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THE FIRST CHECK TO SPANISH COLONIZATION

“We believe to be the most frightful of all spectacles—the strength of civilization without its mercy.”

—MACAULAY, “Clive.”

The Reformation—A Conflict between Germanic and Latin Ideas
—Conquest of Peru—Spain’s Constant Need of Gold

IN 1519 an obscure monk in a North German cloister brooded and brooded with Teutonic thoroughness, until at length the courage came to him from on high and he challenged the Roman Catholic Church in the name of religious liberty. His voice found an echo throughout Northern Europe, at the courts of ruling princes, among the scholars of Leyden and Heidelberg, and above all among the rude but reflective peasantry—to whose hearts the rugged speech of Martin Luther found immediate access. Papal excommunication and threats of violence only strengthened the force of this great awakening. Every courier brought to Rome news of fresh disaster to the army of infallibility, new conquests for Protestantism; until, from the North Cape downward, the avalanche of heretical elements promised to overflow the Alps and the Pyrenees. The danger was great, and Rome realized it. At such a crisis the weak and the lazy were thrust aside and new men with more youthful energy and broader knowl-

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edge of the world were permitted to come forward as the champions of papal authority against those whom they regarded as impious rebels. In Italy and Spain the act of the Wittenberg monk was received as an insult to the Latin race. There were plenty in the papal ranks who desired reform, who believed that the Church should take the lead in spreading scholarship and scientific truth, no less than theology and morality. The birth of Protestantism brought with it a new force in Roman Catholic development, a force that was based upon knowledge of the world, mastery of the sciences, social polish, fluency in speech, diplomatic tact—in short, every art that assists one man in dominating the mind of another. This force alone meant reformation to no small extent, but when to all this was linked the daring and fanatic zeal of a Loyola,* then was created the one force capable of setting bounds to Luther's work. The great Reformation had a political and intellectual side no less important than its theological one.

The citizen of London resented the domination of an Italian priest, though he willingly accepted an equal amount of tyranny from one of his own race. The thinking men of Rotterdam and Stockholm, of Leipzig and Bremen, were not cast in the same mould as the father-confessors from beyond the Alps. National antipathy, race antipathy, united with intellectual antipathy to weaken papal authority over Northern Europe and concentrate it nearer to the centre of its

* Loyola was born in 1491 and died in 1556; a Spaniard by birth, a courtier by education, a soldier by profession; who became "General" of the Society of Jesus in 1541 and infused the soldier spirit among his followers.

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origin. Henceforth the quarrel with Luther resembled somewhat a war of Latin against Anglo-Saxon or Germanic civilization. Since the close of the Thirty Years' War (1648) the area of Protestantism has not increased appreciably, nor has that of Rome. But in America the Pope found compensation. The conquests of Protestantism in Northern Europe were, in the mind of Charles V., to be more than matched by the triumph of the Cross in the vast territories that had been confided to him by Pope Borgia.

The year 1519, the year of Martin Luther, was also the year of Fernando Cortés. What the Pope lost in Saxony, Spain was conquering in Mexico.

It was in March of 1519 that Cortés landed on the Mexican coast in Tabasco with 550 white men, 2,300 Indians, some horses, cannon, and negroes. Of these only three hundred whites started into the interior. Cortés had besides, fifteen mounted men, seven pieces of artillery and 1,300 native soldiers. Many of his men had refused to go with him and while we are not disposed to detract from the glory of this soldier, we are inclined to think that he displayed more courage in managing his own men than in the subjugation of Montezuma.

The Mexicans had never seen a horse or a man in armor, or a firearm of any description. They had no weapons that were in any sense half-way equal to those of Cortés, their country was divided by civil war, and their religious teachers had spread among them the fear of this invasion. They were morally beaten before the contest commenced, and if at any stage they fought, it was the fight of men made

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desperate by injustice, who fight not in the hope of victory, but merely to make the tyrant pay dearly for his triumph.

The courage of Cortés was great, but those interested in comparing relative bravery might with profit compare the conqueror of Mexico with the man who won India for the British Crown. When Clive, with only two hundred Englishmen and three hundred Sepoys, marched out to the relief of Arcot in 1751, it was to meet disciplined armies commanded by Europeans, armed as well as himself, famous as horsemen, and familiar with the white man's methods. No superstitious awe cowed the natives of East India, who, when they laid down their arms, submitted not as to a God, but to a man superior to them in courage, in physical power, in organizing capacity, and, above all, in knowledge of government.

Clive entered India as a scourge: he left it amid the tears of grateful natives.

The Spaniard entered Mexico as a guest, he remained as a scourge, and he left it after three centuries of misrule, amid the curses of an outraged people.

