

ARTICLE IV.

THE SPANIARD PAST AND PRESENT: A CONTRAST.

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HE who at any time may chance to feel himself prompted to indulge the spirit of undue hilarity cannot do better than to take a dip into the history of Spain. It will restore him to a condition of mental sobriety, if not of seriousness. I know of no other accessible record that is so permeated and saturated with matter fitted to fill the mind with gloom, and with contempt for the human race. Hardly anywhere does there appear an occasional gleam of light in the outer darkness. Yet the Spanish people of to-day are a light-hearted, even frivolous, folk. Their polite literature exhibits a spirit of gayety that is surprising when we consider the conditions amid which some of it arose. It was in the reign of the most truculent, if not the most inefficient, king, that the most widely read of all books of humor was written. Could there be a more glaring contrast between literature and life? Did we not know the painful inconsistencies of human nature we should not ask, How can these things be? We should declare that they could not be. There must always have been a painful lack of human feeling in a country where crowds were wont to assemble to witness *autos de fe*, whether the victims were one or scores, as they did in other countries at harmless merry-makings. Yet in his way the modern Spaniard is kindly and sympathetic to strangers no less than to his own. Doubtless we fail to discriminate wisely between different forms of cru-

elty, but we can hardly help feeling that a Spanish bullfight is the most heartless form of barbarity on a large scale to be witnessed in modern times. But to the Spanish people almost without exception it is the most enjoyable diversion that can be brought before them. Whatever may be its origin, it is essentially a Spanish pastime, and for it the Spaniard stands condemned before the civilized world. It is so essentially a characteristic of modern Spain that any account of the land which does not devote considerable space to it is defective.

Bacon affirmed that only those nations which have an effective military organization can expect to have greatness fall into their laps, and that of Christian Europe only the Spaniard had such an organization. This may, in a sense, be true; but it is equally true that greatness so achieved is sure to be ephemeral, unless it is followed up by an effective civil administration. Aristotle reasoned more wisely. He maintains that a state organized on a military basis is sure to degenerate when there is no war. As wars cannot be continuous, disintegration is inevitable. Decay is almost equally certain, even if wars are virtually incessant, as is proved by the example of Sparta, of Turkey, and of Spain. War produces nothing and consumes much. It is always plunder and robbery to a greater or less degree; or, at least, has been so until comparatively recent times. In so far as it seems to enrich one of the belligerents it impoverishes the other. An occasional war may be an unavoidable evil; but continuous wars on a comparatively large scale are a perennial curse. Happily the nations of the earth are beginning to learn the lesson that has long been patent to those who think. In spite of her many wars, England has never been a military state, has never been organized for war; yet no country has grown like England. No people has done so much for progress as those whose native language is English. Yet the peo-

ple of Great Britain are often sneered at by their continental neighbors for being a nation of hucksters and shopkeepers,—as if it were better to destroy than to produce!

The visitor to Spain will find a considerable number of natives who are thoroughly enlightened, and fully alive to the painful deficiencies to be met with everywhere. With the exception of the northeast, where the people are more French than Spanish, and the northwest, where there are many evidences of English enterprise, the entire peninsula wears a decidedly medieval or even ancient aspect. A modern veneer has been spread over the country, chiefly by foreigners,—a little thicker in some sections than in others,—but the average Spaniard has hardly been touched. No doubt within certain limits—and they are narrow enough—he is a reasonable being; but his ignorance is so dense that his reason has little influence upon his conduct. He is such a bundle of prejudices, of habits that have been confirmed by ages of indulgence; he is so thoroughly enamored of himself, so thoroughly averse to physical and mental exertion, that the rational faculty hardly plays the rôle of a tritagonist in his daily affairs. There is nothing that he fears so much as innovation; there is nothing that he dreads so much as change; there is no being that he so thoroughly despises as the man who has the effrontery to suggest that there may be a better and more expeditious way of doing things than those to which his ancestors have been accustomed from time immemorial.

This fanatical attachment to an idea which had once taken hold of him, no matter how it came about, is the most salient characteristic of the Spaniard as history knows him. Not the shadow of a doubt seems ever to have entered the mind of a *conquistador* as to his clear title to all the lands he could subdue in the New World. Was he not a good Christian, the best

Christian on the face of the earth,—as he still is,—and had not the Pope, the overlord of Christendom, given him the lands of the heathen? The same blind zeal that made him the foremost champion of orthodoxy in the Old World also led him to dash himself to pieces against the advancing columns of progress. There is no country of Europe even at this late day where dissent is so utterly incomprehensible to the vast majority of the people. No matter who or what you are, or what you have done; so long as you are a good Catholic, there is hope for you. But if you have lapsed you are lost beyond redemption. As Christian and Catholic are synonymous, when you have ceased to be the latter, you are no longer the former, and no better than a beast. One often hears it urged that there is no harm in killing bulls in the arena because they are not Christians.

