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William Walton

Excerpt

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PRESENT STATE  
OF THE  
*SPANISH COLONIES.*

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CHAPTER XV.

DIVISION OF TERRITORY.—ECCLESIASTICAL GOVERNMENT AND REVENUES.—MISSIONARIES.—JESUITS.—THEIR INFLUENCE OVER THE INDIANS.—LOYALTY OF THE INDIANS.

**I**N our treatises of geography we are taught to divide the dominions of the Spaniards in North and South America, in the following way :

East and West Florida, extending from 80 to 91 degrees of W. longitude, and 25 to 32 N. latitude. It confines with the state of Georgia to the N., the great river Mississippi to the W., the gulf of Mexico to the S. and the Bahama Straits to the E.

New and Old Mexico, including California,

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the first extending from 94 to 126 degrees W. longitude, and 23 to 43 N. latitude, bounded by immense unknown deserts on the N., Louisiana on the E., and Old Mexico and the Pacific Ocean on the S. and W. Old Mexico stands in from 83 to 110 degrees W. longitude, and extends from 8 to 30 N. latitude, and is bounded by the Pacific Ocean on the South West, and New Mexico or Grenada on the N.

The above are the divisions considered as belonging to Spain in North America ; and those situated on the other side of the gulph of Darien running S. to the equinoctial line, constitute the dominions of the Spaniards in South America.

The first division is what we call Terra Firma, the Spaniards Castilla del Oro, and the French La Partie Orientale de la Terre Ferme. It is situated from 60 to 82 degrees W. longitude, and extends from the equator to 12 degrees N. latitude. Peru stands in from 60 to 81 W. longitude, and from the equator to 25 degrees S. latitude ; Chili from 65 to 85 W. longitude, and 25 to 45 S. latitude. Paraguay, or La Plata, from 50 to 75 degrees W. longitude, and 12 to 27 S. latitude.

The subdivisions of these regions are numerous, and the boundaries to particularize them

would be prolix and diffuse. The southern division from the equator extending to 55 degrees, added to the northern division, both on a proportional width of from 30 to 80 degrees, thus form a continent far superior to any other division of the globe; but Paraguay, or La Plata, is the largest subdivision, and is thought to contain 1,000,000 square miles, to which, however, the Brazils of the Portugueze, are of nearly equal extent.

The possessions of Spain in America are divided into four viceroyalties, viz. Mexico, Peru, Buenos Ayres, and Santa Fé. Besides these, there are six captain-generalships, viz. Caracas, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Guatimala, Chili, and the Philippine Islands in Asia, with respective governors in Hispaniola and the Floridas.

In this extent of dominion there are at present seven archbishops, and thirty suffragan bishops, on the ecclesiastical list. The whole of these are nominated and confirmed by the pope, but first proposed and elected by the king; the curates are chosen to the different parishes by the respective governors, on the recommendation of the archbishop or bishop at the head of the diocese. Thus, in some measure, is the authority of the pope indirect, as it extends only to the bulls he gives, and to the points of conscience that create doubts.

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The episcopal sees are principally supported by tythes ; and the revenues vary according to the size and productions of the districts, some of which are extremely rich, and their establishments splendid. The secular clergy have also an allowance from the tythes ; but their chief emoluments arise from pious donations, lodged in the right of the church, which have accumulated, and of which they receive the rents. They have, moreover, the perquisites common in other countries, and receive frequent presents from their respective flocks.

That the reader may form a better idea of the ecclesiastical authority in America, we will give a short detail of the archbishopricks and bishopricks, which may serve also as a collateral illustration of its history and revenues.

The archbishop of Los Reyes, the metropolitan see of Peru, has an annual income of 30,000 dollars, but the following statements of his suffragan bishops will shew how unequally the revenues are distributed.

*Dollars.*

The bishop of Arequipa receives

annually. . . . .	16,000
Truxillo. . . . .	14,000
St. Francisco de Quito. . . . .	18,000
The old Town of Cusco. . . . .	24,000

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The bishop of St. John's de la Victoria. . .	8,000
Panama . . . . .	6,000
Chili . . . . .	5,000
Nuestra Seuora de Chili. . .	40,000

The archbishop of Santa Fe de Bagota, in the kingdom of New Granada, is estimated to receive 14,000 dollars.

*Dollars.*

The bishop of Popaya . . . . .	5,000
Carthagená . . . . .	6,000
Santa Maria . . . . .	18,000

The archbishop of La Plata, in the province of Charcas, is estimated to receive, per annum, the amount of 60,000 crowns; the archdeacon 5,000; the master of the choir-children, the chanter, and treasurer, each 4,000; six canons each 3,000; and of six other dignitaries attached to the same see, the annual pay is valued at 1,800 crowns each.

The archbishop of La Plata has the suffragan bishops of Tay, Tucuman, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Paraguay, Buenos Ayres, and Rio de la Plata, who have from six to ten thousand dollars annual income.

