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MEXICO

By Eber Cole Byam

Part II.

GREAT "CITIES" NON-EXISTENT

The first Spaniards who arrived in Mexico allowed their imaginations full rein, and they gabbled unrestrainedly about "cities" equaling Seville or Salamanca in size, solidity and architectural merit. The ancient city of Mexico was declared to be the largest and most densely populated of all, yet the suggestion by the war chief Ahuitzotl (Ah-wee-tohtli) about A. D. 1500, that four hundred families be removed from this town to repopulate a district whose inhabitants he had exterminated, was overruled by the other war chiefs on the ground that it would be too great a reduction in the population, and the number to be removed was reduced to two hundred families. Furthermore, we are told that the houses of the city were of but one story, and built separately, each in the midst of its individual garden. In addition there were very large spaces given over to market places and temple enclosures, not to mention the space devoted to streets and canals. The area of the original city is fairly well known, with the consequence that the existence of any considerable population within its limits was manifestly impossible.

WHO THE AZTECS WERE

The aboriginal residents of the ancient City of Mexico belonged to a great American Indian family which native tradition said came from the northern deserts in seven groups or waves of migration. One of these groups was known as the Aztec and it was a fragment of this group that ended its wanderings with the founding of a settlement on a marshy island in the salt lagoon of the Valley of Mexico in 1325. This settlement became known as Tenochtitlan (Tay-nohtch-teet-lahn), and upon its site is built the present City of Mexico.

That a small band of wandering Indians could travel about the Valley as the Aztecs did for upwards of a hundred years before settling definitely on one spot, disposes of any "dense populations," or "well organized governments," and, if this were not sufficient, the subsequent behavior of this particular band and their neighbors would be quite conclusive.

After the wanderers, known to themselves as the Mexica, had established themselves on their marshy island, they subsisted by thieving forays amongst their neighbors on the mainland, and some of them in time saw fit to ally themselves with the island marauders. And this was the condition prevailing when the discovering fleet brought the white men to the islands of the Western Sea. It is of interest to observe that a quarter of a century elapsed between the landing of Columbus on Watling Island and the arrival of the fleet of Grijalva (Gree-hahl-vah) off the Mexican coast and the receipt of the news by Montezuma that the dread prophecy of the return of the bearded god was about to be fulfilled.

Ages before the coming of the Spaniard, Indian traditions declare that a very wise man had appeared among their ancestors and taught them the ways of civilized beings, but dissensions arose among them and this wise man left them to return to his home in the East. As he left he warned them that at some time in the future bearded white men like himself would come out of the East, and conquer and rule over the contentious people.

COMING OF THE WHITE MEN

Grijalva landed and observed the natives of the Mexican coast in 1518, almost four hundred years ago, but, much to the disgust of his superior, the Governor of Cuba, he made no settlement and hurried home to report. It was thus that the opportunity came to Cortes to command the expedition which was to mark an epoch in history and himself as one of the world's greatest conquerors.

Cortes landed in April, of 1519, arrived at Tenochtitlan in November and was driven from there in the "Dreadful Night" of June 30th, 1520, only to return the following year, to lay siege to it and to enter its ruins on the 13th of August, 1521, as its conqueror and the master of all the tribes. With that date the traditional and ancient historical period of Mexico came to an end, and marked the beginning of written history, and of the Spanish Colonial period which was to last an even three hundred years.

The Spaniards found themselves amongst a people from whom they differed widely, yet endeavored to describe them in terms of European social and political life, with results often the opposite of what they must have intended. The Spaniards assumed the existence of empires and emperors, kings, nobles, courts of law, judges, great estates; in fact, a duplication of what they knew in Europe. The result was a series of well-meant blunders which required years to remedy, even in part.

Aztec Social And Political Life.

At that time the Mexican Indians were divided into a vast number of tribes, speaking over a hundred different languages and dialects, of which some fifty still survive and are spoken by a considerable portion of the population. In fact, it is claimed that the language of Montezuma is today the mother tongue of nearly a million Mexicans, many of whom speak no other.

In the days of the Conquest many thousands of these Indians lived a partly nomadic life in the northern deserts, subsisting partly by agriculture, and as much as possible by raiding and robbing any villages not on the alert against them. In and about the Valley of Mexico the tribes had adopted a more regular state of existence, but even here the purpose of exacting tribute from the conquered.