As the soil of the New World belonged to the Spanish crown by virtue of the papal donative, it was absolute master thereof. This mastery was used in the most heartless manner. The Spaniard did not care to identify himself with the new possessions; besides there was no superfluity of population at home. Those who were willing to labor with their hands could find enough to do without going over-sea. There is good reason to believe that not more than fifteen thousand Spaniards were in the New World by the middle of the sixteenth century.

It can hardly be charged against the conquerors that they systematically exterminated the natives. The fact that in the present population of Spanish America the native element so largely predominates, is evidence that the government must have protected it. The case was different in the West Indies. There the native races had disappeared within half a century after their discovery by the whites. The political organization

was constructed entirely in the interest of the mother-country. In the nature of the case the church was especially favored. Splendid and imposing ecclesiastical edifices were erected, and at least one university was founded (Lima) as early as 1550. But the same policy prevailed as long as there was an acre of American soil under Spanish dominion,—to exploit the new country to the fullest extent in the interest of the old. All persons except Spaniards that tried to secure any of the trade were regarded as pirates, and, if captured, treated as such. Most of the enormous profits accrued directly or indirectly to the crown. As production was limited both in quantity and kind to the wants of the over-sea colonies, the price of commodities was kept at the highest figures. By means of the Inquisition and the censorship of the press, thought and publication were kept within very narrow limits. The intellectual life of the New World was, if possible, feebler than that of the Old. What amount of revenue the American colonies contributed to the royal exchequer can only be approximately estimated. Authorities differ somewhat widely. Motley thinks that Spain received from Mexico during the reign of Philip II. nearly three million dollars annually. This is probably a moderate estimate. For purposes of comparison it may be added, that, according to Gardiner, the public expenditures under James I. during years of peace amounted to four hundred thousand pounds.

The amount of money lavished on the "Armada," which was well nigh a total loss, was almost fabulous when we take into account the purchasing power of bullion four centuries ago. From a period even anterior to this event, Spain's losses from decade to decade exceeded her gains, and ere long the country had reached the lowest depths of poverty. At the death of Philip II. the population of the country is supposed to have

been about eight and a half millions. By the beginning of the eighteenth century it had shrunk to hardly six millions. Many villages were deserted and long stretches of country lay uncultivated. With the reign of Philip IV. some improvement in internal affairs began to be manifest, though the latter part of his reign was unfortunate: the lust of conquest, that had long lain dormant, showed signs of revival. His two successors were on the whole the best kings Spain ever had. On the death of Charles III., in 1788, the population had increased to more than ten millions. However, the closing years of the century were again unfortunate. The public debt increased enormously, corruption was rampant, and genuine patriotism an object of bitter persecution.

Under Philip II., Spain possessed the outlying lands of Portugal, Naples, Milan, France-Comte, and Flanders. It held sway over the greater part of what is now called Spanish-America, and a considerable portion of the United States. It occupied a line of important settlements in Africa, India, and Malaysia; or, as Motley puts it, "From Borneo to California the great ocean was but a Spanish lake." How many Spaniards there were at that time no one knows. It is not much easier to answer the question at the present time. Let us examine the conditions of the problem. According to the latest guesses, or to give it a more dignified name the latest estimates, the population of the Spanish-American mainland is some thirty-eight millions. Adding that of the islands, we get about forty millions for the Western world. How many of these people are Spaniards by descent, or, if they are not, how many speak Spanish as their native tongue, nobody knows, and nobody pretends to know. Of Mexicans, less than one-fifth are Spanish by ancestry; while in some other states the proportion is much less. Of the Peruvians, more than sixty per cent

are Indians. If we put the number of persons in the New World who, because of their speech, may be called Spanish, at twenty millions, the estimate is very liberal. The number of actual Spaniards in the mother-country is less than eighteen millions. The Spanish-speaking population of the world, therefore, falls below thirty-eight millions.