Slavery entered Mexico with Cortés and flourished from the start. The noble Las Casas, in hopes of bettering the lot of the Indians, had urged Charles V. to encourage negro slavery instead, and to supplement this by emigration of white labor. Negro slavery was indeed furthered, but Indian slavery did not cease, nor was any encouragement given to white labor, for, of course, no white Spaniard would work in the hot sun when Indians could be made to work for him. Thus

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Las Casas, one of the great "humanitarians," is practically the father of the African slave-trade.

Charles V. caused inquiry to be made as to how many negroes would be needed in the West Indies, and the Seville Chartered Company answered that 4,000 in all would be sufficient—1,000 for each of the islands,—Jamaica, San Domingo, Porto Rico, and Cuba. (In parenthesis let us note that in 1870 the number of black slaves in Cuba alone was 360,000.)

The license to import the 4,000 Africans was given to a Court favorite and he in turn sold it to a Genoese broker for 25,000 ducats, or about \$56,000. This sum purchased a monopoly of the American slave-trade for eight years. The Genoese broker, however, had an interest in keeping up the price of negroes, so he only supplied a small quantity at a time. This did not at all satisfy the planters, who met this deficit by vigorous slave-raiding among the native Caribs. It illustrates the sentiment of the time, that while Las Casas was urging Charles V. to abolish slavery among Indians, the Bishop of Darien was proving to this same monarch that these very natives had been intended by the Almighty as slaves. No wonder that the "most Catholic" monarch was puzzled when the Church itself showed doubt! So he passed laws which sustained Las Casas in theory, while in practice slavery spread unchecked—both Black and Indian.

The plantation system in Mexico was similar to that which was inaugurated in the islands; estates were given to settlers, and these settlers had to cultivate them for eight years before they got a clear title from the Crown. The Church entered upon this new field

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with zeal, and in thirty years claimed to have made 9,000,000 converts. These figures are open to question, but however they may be modified, there is no reason to doubt that, in the absence of any competing religious denomination, the Roman Catholic Church did make substantial progress in Mexico.

Mexico had not been conquered more than five years when an expedition was fitted out to conquer Peru (1524). Pizarro was to command the fighting force, but the profits were to be shared by a little syndicate consisting of three people—one of them the Vicar of Panama. In 1526 a written agreement was drawn up on the subject, securing to each of the three financial promoters his portion of the expected plunder. Each was to have his share of profit from the slave-trade. The Vicar, who had advanced 20,000 pesos (dollars) toward fitting out the expedition, was to receive one-third of all the land and treasure and slaves they might secure. Pizarro promised to make good any losses the Vicar might sustain. He had to be very careful with the Vicar, for it was known that this holy man represented some capital subscribed by the Chief Justice, who was forbidden by law from appearing in such transactions. It was also necessary to interest the Governor in the enterprise, and that meant another share in the concern. However, by joint effort of these three, Pizarro started out for Peru, with the blessing of the Church, the protection of the law, and the good-will of the Governor. That time all went well with Pizarro.*

* Pizarro was the illegitimate son of a Spanish officer. He was born about 1471, and was murdered by his own people in his seventieth year. It is not known how or when he came to America.

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On his preliminary journey the natives received him with hospitality, and he returned full of plans for the enslaving of that unsuspecting people.

First he went to Madrid, where he retailed his discovery and was made Governor-General with all sorts of privileges. The Vicar was made a bishop, and the King made him out a patent enjoining above all things gentleness toward the natives!

Pizarro promised everything, and sailed away in 1531 to the conquest of Peru.

Skipping details (which are interestingly narrated by Prescott), in 1532, with one hundred and seventy-seven soldiers and sixty-seven horses, Pizarro at last met the Inca at Caxamalca. His patent was dated 1529, and the interval had been devoted to getting thus far, by a course of plundering raids that had astonished the natives.

The Inca came forth to meet Pizarro unarmed. He was surrounded by his Court dignitaries, and the great square was crowded by the curious. He was led to expect a meeting with Pizarro, but, instead of that, a Dominican monk came toward him, a book in one hand, in the other a crucifix. In a loud voice he called upon the native ruler to turn Christian and acknowledge Charles V. as his master. The Inca was naturally surprised and annoyed at this unexpected alteration in the programme, and expressed himself to that effect. This was what the monk desired. He made a signal, fire was opened upon the people by the Spanish guns, and while the confusion was great the horses charged in and trampled women and children under foot. In half an hour Peru became Spanish—a conquest that

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makes one blush for the race to which we belong. There were thousands of corpses to be buried that night, and the booty was ample. Pizarro celebrated his victory by a banquet, and by his side sat his victim; a timid, gentle nature who hoped, perhaps, yet to serve his country by bowing meekly to the Spaniard's yoke.

