

The Awakening of Spain

Colaboration^a

The beginning of the sixteenth century coincides with "the heroic period of the history of Spain, the period of the final victory over the Moors and of the visionary conquest of a new world, period in which religious and military enthusiasm elevated the national character in an extraordinary manner. In war as in diplomacy and in the art of governing, the preeminence of the Spaniards was recognized and feared." By the end of the fifteenth century, Columbus had discovered and acquired for the crown of Spain "extensive and extremely rich territories." It was during the first years

^a This chapter was compiled by Messrs. C. C. Crisler and H. H. Hall, and was inserted in this work with the approval of the author.

The Missing Chapter

of the sixteenth century when the first European saw the Pacific Ocean; and while in Euskirchen the crown of Charlemagne and Redbeard was placed upon the head of Charles V, "Magellan carried out the great voyage that was to have by result the circumnavigation of the globe, and Cortes adamantly struggled in the arduous conquest of Mexico." Twenty years later "Pizarro had led unto a joyous end the conquest of Peru."¹

Charles V ascended to the throne as sovereign of Spain and Naples, the Netherlands, Germany and Austria "at a time in which Germany found itself in a state of unrest without precedent."² With the invention of the printing press the Bible spread into the homes of the people, and as many learned to read for themselves the Word of God, the light of the truth dissipated the darkness of superstition as if by the work of a new revelation. It was evident that there had been a falling away from the teachings of the founders of the primitive church, such as were presented in the New Testament.³ Among the order of monks "convent life had become so corrupt that the more virtuous monks could no longer tolerate it."⁴ Many other persons in close relationship to the church hardly resembled Jesus and his apostles. The sincere catholics, who loved and honored the religion of

The Awakening of Spain

13

old, were horrified by the pomp that was displayed everywhere. Among all of the social classes was noted "a living perception of the corruptions" that had been introduced into the church, and "a profound and general yearning for the Reformation."⁵

...

[Page 22]

Nevertheless, the friends of the cause persevered, until many thousands of tracts and booklets were introduced by contraband, deceiving the watchful eye of the agents standing guard in the main port of the Mediterranean and along the passages of the Pyrenees. Sometimes these publications were hidden within bales of hay or jute (hemp from India), or in barrels of wine from Bourgogne or Champagne.¹⁴ At times they were packed in an inner waterproof barrel inside another bigger barrel filled with wine....

In the meantime, the Inquisition tried to prevent with doubled vigilance that said books should reach the hands of the people....

...

[Page 24]

One of the most tenacious and fortunate colporteurs in the business was Julián Hernández, a dwarf who, often disguised as a peddler or mule driver, made many trips into Spain, either crossing the Pyrenees, or entering by one of the southern ports of Spain....

...

[Pages 38-41]

Nonetheless it was in "the Jeronimian convent... one of the most celebrated monasteries in Spain... where the light of divine truth shone with more splendor. One of the monks, Garcia de Arias... cautiously taught his brothers "that upon repeating in the halls of the convents, day and night, the holy oratory, whether reciting it or chanting it, that was not praying to God... that the Holy Scriptures should be read and meditated upon paying exceptional attention, and only from them could one extract the true knowledge of God and of His will."³⁴ This teaching was effectively upheld by another monk, Casiodoro de Reyna, "who later became well known for translating the Bible

into the language of his country." ...The hours of prayer which had been spent in solemn, vain repetitions, were then dedicated to hearing conferences about the Scriptures; praying for the dead was suspended or substituted with teaching for the living; indulgences and papal exemptions, which constituted a lucrative monopoly, were completely abolished... Of the old system only the monk's garment remained and the exterior ceremony of the mass which they could not abandon without exposing themselves to inevitable and imminent danger.

...it placed them in a delicate and painful situation. They could not do away with all of the monastic practices without exposing themselves to the wrath of their enemies; they could neither advocate them without incurring in the slightest guilt.

...Events that followed made them reconsider the matter, reaching the agreement of letting each one at liberty to do, according to the circumstances, what each deemed was best and more prudent. "Accordingly, twelve of them abandoned the monastery and, by different routes,

managed to find safety outside of Spain, and twelve months later they met in Geneva."³⁶

...

[Pages 49]

..."Antonio Herrezuelo, exceedingly wise lawyer, and of Doña Leonor de Cisneros, his wife, a twenty-four year old young lady, discrete and greatly virtuous and of such beauty as would be fancied by desire."

...

[Pages 51-52]

As Herrezuelo advanced to the gallows...

...

...she was thrown into prison...

...