These figures, however, tell us very little. A people or a race may be numerically strong, and yet represent a very small intellectual or moral force. Such is the case here. Of these thirty-eight millions, more than four-fifths are wholly illiterate, while less than half of the remainder can be said to be fairly well educated. The conditions are better in Mexico and some of the South American states than in the Iberian peninsula; but, taking the general average for the Spanish-speaking people, the estimate is not too low. It stands to reason that intelligent Spaniards are painfully aware of the wretched state of the country. From a book entitled "Education in the Twentieth Century," published in Madrid, I take the following passage: "In foreign countries no one pays any attention to us; we exist as if we did not exist. No important publication has anything to say about education in Spain. No statistician takes note of us or mentions our name. Now and then a French publicist devotes to us a brief article in which he either treats us with a certain consideration, whereupon we reproduce it and think it over; or he treats us with contempt which we do not resent." Alas, how have the mighty fallen! Similar in tone are two works of great excellence by Professor Altamira, of the University of Oviedo, "The Teaching of History" and "The Psychology of the Spanish People." But to preach by means of the printed page to those who cannot read is about as profitable as to preach with the living voice to those who cannot hear nor understand the language of the speaker.

Professor Fouilleé, in his book "The Psychology of the French People," expresses himself as follows upon the relative importance of some of the European languages: "Formerly French was spoken by twenty-seven per cent of the people of Europe. To-day it is spoken by forty-six million individuals, whereas a hundred millions speak German; one hundred and fifteen millions speak English, while one hundred and forty millions use English as their official language. Commerce is chiefly carried on by persons who speak the same language; it is therefore to be regretted that the number of men who speak French is decreasing. Besides, the influence of France cannot but suffer by it." M. Fouilleé's estimate of the German is probably too high. Let us see how the case stands for the English. The population of Great Britain and Ireland is about forty millions. Of this number, there are probably not more than a million who do not speak English as a vernacular. The number of individuals in Canada who do not speak English, or who speak it imperfectly, is about a million. The English population of Australasia is six or seven millions, that of Africa not far from four millions; or let us be conservative, and assume that there are ten million individuals in Asia, Africa, and Oceanica whose mother-speech is English, or who speak the language with the ease of a native. By the census of 1900 the total population of the United States was seventy-six millions. Among these there were some millions who could not speak English. But it is probable that the increase during the last four or five years will about cancel the speech of these foreigners, so that we may safely place the present English-speaking population at seventy-five millions. If, therefore, we put the aggregate of those persons on the face of the globe whose native speech is English, or who, if bilingual, speak this language fluently, at rather more than

one hundred and thirty millions, our estimate is not excessive. Perhaps four or five millions added to this total is nearer the truth.¹

If we would form an adequate idea of the rapid spread of the English-speaking population of the globe, we need to remember that in the middle of the eighteenth century there were not more than ten millions of Englishmen on the face of the earth. The overmastering power of the English language is almost marvelous. This is particularly noticeable in the United States. It is not uncommon to come across parents who speak a foreign tongue only, while their children, or at least the younger ones, speak only English with any degree of ease. In some localities in the New World the Germans are making strenuous efforts to retain their mother-tongue; but their success has not generally been great, except in such countries as Brazil, where the native literature is of very inferior quality. The public schools are probably more responsible for this rapid transformation than is any other cause.

That the English have thus far been the only successful colonists is a patent fact. But there is one feature of their colonization schemes that is often overlooked. Speaking broadly, English political institutions are founded on the doctrine that one man is as good as another. This is the theory; it is not the practice now, and never has been. The home government

¹ The sixth edition of Meyer's "Konversations Lexicon," which is now in process of publication, places the number of English-speaking persons at one hundred and twenty-five millions, and adds that this language has the fairest prospect of becoming the general medium of communication among the nations of the earth. The writer of the article estimates the number of Englishmen in the time of Queen Elizabeth at five millions. He also puts the number of persons whose speech is German at eighty-eight millions, including the Dutch; exclusive of the latter, at rather less than eighty millions.

did not accord the same political privileges to the North American colonies that its own citizens possessed. Its colonies are still treated in much the same way. In some parts of the world the government is distinctly autocratic. This is not saying that it is not the best under the circumstances. The signers of the Declaration of Independence affirmed it to be a self-evident truth, that all men are created free and equal. Though it was self-evident, they did not see it. What they understood by freedom and equality becomes clear when we remember that many of them were slaveholders. They did not even mean equality before the law. The fact of the matter is, they did not themselves clearly apprehend what they meant; but they were more or less under the influence of the spirit of the age,—a spirit that found such vigorous expression in France a few years later. Besides, men's aspirations and ideals are often ahead of their practice, sometimes very far ahead. After the war between the States, when Congress resolutely determined to put this dogma into effect in the reconstructed South, chaos was the result. All efforts in this direction were futile. The black man in the Southern States is not, as is often asserted, worse off than before the war; but he is worse off than he would have been had the North never tried to make him the social equal of the white man. It assumed the rôle of preaching to others what it did not, and does not now, practise.