Each village was an autonomous governing entity independent of all the others, except as they might combine temporarily for purposes of aggression. The three principle towns of the Valley of Mexico had formed such a combination before the Conquest by Cortes. This alliance was solely for the purposes of joint attack upon other towns and villages and determined the division of the booty or tribute. The members of the confederacy, however, remained free to make war on their own individual account. The conquered villages, if not exterminated, were invariably left free to govern themselves, but were compelled to pay a tribute in the products of their districts to the conquering tribe or confederacy. No "garrisons" were placed in charge, and only unarmed representatives of the victorious tribes were placed in the conquered villages to see that the tribute was gathered and carried to Mexico as agreed. The tribe paying tribute could make war on any tribe not paying tribute to the confederacy, and exact tribute on its own account, if able to do so.

Shortage of Shipping Affects Belgian Relief

Dr. Vernon Kellogg, Director of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, and David T. Nelson, J. L. Gleason, T. B. Dawson, Ben Allen and R. H. Simpson, all members of the Commission, arrived in New York last week with Herbert Hoover, Chairman. Dr. Kellogg, who has spent most of the last two years in Brussels, and has been associated with Mr. Hoover in all of the diplomatic conferences in London, Brussels, Berlin, The Hague and Paris, left Brussels on March 10th, after the breaking of diplomatic relations. He states that the long interval in which no relief boats arrived in Rotterdam has caused great depression in Belgium. The fact that the Commission for Relief in Belgium has been unable to charter sufficient shipping to carry all the necessary fats has made it necessary for the Belgians to begin to kill the cattle they have been holding in reserve in order to supply this very necessary adjunct to their daily ration.

Dr. Kellogg states that the problem before the Commission is now largely one of shipping, and that it will be impossible to carry out the complete plan for rationing unless some solution of the problem can be found. Mr. W. L. Honnold, Director of the Commission in New York, stated that it was growing more and more difficult to secure the necessary shipping to carry the relief cargoes, and that consequently it was now and might continue impossible to take into Belgium the full quantity of food provided by the budget of last October. He also stated that the Commission was endeavoring to meet the shipping situation and that the Government at Washington was sympathetic and inclined to help as far as possible in furthering the interests of the Commission.

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Foreign Mission News

Special correspondence by The Propagation of the Faith Society 348 Lexington Ave., New York City.

"The best parishes in the United States to-day are those parishes which contribute most generously to missionary work. The best Catholic homes in the land to-day are those homes in which some sacrifices are made for the missionary conquest of heathen lands."—Bishop Canevin, Pittsburgh.

Fr. S. Lesaint, O.F.M., of Canton, China, says: "The schools for boys and girls are a heavy charge on the mission, but what can we do without them? I dare to hope that good friends are going to help us form these little children so that they may become the founders of good Christian families."

The Queen of Apostles exacts something from us this month. Our May devotions will be especially acceptable if we fill a mitre box or send an offering in her name to the poor priests who are daily beseeching her for means to save a few more souls.

DON'T BE A SLACKER

A good deal is heard just at present about slackers. The term applies to those able-bodied young men who show unwillingness to serve their country when the edict has gone forth that they are needed.

It might be stated that there are "slackers" in every community besides the soldiers who refuse to be soldiers. The Catholic Church is calling loudly for zealous individuals to step forward and protect her interest in foreign lands, those same interests being vested in the hands of a few struggling missionaries. The poor, almost entirely up to this time have sustained apostolic work out of their hard earnings. It is now time for the rich to relieve the strain and stress of the religion they profess, and not to do so is to place oneself in the "slacker" class.

WENCHOW A PROGRESSIVE MISSION.

Wenchow continues to keep well to the front in the march toward Christianity. Each year, for the past sixteen years, about one hundred and fifty adults have been baptized in the city church alone. The district near the city grows correspondingly, and the Lazarists have all they can do to keep pace with the ever increasing flock of converted souls.

Fr. Cyprian Aroud states that he has thirty-six schools and one hundred and seventeen chapels under the care of native teachers and catechists. These vital works are crying loudly for more European religious, but such are not forthcoming, nor can they be expected to do so for some time to come.

A capable school teacher in Wenchow gets about twenty-five dollars, American money, a year, and the good he performs is incalculable. With new centres continually coming into the Church, Wenchow should at least be well supplied with native teachers.

