

half of the eighteenth century, when the work was completed. From 1763 onward the office of viceroy was definitely established, and the seat of government fixed at Rio de Janeiro.

The captains general, in charge of the separate provinces, frequently evinced a marked spirit of independence toward their superior. The people of the various captaincies, similarly, did not hesitate to oppose, whenever they could do so, any interference on the part of the central authority in purely local concerns. Given the circumstances under which many of the provinces had been originally founded, added to the lax administration of the mother country in general, it is not strange that the relations among them should have been much closer than was possible in the case of the Spanish colonies.

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

AMONG the numerous groups of aborigines in the New World the grade of civilization ranged from utter savagery up to a superior sort of barbarism. The lowest in the scale were nomads and cannibals. Others, like the virile Araucanians of Chile or the gentler Guaranís of Paraguay, carried on a rude kind of agriculture, and dwelt in more or

less permanent communities. Some of the natives had even made remarkable progress in the institutions of an orderly life.

To the relatively civilized class belonged the inhabitants of the cooler regions of the highlands extending from central Mexico to southern Peru. Typical of them were the loose confederation of tribes under the Aztecs and the mass of natives who submitted to the yoke of the Incas. Both had built upon foundations laid by peoples of a culture higher than their own, and of an origin altogether obscure.

Externally at least, with its potentates, priests, nobles, commoners, serfs and slaves, the social system of the Aztecs and the Incas bore much resemblance to that prevailing in Europe at the time, or was made to appear so by the Spanish writers who described it. Elaborate forms of administration had been devised, class distinctions had arisen, and various arts and industries flourished.

To this aboriginal element in America was added another from Africa. Early in the sixteenth century negro slaves were brought to the West Indies to replace the natives as laborers on the plantations and in the mines. From the islands they soon spread to the mainland about the Caribbean Sea.

Whatever may be said of the conduct of the early adventurers, the Spanish govern-

ment itself was very solicitous about the welfare of these two dependent peoples. It prohibited the enslavement of the Indians, and recognized them legally as subjects of the crown, though standing on a somewhat lower plane than those of Spanish descent. This was designed to protect them against exploitation and oppression, while it restrained any tendencies on their part to relapse into the ways of barbarism. The laws enjoined the officials to take care that both the Indians and the negroes should be kindly treated. Had the enactments been consistently applied, the lot of the humbler folk in the colonies would have been much happier than it was.

On the several bases of the native characteristics, the policy of the home government, the conduct of the individual colonists, and the conditions in general arising out of the contact of Europeans, Indians and Africans, the Spaniards erected their social organization in America. Intermarriage of the races was early established. The pioneers had come without their womankind. Almost everywhere the Spanish settlers were far less numerous than the natives. Considerations of temperament and climate also had their effect. The Europeans, accordingly, blended with the Indians, and to a small extent with the negroes, to form a new society. From the mixture of the white and

the Indian came the "mestizo," from that of the white and the negro, the mulatto, from that of the negro and the Indian, the "zambo," and from the crossings of these and their descendants, an extraordinary variety of ethnic types, along with a nomenclature for them that was bewildering.

Although the physical, mental and moral traits of all these ancestors were reproduced to some degree, and although the European element on the whole remained dominant, the racial foundation in colonial Spanish America was not European but Indian. Only in the southern part of South America did the Spaniards keep their blood relatively free from contact with that of the natives. This was due, partly to climatic and economic considerations, partly to the relatively smaller number of the aborigines and to the extermination of a few of the tribes, and partly to the fact that the country occupied was large enough to make it possible for the two social factors to remain fairly separate. Regarding the precise number of the population in Spanish America at large, the estimates for the end of the eighteenth century range from 12,000,000 to 19,000,000, of which the percentage of whites, or of those who passed for whites, in any given colony was probably somewhere between one eighth and two fifths.

Of this population the bulk was found outside of the distinctly tropical regions. Except where commercial connections might require otherwise, the Spaniards settled in the upland areas. Because of the cooler and more healthful climate, and as a measure of security against attacks from European enemies, they erected most of their towns and villages on sites thousands of feet above the level of the sea, and well-nigh inaccessible from the coast.

Towns like Potosí in the silver-mining district of what is now Bolivia, with its population at one time of 160,000, Mexico, Guatemala, Lima, Buenos Ayres, Caracas and Havana were all distinguished for their wealth and splendor. Potosí, in particular, and later, Mexico, were beyond doubt the finest cities in the New World.

Among the inhabitants of town and country two main classes developed. To the first of these belonged the native Spaniards and the creoles, *i. e.*, whites born in America, and those of mixed descent who traced their ancestry to Spaniards and to the families of Indian chieftains. Below them came the heterogeneous mass of half castes in whom the percentage of Spanish blood was small, and the great body of the Indians and negroes. Europeans not of Spanish stock were exceedingly rare. For a while even Spaniards

other than Castilians were forbidden to go to America. Because of religious, economic and political reasons, foreigners were not welcome. Heretics of course could not be tolerated; the mineral wealth of the New World was too precious to share with outsiders, and the huge extent of the Spanish dominions, compared with the size and strength of Spain itself, made a policy of exclusion desirable.