In the Philippines we see a partial repetition of the same thing. The natives, though not "niggers," are by many Americans regarded as such, and treated as such,—are held to be intrinsically inferior, and despised accordingly. There is in the United States a considerable mixed population, the offspring of irregular cohabitation of white men with black women; but intermarriage is rare, and in some States unlawful.

It is just as certain as anything impossible of mathematical demonstration that the Anglo-Saxon will never amalgamate with an inferior race. Without saying much about what he purposes to do, he makes himself the master wherever he goes to stay. Such is the hard logic of facts, if it is not the logic of enlightened humanity. I would not affirm, however, that this is of necessity a condition of things to be deplored. A father may be just to his children, yet be a stern governor. It is essential only that he rightly apprehend the relation between parent and offspring; that he be careful lest his legal right degenerate into tyranny. Testimony is abundant to the effect that the wisest course a conquering nation can pursue toward a subject race is to accord to it practical justice, equality before the law. This does not necessarily mean equality with the conquerors, but equality among themselves. Roman justice was far different from modern justice; yet for its time it was the best in the world. *Pax Romana* meant peace and quiet. It did not protect the subject from systematic plunder by Roman officials; it did protect him against the irregular depredations of those who robbed him when they felt strong enough to do so with impunity. We must not judge other times and other manners by our own feelings. We are prone to make the mistake of judging our cotemporaries by the same misleading standard.

When we see, for example, what the English have accomplished in Egypt and in the Straits Settlement, we must admit that, in seeking her own advantage, she has very greatly promoted the well-being of the natives. In his recent book on South Africa, Lionel Declé, a Frenchman, affirms that during his three years' travel in that part of the world the only foreigners he met with who seemed to be really solicitous for the welfare of the aborigines were the English, and that they are

the only foreigners against whom the natives do not cherish a strong aversion. Possibly the experiment now in progress in the Philippines may result in qualifying the natives for self-government. Thus far it has not reached a promising stage, and the outlook can hardly be called encouraging. That the natives would, by a large majority, prefer the rule of Spain to that of the United States seems certain. They may eventually think otherwise or they may not. That the English language is already far more generally understood throughout the entire archipelago than the Spanish after three centuries of propaganda is generally admitted.

The policy of the Spaniard in the New World was in the main the exact opposite of the Anglo-Saxon, though nobody now maintains that the latter always acted wisely. Theoretically it was more humane. The natives were not exterminated. From the first the Spaniards cohabited with their women to such an extent that the mixed population soon exceeded the pure Spanish. Perhaps this unconscious and unintentional experiment in race-mixture may eventually produce an improvement on the original stock of both ancestors. Diaz, who has done so much for Mexico, is generally held to be only part Spanish. Unfortunately for this theory, these Spanish-American countries where the admixture is least are the most prosperous and the most progressive. The government has discretion enough to follow the example of the more enlightened nations of both hemispheres. Some of them are certainly succeeding much better than the mother-country.

It is a curious and yet not inexplicable fact in the history of Spain that the Renaissance, strictly speaking, produced no impression upon that country. It is true Professor Voight, in his "*Wiederbelebung des classischen Altertums*," suggests, as a possible reason why such faint traces of this awakening have

thus far been discovered, the lack of printed material bearing upon this period. Yet he admits that Petrarch's writings were unknown in the Peninsula, and that it was not until the time of Poggio that some faint traces are discernible beyond the Pyrenees. The era of humanism was essentially a revival of paganism. That it would meet with small encouragement among a people the zeal of whose grandees had for years been kept up to the highest pitch of enthusiasm in defending the Christian faith against the infidels is but natural. Yet there was a sort of awakening even in Spain. As early as 1474 a printing-press was erected. By the year 1500 there were at least thirty presses in the country. The noted Greek scholar Barbosa, a native of Portugal, became a professor in Salamanca in 1489. The names of some ladies of noble birth have been preserved who assiduously studied both Greek and Latin. The well-known "*Complutensis*," a remarkable work for its day, was finished in 1517, and printed in Alcala a few years later. Four additional universities—Alcala, Seville, Toledo, and Granada—were founded between 1507 and 1531. But in 1502 the censorship of the press was introduced, which, owing to its connection with the Inquisition, completely crushed the spirit of free inquiry.