The Month of Mary

The Church was scarcely out of the Catacombs before the Fathers began to sound Mary's praises in immortal prose and poetry.

Prudentius and Fortunatus sang rapturously of the Queen of Heaven. For centuries the Christmas carols sang the quaint praises of Our Lady and caused simple and happy peasants to trust her as their Mother in their joys and woes. The miracle-plays brought her before people as a model of all virtues and Mother of the Redeemer. The troubadours in France paid her a meed of praise, as did the ballad singers of Germany, the minstrels of England, the bards of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. With the exception of the "Dies Irae," no finer hymn than the "Stabat Mater" was ever penned. It was a fitting theme for so tender words and music. Jacopone da Todi voiced the feelings of the Middle Ages.

The Renaissance, and later the Protestant "Reformation," spread rebellion and sin broadcast, which dried up rapture, song, and love for God and His Holy Mother. Still, we find many, like Vittoria Colonna and Tasso in Italy, Southwell and Crashaw in England, who remembered Mary in their muse. If in later times Voltaire, Balzac and Zola flouted the Blessed Virgin and holy purity, Coleridge, Blake, and Poe remembered her in a befitting manner in their works. Ruskin criticized Catholicity, but lauded Mary. Wordsworth hated the Catholic Church, but we can forget much about the poet of the lines:

"Woman above all women glorified,
Our trained nature's solitary boast."

We can forgive the bigotry of Sir Walter Scott for his praise of the Blessed Virgin in "The Lady of the Lake."

In "All's Well That Ends Well" Shakespeare puts beautiful lines concerning Mary's power into the mouth of the countess when she learns of her boy's sin. The Irish poets Aubrey de Vere and Gerald Griffin, and the English poets Coventry Patmore and Francis Thompson, honor the Blessed Mother in chaste verse. Rossetti, William Cullen Bryant, and Kipling follow in the wake of George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, and Father Faber; and we cannot forget Mrs. Browning in her tender poem, "The Virgin Mary to the Child Jesus." (Pittsburgh Observer.)

Give Erin Home Rule!

The New York World publishes expressions of opinion and conviction on the Irish problem from leaders of American thought, in response to the appeal made through it by Lord Northcliffe and in conjunction with the London Times.

Lord Northcliffe, in seeking The World's aid, said: "The next fourteen days will be, in my opinion, the most vital in the history of attempts to solve the Anglo-Irish problem. American statesmen and American newspapers could greatly assist those of us here who are struggling to arouse interest in the Irish question by a prompt expression of their opinion. This is the golden hour."

The joint inquiry of The World and London Times evoked a response to the Northcliffe appeal prompt and full from American statesmen, lawyers, business men, leaders of religious thought and writers. A variety of sentiments have been expressed and many remedies suggested, but the large majority agree Ireland should have self-government in as full measure as possible, while remaining part of the British Empire.

By Theodore Roosevelt. I most earnestly hope that full Home Rule will be given Ireland; the principle announced by President Wilson in his address to Congress asking it to declare war on autocracy for the world-wide safety of democracy and of small nationalities."

Of course Ireland should remain part of the empire. I have no more sympathy with the irreconcilable extremists on one side of the question than on the other. I am sure that the Canadians and Australians feel in this matter exactly as Americans do—that, both permanently and as regards this particular war, it would be an immense advantage to the empire to give Ireland Home Rule.

By William H. Taft.

We in the United States are hoping earnestly for a speedy settlement of the Irish Home Rule question. It would much help to solidify and hearten American public sentiment in the great cause for which the democracies of Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy and the United States are fighting shoulder to shoulder and which they must and will win.

By George W. Wickersham.

I think it a peculiarly happy time to bring about a solution of the much vexed Irish question. It would be of immeasurable value to everybody if a solution could be found now, and it certainly ought to be possible to solve the question now in a manner equitable to all parties concerned. Nothing could help the cause of the Allies more in the minds of Americans than to have that question settled.

By Charles W. Eliot.

Americans without distinction of race, creed or party believe that now is the time for the National Parliament to give Home Rule to Ireland, in recognition of Irish unity and loyalty in the great war and in just settlement of long standing and grievous dimensions between Parliament and the great majority of the Irish people. Increase in the number and strength of self governing members of powerful national groups is one of the best outcomes of the war thus far.

By John Purroy Mitchell.

