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Home Miss.

MEXICANS OR AMERICANS?

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Mexicans or Americans?



IN the early days of the revolution in Mexico, a Chinaman was plodding along a country road near Torreon. He chanced to meet on his way a detachment of soldiers, and upon being commanded to declare his sympathies, he cried, "Viva Huerta!" But the soldiers happened to be Carranzistas, and they beat him up and left him by the roadside.

A few days later, having recovered from his wounds, he again chanced to meet a company of soldiers, and profiting by his former experience, he cried lustily as soon as they came in sight, "Viva Carranza!" But these happened to be Huertistas, and they too administered a sound drubbing before they went on.

Some time later he met a third party of soldiers, and tried as upon the first occasion to slip by unnoticed. But such a thing is impossible in Mexico, for there is no room for a neutral, and they all gathered around him, insisting that he declare himself. The Celestial rubbed the sore spots on his limbs, and looking intently at one of his tormentors said, "Viva tu primero!"—"You hurrah first!"

It is a significant thing in these days when nobody loves a hyphen, that there is no such thing as a "Mexican-American." In the language of the farmer who saw a hippopotamus for the first time, "There ain't no such animal." The Mexican mind permits no neutrality. A Mexican is a Mexican whether he lives in Chihuahua or Chicago, and geography cannot hyphenate him.



THE CATHEDRAL AT MEXICO CITY

This is the type of building in which the Mexican is accustomed to worship

Making Americans

There are nearly a million and a half people in our great southwest whose native tongue is Spanish. Americans generally lump them all together and call them "greasers"—a term both unjust and un-Christian. About half of this number are Spanish-speaking Americans, most of them intensely loyal to the stars and stripes. Few states in the present struggle have a more enviable record than New Mexico; and it is a fact of history that during the Civil War New



And this is the type of building in which we expect him to worship if he becomes a Presbyterian

Mexico sent more soldiers to fight for the Union, in proportion to her population, than any other state or territory.

But the real Mexican in the Southwest is something very different. In his veins there flows the proud blood of the Spanish conquerors mingled with that of the learned Aztecs—and of the latter strain he is the more proud. His religion, when he has any, is a cross between Romanism and Aztec paganism. Socially and

intellectually, he is the logical product of nearly four centuries of supersition, fanaticism and oppression.

And the Mexican feels very much at home in our Southwest. Other foreigners come to our shores as to a strange land; the Mexican comes to that which he believes to be his own. From childhood he has been taught that the southwestern territory was stolen from his country by "the robber nation to the north;" and no Frenchman ever yearned more earnestly for the return of Alsace-Lorraine, than have the Mexicans dreamed of winning back their "stolen" states. They forget the toil and capital which have dotted the desert with cities and beautiful farms; when they cross the Rio Grande they feel that they are simply returning to a part of that which is their own land.

What Has Been Done?

For fifty years there has been a succession of large-hearted, big-visioned men who have seen the importance of winning these people of Spanish speech to Christ. It is a significant thing that where we have the most churches, and the strongest schools, the people are most loyal to America. The results of the efforts for Christian education, exerted through Menaul School for Boys at Albuquerque, and the Allison-James School for Girls at Santa Fe will never be fully known this side of eternity. There is another stirring story to tell also of the self-sacrificing devotion of the teachers under our Woman's Board who have hidden themselves away in the mountains of New Mexico, and have sown the seeds of the truth. Our Board has more churches

in New Mexico than in all the rest of the Southwest. They have always been small churches, it is true; but they have had their certain part in the development of that Christian character which speaks to-day in the loyalty of the Spanish-speaking people of the State.

Among the real Mexicans, a beginning has been made but it is a notable beginning. Two strong churches, at least, one in Los Angeles, the



This is a fair sample of the chapels in which our Mexican Presbyterian churches are housed. In the whole of our Spanish-speaking work we have hardly a decent building

other in El Paso, are teaching with wonderful results that Christian liberty which is the mother of all true democracy.

What Can the Church Do?

There never was a time when the church of Christ had a more splendid opportunity to serve



The white building in the foreground is the chapel of our Mexican Presbyterian Church in Santa Fe, New Mexico. In the background are the Roman Catholic Cathedral and the Arch-bishop's palace

the nation than that which presents itself to-day in the evangelization of the Mexicans within our own borders. They have come to us with prejudices, it is true; but with open eyes and ears. Vaguely they feel that the church, as they have known it, has been responsible for their social ills. Unconsciously they have repudiated that for which the church stands, and with ready hearts they are groping for something to take its place. The rapid progress which the I. W. W. and other social isms have made among them,



THE CARMEL MISSION, CALIFORNIA

testifies to their readiness to hear. And whenever we have been able to place a real evangelistic leader among them the people have thronged to hear the word of life. Our Mexican Presbyterian Church was organized in El Paso in 1915, and to-day has 390 members, with sixty being prepared for membership.

But we have been spending pennies where we should have spent dollars. We have invited these people to worship in shacks and huts, when for centuries they have worshipped in cathedrals. We have not visited their sick, or clothed their

naked, or fed their hungry, or preached the gospel to their poor.

We need help to prepare worthy young men for the ministry among them. We need hospitals in the large border cities; and we must establish more settlement work, where we may teach them—their women to keep house, their children to play and work, and men, women and children our English language, and the ideals of American citizenship.

Ours is a land of great ideals; and these spiritual realities have sprung from the religious undercurrent in our national life. So the church can help the nation in the Americanization of these Mexicans by holding out a helping hand, that they may know that America cares; and by preaching to them that liberty in Jesus Christ from which all true democracy springs. Will the church heed the call?

The Board's work for the Spanish-speaking people in the U. S. includes:

Ordained native ministers	30
Native helpers	9
Churches	54
Stations	38
Communicants	2,400
S. S. membership	1,800
Budget, 1917-18	\$29,170

Immediate needs—

For buildings	\$300,000
For support of work, 1919-20.....	\$76,000