It is remarkable how early in the history of modern times we find the Spaniard branded with infamy. "The people of our own race—such men, for example, as Drake and Cavendish, and afterward such men as Essex and Hawkins and Raleigh and Sydney—regarded Spaniard as only another name for *child of hell* and the living Spaniard as the visible ally of the devil. In their fierce warfare with him—in such fighting as is so graphically and vigorously described in Tennyson's ballad of 'The Revenge,' a deep religious horror of the author of lies and his children gives dignity and strength to an Eng-

lishman's loyalty to his nation, his sovereign, and his neighbor." These Englishmen were certainly not oversensitive, were themselves at times guilty of acts of cruelty that admit of little palliation, chivalrous as most of them were. What then must have been the character of the men who could inspire these rough and ready fighters by land and sea with such profound loathing! The English were often coarse, even brutal; but they were frank, open-hearted, straightforward, and plain-spoken; the Spaniards were the opposite of all this.

The Inquisition was a terrible curse to Spain. The first Inquisitor-General, Torquemada, during his incumbency burned about two thousand persons, and sentenced a much larger number, who had gone into exile, to death. The havoc wrought and the terror excited by this sanguinary tribunal may be inferred from the record that between the end of the fifteenth century and the end of the eighteenth century fully thirty thousand persons perished at the stake, while nearly three hundred thousand were punished with imprisonment, the galleys, confiscation of property, or infamy of the entire family of the suspected person. It is easy to see how under such conditions all free thought would be extinguished in the germ. If ever there was a hell upon earth it might be found in Spain several times during the last four centuries.

Yet the Inquisition was not the only enemy of progress. In the words of the late Emilio Castelar: "Never has the world known so ruthless a king as Ferdinand VII. Fifteen thousand Spaniards expatriated in 1814, twenty thousand in 1823, six thousand sacrificed to his vengeance on the scaffold, two hundred and fifty thousand dead on the field of battle through his blunders." Yet this is only a part of the frightful record that damns him to eternal infamy. Spain has been unfortunate, not because her rulers were intrinsically worse than

those of other countries; not because the Roman Catholic hierarchy got a firmer hold in the country than elsewhere; nor because her people were more ignorant than in other parts of Europe: these are but symptoms; the disease lies deeper. The Spanish people have from time immemorial lacked civic virtue; they have lacked true patriotism; they have lacked the courage to maintain their rights: at bottom the Spanish character is responsible for all of Spain's woes. The Spaniard has never regarded life with sufficient seriousness, and so has always been more willing to endure the miseries he had than to make a resolute and persistent effort to get rid of them. On the whole, the modern Spaniard means well, but he has not the persistence that is essential to doing well. It is probable that there will be a slow and gradual amelioration of conditions, but there is little doubt that for many decades to come Spain will be far behind the rest of enlightened Europe. Greece was in a comatose condition for more than a millennium and a half, yet woke up at last. The same may be said of China, but China too is beginning to bestir herself as never before.

“The primacy of Spain meant a century of blight: it meant the rank flowering of the Inquisition and the organization of Jesuitry by Spaniards, the Spanish attempt to crush out forever the ideals of liberty, the perpetration by Spanish generals and rulers of uncounted atrocities in Europe and America, the establishment by Spaniards in America of the most corrupt and cruel of modern colonial systems, and the degradation of the Spaniards themselves into merciless fanatics, court puppets, and cloddish peasants. The frightful potency of immense wealth to brutalize was never shown more clearly than in the case of the Spanish *grandees* on whom were showered the riches of Mexico and Peru, of the East Indies

and the West. Can it be said of any other nation which held the ascendant that it added nothing in science, in invention, in manners, in politics, in philosophy, or in religion, to human progress? What the Turk was among Asiatics, such was the Spaniard among Europeans. Ferdinand, Charles, Philip,—these the monarchs of Imperial Spain; Torquemada, Loyola Alba,—these are the incarnation of the Spanish character at prime. In return for the check she dealt to human progress, and for the incomputable sum of injustice, ignorance, misery, and pain charged against her, Spain has given the world one humorist, one dramatist, and one painter—the products of her decline.”

With these words W. R. Thayer, in his “History of Venice,” succinctly sets forth the part Spain has played in the history of modern times, and the sum of her achievements. The items on the debtor side of her national ledger so far exceed the credits, that we may well ask whether the account can ever be balanced. The answer can hardly be otherwise than in the negative. There is a sense in which her rulers may be said to have committed the unpardonable sin; and here, if anywhere, is it true that the iniquities of the fathers are visited upon the children, not only unto the third and the fourth generation, but unto all time.