The whole Irish race is now included within the Allied countries, and have a right to hope that principles conducive equally to the security of Ulster and to the recognition of Irish nationality may be placed in practice. If in the future democracy, tolerance and prosperity march hand in hand in Ireland, the share which the Irish are taking in this terrible conflict will not have been in vain.

Laurier for Home Rule.

The Canadian Parliament is debating the question of Home Rule for Ireland. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, leader of the Liberals, introduced a resolution calling upon England "without further delay to confer upon Ireland the free institutions long promised her."

Cablegram of 200 Congressmen

A cablegram urging a settlement of the Irish problem was sent to Premier Lloyd George April 23, by 200 representatives in Congress headed by Speaker Champ Clark.

There is great interest in this country in the situation, and the Irish Home Rule question has been discussed by American officials with members of the British commission now visiting the United States.

The message sent by the representatives follows: "You are quoted as saying that the settlement of the Irish question is essential for the peace of the world and for a speedy victory in the world."

"May we, members of the American Congress, suggest that nothing will add more to the enthusiasm of America in this war than a settlement now of the Irish problem."

"We believe that all Americans will be deeply stirred and their enthusiastic effort enlisted if the British Empire will now settle this problem in accordance with the principles announced by President Wilson in his address to Congress asking it to declare war on autocracy for the world-wide safety of democracy and of small nationalities."

News From Ireland

The death has taken place of Mr. Moore Smith, J. P., 86, at Broughanlea, Ballycastle.

Messrs. M. J. O'Hara and James McGuill have been co-opted on Armagh County Council.

J. P. Hughes, J. P. Clashganny Mills, Borris, has been appointed an inspector under the Department of Agriculture's tillage scheme.

Mrs. Mary A. Whitfield, who resided outside Cooteshill, died suddenly at a local fair.

Mrs. Mary A. Duke, Stradone, Cavan, who died recently, was the wife of Andrew Duke, merchant, daughter of the late John Traynor, Ladunigan, and sister of Rev. Philip Traynor and Jas. Traynor, Chicago.

The Scanlon scholarship founded at University College, Dublin, by the late Rev. Dean Scanlon, Birr, Kings county, is confined to male Catholic lay students of Kildare diocese, which is to be competed for by three candidates to be selected by the Dean and chapter of that diocese.

The first list of subscriptions for the golden jubilee of the Christian Brothers in Midleton amounts to £178 19s. 6d.

Most Rev. Dr. Cohan has appointed Rev. J. Coakley, C. C. Bandon, P. P. Drimoleague, and Rev. J. McSwiney, chaplain, Little Sister's Convent, to be C. C. Bandon.

J. H. Pollock, J. P., formerly a member of the Derry corporation, has been co-opted a councillor in Derry corporation in room of the late Councillor H. H. Laverty.

James Forsyth, Bangor, has been appointed principal of Lurganmore N. S., Lisburn. There were over eighty applicants.

The Newry steampacket dockers' strike has ended, the men returning to work at the old rate of 35s. per week.

Marlborough Hall, Glasnevin, the residence of the men students of the Marlborough Street Training College, is to be taken over by the British military as a hospital for wounded British soldiers.

University College Gaelic society, St. Augustine's Dramatic corps, Galway, signalled the National anniversary by the production of Irish plays.

Listowel U. D. C. has passed a vote of condolence to Rev. G. O'Sullivan, C. C., on the death, at the Convent of Bon Secours, Orleans, of Sister St. Alice, his sister, and daughter of the late J. P. O'Sullivan, the Union, Kilkenny.

The late Patrick Doody, Professor St. Kieran's College, whose death has been announced, was brother of the Rev. E. Doody, C. C., Ballyhale, and a native of Kilmacow.

Sister Anastasia O'Brien has celebrated her golden jubilee at St. Joseph's Convent, Fermagh. She is the oldest Irish religious in the Order, and one of three sisters who joined the Order shortly after it was established in Ireland. She is a sister of Roger O'Brien, Drumraney, Athlone.

Very Rev. Father McManus, O. M. I., for many years manager of St. Conleth's Industrial school, Philipstown, has been transferred to Leith.

At a meeting in Wexford, at which Father Mark O'Byrne presided, it was decided to hold the Feis in Wexford this year on the usual date, Whitsunday.

Wexford Guardians have granted a war bonus of 10s. 6d. weekly to Dr. Ryan, Teggim.