He offered to buy his liberty by filling his dungeon with gold, and nearly kept his promise. But Pizarro perhaps concluded that he could fill it himself equally well, so in 1533 he put his royal prisoner to death—first taking the precaution to have him baptized in the same faith as himself!

Hereupon Pizarro divided plunder to the extent of \$17,500,000.

Peru was now divided up among the followers of the conquerors. Soldiers who had never before known more than the fare of a Catalonian peasant became grandees of the soil—were waited upon by many slaves. There was no more desire to go home. Spain offered no such fortune to them as was to be found here on the ruins of Inca palaces.

The maintenance of slavery became here, as elsewhere, the most important section in the colonial constitution. Men who had murdered inoffensive women and children were not likely to deal gently with anyone attacking what they regarded as their vested interest.

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SPAIN'S FIRST COLONIAL INSURRECTION

Only eleven years after the murder of the Inca Atahualpa by Pizarro, Spain had to face in Peru her first colonial insurrection. In 1544 Charles V. attempted to enforce the successive decrees against slavery, which had uniformly been ignored, notably one of 1543. In Mexico 150,000 natives were nominally set at liberty, for the law of Spain proclaimed the Indians free by virtue of being vassals of Charles V. But it was too late—vested interests had grown too strong. In Mexico the law was evaded, for, since it applied only to vassals of the Crown, the planters who held slaves pretended that they had been seized for refusing allegiance, and that plea was rarely found defective by a colonial court. In 1530 slavery was guarded as jealously in Spanish-America as it was three centuries later in a part of the United States; no priest was allowed to teach a native anything that could harm his master; to sell a horse or fire-arm to a native was punishable by death.

Charles V. had failed in Mexico; it was not likely, therefore, that he would succeed in a land so much farther away as Peru.

When, therefore, the Crown officials arrived with anti-slavery proclamations, drawn up by Las Casas, it was the signal for open rebellion. The agents of the great Charles were openly insulted and driven out of Peru. It was a sort of Boston Tea Party in a rough way, at least so far as the nullification of a royal command was concerned. And, more strange still, this

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monarch, whose little finger was felt the length and breadth of Europe, bowed to the storm created by his far-away colony: sent out a white-washing commission, pardoned the rebels, granted all that the colonists demanded, and surrendered the natives as slaves to the white man.

The secret of this cowardice is not far to seek. Money, money, and only money, was the cry of Charles. He feared that a fight with the colonists of Peru would interfere with his supply of cash, and to accomplish what he wished in Europe money was vital. It was not to be got from Spain; it could only be drawn from America. So Charles satisfied his conscience by promising reforms, and closing one eye when his laws were treated as dead letters.

Up to this time the power of Spain over her colonies had been seriously questioned by no European power. Her claim to the whole of America appeared to be acknowledged by the whole civilized world. The Spanish treasure-ships sailed between Spain and her colonies with no thought of other dangers than those associated with a journey from Cadiz to Barcelona. Toward the end of 1568, however, a new viceroy, arriving at Vera Cruz with a strong fleet, was amazed to find that port occupied by two Englishmen. These, in the eyes of Spain, were pirates, but in the eyes of their fellow-countrymen they were important elements in what made up the glorious reign of Queen Elizabeth. Sir John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake had inaugurated a series of visits to the Spanish Main, which not merely caused panic throughout these coasts, but stimulated the spirit of adventure in every port of the British

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Isles. The contemporaries of Shakespeare were not men to fold their hands and look on, while gold and silver were to be secured at no greater cost than a hard fight. There has ever been a strong magnetic affinity between gold mines and men of our race, and we might almost recognize the landmarks of our progress as stamped in bullion with such names as Johannesburg, California, Australia, and the gold galleons of Charles V.

Drake and Hawkins are among the world's heroes because their work was successful and achieved great national ends. Had they both been hanged by the Mexican viceroy in 1568 they would have ranked with men of the Jameson type, in a long list of unsuccessful filibusters. Queen Elizabeth gave them scant countenance when they sailed forth to risk their lives in her service, but she gladly honored them when they returned as national heroes. Drake and Hawkins, in 1568, commenced the uphill fight between little England and the great Spanish Empire—a fight which enlisted wide sympathies, in so far as it measured the strength of Protestantism with papal authority. To the Spaniards an English sailor was not only a pirate, but a pirate that had the audacity to deny the authority of the Pope, and for him death was regarded as a mild punishment. Lucky the English prisoner that was not handed over to the Inquisition for torture before being publicly executed. In "Westward Ho" Charles Kingsley has drawn a dramatic picture of adventurous life in that day, and, startling as his pages are, they scarcely outdo the cold recital contained in official Spanish chronicle. From the time of the intro-

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duction of the Inquisition into Mexico (1571), 2,000 cases are recorded as having been tried in thirty years, or more than sixty-six cases each year, more than one a week—a terrible showing in a young colony with only a handful of white men and a native population almost feminine in its docility. Need we wonder that at the end of the sixteenth century the Inquisition, co-operating with the Crown officials, had produced such misery that the native population had dwindled to a quarter of what it was when Cortés first landed in 1519!

