Public improvements have been judiciously

prosecuted. Business successfully encouraged. Education sustained and forwarded. Laws revised, codified and enacted in the interest of justice and equity. Courts of inferior and superior jurisdiction created. The police rendered efficient in country as well as municipality and the army so commanded as to secure peace and freedom from revolution. A wise surveillance is exercised over the entire country, aided by daily telegrams which enables the president to keep his hand on the public pulse at all times. The bandit, the revolutionist and the ecclesiastical fanatic are controlled in the interest of peace, prosperity, stability, religious liberty and political education.

It may truthfully be asserted that no national presiding officer in the world, whatever the title may be, has better adaptation to his work, nor has been more successful as the benefactor of his people than Porfirio Diaz, president of the Republic of Mexico.

Moreover Diaz is the ally of the United States in maintaining the principles of the Monroe Doctrine; going further, it is said, and insisted that European holdings in the Western Continent shall eventually cease. His friendship for this country is fully manifested at this time by his suppressing sympathy and aid, from Spaniards in Mexico, for Spain.

After Diaz what? This momentous question confronts the statesmen and patriots of Mexico. The standing enemy of REFORM is the church, the clergy. No other party has or has had principles or plans in opposition. To meet and counteract this ever-existing menace to liberty of conscience, education and progress it has pleased patriots of Mexico to organize "SOCIETIES OF THE REFORM" throughout the entire country, whose object and intention is to keep ecclesiasticism out of political and state affairs including education.

Those having authority and control have appointed three hundred and sixty-five *decoration* days for each year. Daily a society or its representatives with appropriate ceremonies makes visit and floral bestowment to the tombs of

the Reformers. This is to popularize and perpetuate the era and principles of "LA REFORMA" and is also intended to prevent any tendency to ecclesiastical reaction.

It pleased the Pontiff of Rome, in 1840, to send an ablegate to Mexico. His coming having been heralded there was a wonderful demonstration of welcome. All Mexico rose up to do him honor. In 1896 the same venerable potentate, in the person of Leo XIII., sent Archbishop Averfidi in the same office and duty as ablegate. Notwithstanding the heralding of his coming only one priest and one representative of the press met him at the station to do him honor and give him early welcome.

That he might publicly make known his mission a pavillion of six thousand seating capacity was scenred. There, before a full house the ablegate discoursed upon the antiquity of the HOLY SEE *its divine authority as RULER OF THE WORLD*, the intense love of the Holy Father Leo XIII. toward his people of all nations and specially towards Mexicans. He in official capacity earnestly entreated them to resume their fealty as of yore. A distinguished Mexican orator on behalf of the officials of the Republic and the people replied, substantially, that they desired no closer relation to the Vatican than that sustained at the time. He bade the Archbishop to look upon the Mexico of to-day under the auspices of the Republic and then compare it with the Mexico of Theocratic rule. He alleged that no classes had suffered loss by the change but priests and tax-gatherers, while the whole people otherwise had been beneficiaries of the reform.

He then and there informed the distinguished agent of the Pope that if priests were in demand by the holy father for work elsewhere Mexico could and cheerfully would spare an army of them for such foreign service.

These evidences of individual resolve, of policies, of sentiment and good sense answer the query, "After Diaz what?"

Mexican history never can repeat itself. It arose like a flood and swept away custom, tradition, superstition and ecclesiastical politician like a tidal wave. But the turbulent

tide of events has left a smooth, calm sea upon which the ship of state sails on majestically bearing a precious freight of liberty, development and prosperity—and no priest can stand at the helm.

If the Mexican people have not attained to all possible heights of education, and to all degrees of development they yet, under their democratic form of government, have the right and privilege to advance, unburdened by priestly restrictions and relieved of the inexorable rapacity of the tax collector—coparcener with ecclesiasticism—which had so long a rule under the theocracy. The people are surely, even if slowly, moving toward higher planes of individual and national attainment by the paths of education, self-assertion and intelligent patriotism. They advance and do not retrograde.

With a retrospect of the closing century it seems indisputable that among progressive nations Mexico has made the greatest advances in reform and development; while among the great number of eminent men who have impressed themselves upon the records as humanitarians, reformers, educators and statesmen, Benito Pablo Juarez and Porfirio Diaz rank all, who by *initiating* and *effecting* reforms have made glorious and illustrious this NINETEENTH CENTURY OF CHRIST.

THE END.





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