True to the traditions of the mother country, positions in the government, the church and the army were eagerly sought by the members of the upper class. The enjoyment of rank and title, which would assure the largest social prominence with the smallest expenditure of effort, was the goal of ambition. A few patents of colonial nobility were granted. Persons not so favored contented themselves with orders and decorations dispensed by the crown. The higher offices in state and church were usually reserved to native-born Spaniards, while the lower ones fell to the creoles. The latter, also, constituted the majority of the planters, cattle-raisers, mine-owners, professional men and merchants. To the half castes of low degree, as well as to the Indians and negroes in general, were relegated the humbler trades and labor of the ruder sort.

Among the members of the upper class

some prided themselves on the fact that they came from one province or another in Spain; although in the long run Andalusia and the Basque provinces triumphed over all the rest in their influence on character, speech, dress and custom. Others gloried in their descent from the "conquistadores," from the Spanish and Indian nobility, and from ancestors of wealth or of high official station.

But the great contrast that pervaded social relations in colonial Spanish America was that which existed between the native Spaniards and the creoles. Nowhere was the line easy to draw. The Spaniards did not constitute the governing class wholly, any more than the creoles made up the wealthy element alone. Yet the attitude of the creoles became hostile, or at least resentful, toward the natives of the mother country, who were accused of insufferable arrogance and exclusiveness, due to the especial favors they received from the home government.

Whatever the amount of ill-feeling that prevailed among them, the members of the ruling class were more or less equally disdainful of the plebeian multitude below. The former were distinctly the "gente de razón," or rational folk, whereas the latter, presumably, were the ignorant and debased. In their turn the lower orders were none too

friendly disposed toward their white superiors, and were also inclined to view with condescension such of their own number as they considered to be of inferior station.

In this attitude of mutual resentment and disdain the power of the home government found one of its strongest supports. So long as the Spaniards and the creoles could be kept in a state of disagreement, a judicious distribution of offices and other favors would suffice to hold it within bounds as a useful undercurrent of repulsion. Indeed, the humane treatment of the Indians appears to have been more or less designed. Since the natives looked upon the Spanish government and clergy as their protectors against the whites, whether Spaniards or creoles, they supplied a valuable counterpoise to any display of undue ambition from that quarter. All of this constituted the social phase of the policy of "divide and rule"; but it never operated to the point of causing the social divisions to become altogether sharp and irreconcilable.

Much of what has been said so far of Spanish America applies to Brazil under the Portuguese dominion. The Indian element was less numerous, and on the whole inferior to that found elsewhere in the New World. Despite the raids of the Paulistas, attempts at the enslavement of the abori-

gines were not altogether successful. Many of the natives lived far from the coast, they could escape quite readily into the jungles of the interior, and they were unfitted to supply the kind of labor demanded. Though enjoying considerable protection from the clergy, they were neglected by the home government, which made no serious effort to prohibit their enslavement till the middle of the eighteenth century.

The negro slave population, on the other hand, especially along the eastern coast of Brazil, was relatively larger than in Spanish America. From the time of their first importation, in 1563, the hot, moist climate of the lowlands and the life on the great plantations proved to be well suited to the blacks. Though often treated cruelly by their masters, they thrived abundantly.

Like the Spaniards, the Portuguese colonists freely mingled their blood with that of the Indians and Africans, constituting a mixed society in which the fusion was more complete and the differentiation, on account of race and color, less noticeable than in Spanish America. In the fairly temperate regions of the south, where the aborigines were of a strong stock, the white settlers amalgamated with them to form the vigorous, enterprising and aggressive "mamelucos" among the Paulistas. The activities

of these southerners, in fact, contributed as efficaciously to their domination over the affairs of the colony at large, as they did to the maintenance of Portuguese control in the southwestern portion of it against the pretensions of Spain. Here and elsewhere in the settled areas of Brazil, toward the close of the eighteenth century, there were altogether about 3,000,000 inhabitants, white, half caste, Indian and negro.

Antagonism between creoles and the native Portuguese in Brazil had much the same reasons for existence as in Spanish America, but the economic motive was stronger. The Paulistas resented the Portuguese competition in the mining regions, and the creole sugar-planters in the northeast disliked the merchants from the mother country on account of their trade methods. In both cases armed conflict ensued. That it was decided in favor of the Portuguese, certainly did not improve the temper of the creoles.

CHAPTER IV

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

EXCEPT in Peru and the adjacent regions under the rule of the Incas, where the llama had been trained to carry loads, there were no domestic animals known to the Indians. Among the more advanced communities