The British sea-fighters of that day were not respectable in the eyes of the law, but their freebooting acquired the halo of popular sanction when it became more generally known that their raids were at the expense of men who were the enemies of their Queen, the enemies of their religion, and, above all, capable of outdoing the Mohammedan corsairs in cruelty toward the captured.

In the days when Japan was a hermit nation, when it was death for a Japanese to leave his country or to entertain a foreigner, we can find no barbarity on their part equal to that displayed by Spaniards under the sanction of Christian ecclesiastical authority.

The Chinese are not famous for gentle treatment of their enemies, but in the three centuries of our intercourse with that nation—making due allowance for acts of pirates, brigands, and fanatical mobs—the history of European intercourse will be sought in vain for official acts of cruelty so barbarous and so frequent as those which meet us on every page of Spanish colonial history.

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English adventurers were soon followed by Protestant Dutch, and French, who might or might not have been Protestants, but who were no less interested in intercepting treasure-ships and pillaging the palaces of viceroys. In the last twenty years of the sixteenth century eleven silver fleets left Vera Cruz for Spain; but frequently they did not pay expenses, because of the cost involved in securing them from capture. It is impossible to tell exactly how much gold and silver reached the Madrid treasury during all the years when the Spanish flag dominated from the Golden Gate to the Rio de la Plata. Whatever it was, it was never enough to stop the unceasing clamor for more, which was the burden of every despatch from Spain to the New World; it was never enough to establish agricultural or manufacturing prosperity in the mother country; it was not enough to bring contentment to the people of Spain, nor was it enough to check the horrible decrease of population among the natives of America.

Spain was burdened prematurely with a great colonial empire. She had not a teeming indigenous population, nor had she manufactures seeking a market. With the growth of her colonies, we might, even in that age, have looked for a disposition to encourage the manufactures of the country at the expense of the colonies. Spain itself did not invite immigration, although the high cost of living, consequent upon the discovery of America, would normally have invited a stream of wage-earners from neighboring white countries. Therefore, while Spain was steadily being drained of her most vigorous children, she did nothing

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to fill their places at home. Yet she did not encourage emigration to the New World beyond the numbers she thought necessary for conducting the government and securing tribute from the colonies. She regarded her Spanish subjects in New Spain merely as an army of occupation, who were to act as they were ordered to from home, and to have no interests in the New World save as servants of the Crown. The Government passed many regulations discouraging to those desirous of leaving the mother country. The ships were carefully overhauled before they sailed, the proposing colonist had to show a special license, and to secure this license he had to prove, among other things, that for two generations no member of his family had fallen under the suspicion of the Inquisition.

Suspicion, indeed, was the key-note of Spanish colonial administration. The governor or viceroy had no sooner sailed from Spain than a commission followed him, charged with the duty of reporting secretly about him. The Crown trusted no one. Every man was suspected, and the Inquisition machinery was set in motion for political quite as much as for theological heresy. In Peru, in the year 1569, the Inquisition had charge not merely of all breaches of faith, but of the relations of master and servant and all questions of morals. The partnership between Church and State, in Madrid, was reflected in every Spanish colony, the only difference being that on American soil the Church was the only partner seriously consulted.

Spain's legislation against emigration was due less to economic reasons than to her chronic distrust of her colonists. She instinctively felt her own weakness,

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and acted in the belief that her children would break away from her as a matter of course. She therefore adopted the policy of keeping them individually weak, and not only that, but of forbidding on pain of death all commercial intercourse between one colony and another. The Spanish Court wanted gold and silver, but beyond that desired no further commerce with the New World. She limited the number of ships that might annually cross the ocean, as she limited the number of men that sailed in them. She took no interest in supplying the New World with Spanish products—she was not intelligent enough even to be a “protectionist.” The looms of France, Holland, and England furnished the produce which sailed from Spain for the benefit of her Western possessions. Local manufacturers complained, but the Government preferred the ready cash collected at the Custom House to the remoter advantages springing from busy factories at home. Thus the very indifference—not to say contempt—which the Spanish Government entertained for trade, led indirectly to the founding of mills and factories in America. Already, in the sixteenth century, guns were cast at Santiago (Cuba) as well as in Mexico. The Spanish nobleman’s inherited aversion to all useful occupations blinded him to the military advantage of having an army of machinists to fall back upon.