The archbishoprick of St. Jago, in the province of Tucuman, is worth 6,000 crowns, and the bishoprick of St. Laurence de las Barancas, 12,000.

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The bishoprick of Paraguay may be estimated at 18,000 dollars, and that of La Santa Trinidad at 15,000.

The archbishoprick of Mexico is only stated at 20,000 rials, but the perquisites reach to many times that value, whilst the bishoprick of Los Angeles is quoted at 50,000 rials.

*Dollars.*

The bishoprick of Mechoacan is valued	
at . . . . .	14,000
Antequera . . . . .	7,000
Camayagua, capital of	
Honduras . . . . .	3,000
Guadalaxara, in New	
Gallicia . . . . .	7,000
Durango . . . . .	4,000
Merida, capital of Yu-	
catan . . . . .	8,000
St. Jago, in the province	
of Guatemala . . . . .	8,000
St. Jago de Leon . . . . .	3,000
Chiapa . . . . .	5,000
Santa Anna de Coro . .	8,000
Puerto Rico . . . . .	8,000

The archbishop of St. Jago, in Cuba, has a revenue of 12,000 dollars, and the bishop of the Havannah 80,000.

The archbishop of Santo Domingo was pri-

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mate of the Indies, with three bishops under him, but his salary did not exceed 6,000 dollars; this see, however, became vacant when the island was made over to the French, and has remained so ever since.

Besides superintending the assemblage of the faithful, the clergy are placed as missionaries, amongst the Indian villages, to superintend their spiritual instruction, and infuse into them the first rudiments of social life. The most exemplary and enlightened of all the Spanish clergy are those who have been sent from Europe from time to time, to exercise these pastoral functions amongst the Indians; and the mental command and influence they have frequently acquired over them is highly astonishing.

These missionaries and preachers fixed in the midst of the back woodsmen, or original natives, have a small inadequate salary from the crown, which sometimes does not exceed twenty pounds sterling; but their wants are few; they live recluse, and principally subsist on small presents they receive from their flocks, of fowls, cocoa, rice, fish, vegetables, and guarapo, a fermented drink made of the pineapple and wild honey, which the Indians prefer to wine. These are in general the gifts of their converts, who also consider that a day's per-

sonal labour, expended in the tillage of their pastor's garden, must be an acceptable offering to the Divinity, being dedicated to the use and purposes of that being, whom they consider immediately between them and the Supreme. By law they cannot exact any thing from this part of their flock, in cases of marriage, baptism, burial, or spiritual advice.

Government, early in possession of that fatal experience, which had marked the devastation of original population in Santo Domingo, found the ill effects of laying a stress in their instructions to their viceroys and subordinate governors, on the adherence to the stipulations of the pope's deed of 1493, which gives them authority to extend conquest and dominion in those unknown climes, on condition of also widening the pale of christianity. Far from forming amongst the natives proselytes to their own faith, this union of conquest with conversion served to give to their expeditions the character of crusades, under the direction, too often, of tygers who breathed destruction and ravage, rather than to establish schools of instruction, and make the natives converts to their religion. They therefore, entered on the plan of sending out missionaries, assigned to this task alone, independent of the military, and as much as possi-



ble selected from persons of the best character. These were directed to inculcate the precepts of religion and morality with the doctrines of subordination and passive obedience; they were told to represent their lawful sovereign, whom their flocks now owned, as the most powerful vicegerent of heaven on earth, and to stigmatize any thing that could militate against this supreme magistrate, and supposed agent of the Divinity, as a glaring crime against the great first cause and ruler of the physical and moral universe, and an infraction of the mandates of the church. They taught the people to believe, that resistance to rulers had often been punished with the thunder of the heavens, the deluge of the earth, plagues, pestilence and famine, the visitations suited to apostate and revolted subjects.

This credence was not, however, established without the bloodshed of some of the missionaries; but even the heroism with which they suffered seemed to cement the spiritual superstructure of which they had, as yet, only laid the corner-stones. It is to them we owe the first knowledge of the interior of these regions, and the Spanish language has many testimonies of their labours entirely unknown to us. The

Jesuits have particularly described to us Paraguay and Patagonia, the seats of their greatest zeal, which was, nevertheless, extended to the other parts of the continent.

The dissolution of this valuable body of men was an event the Indians could never account for, and will ever regret. They called them their fathers, and had for them a veneration that was unexampled. At the time this society was expelled from Spanish America, they had in Mexico, Peru, and Paraguay, 117 colleges and houses appropriated as seminaries and schools. The number of their members, exclusive of novices, amounted to 2,468, who had charge of upwards of 4,000 pupils, many of whom were educated gratis, and the rest at a very small pension.

That peculiar aptness to train up every species of élèves, which formed the characteristic of this body of men; their profound system, discipline, policy, and mode of suiting instruction to the ages and capacities of those under their care, have always been remarked by those acquainted with their history, and have led many of the best Spanish writers to concur in vindicating their conduct. To this day they are respectfully remembered on the Main, and