

History of the Catholic Church in Mexico

By MANUEL GOMEZ.

(Chapter Three—Continued)

"To Hell with the Constitution."

When the secretary of the interior ordered all government employees to take the oath of obedience to the constitution of 1857, the catholic hierarchy deliberately advised, and even commanded disobedience to the order. The archbishop of Mexico sent circulars to all bishops under him declaring that since the constitution contained provisions inimical to the institution, doctrine and rites of the catholic church, neither clergymen nor laymen could take the oath of allegiance to it under any circumstances whatever. The bishops then sent circulars to their respective country vicars and parish curates, informing them:

"First. That it was not lawful to swear allegiance to the constitution

pire," which lasted for three years, supported by French bayonets. On its overthrow Juarez came back to power. He was succeeded by another liberal, Lerdo de Tejada. Then followed the revolt of General Porfirio Diaz, who, basing himself on the old aristocracy and the army, as well as foreign concessionaries, maintained himself in power as dictator for a period of 32 years.

I have already pointed out in previous chapters how the church gradually regained much of its lost power during the "Diedadora Porfiriana."

Diaz ruled by intimidation and subordination. There was no such thing as free elections. Every governor, every local municipal president or "jefe politico," every member of the chamber of deputies, every senator,



because its articles were contrary to the institution, doctrine and rites of the catholic church.

"Second. That this communication must be made public and copies of it distributed as widely as possible.

"Third. That those who had already taken this oath must retract it at the confessional and make this retraction as public as possible, and that they must notify the government of their action." (Zamacois, "History des Mejico," Vol. VIX, p. 535.)

We therefore see that it is not only now that the catholic church has begun to resort to rebellion against a progressive constitution. The hypocritical clerics who pretend to set so much store by "law and order" and the principle of constituted authority—for the workers—have never scrupled to attack these principles when erected as a barrier against reaction. The oppressed classes in society can well take a leaf from the book of their enemies in this respect. "Law and order" represent in themselves nothing that deserves respect. They are a weapon of governmental suppression. Only under a workers' and farmers' government can they serve the true interests of the toiling masses.

Happy Days Under don Porfirio.

We cannot here go into the long-drawn-out details of the struggle which the church and its allies carried on consistently for the overthrow of the liberal Juarez regime. It culminated in the "Second Mexican Em-

pirate," which lasted for three years, supported by French bayonets. On its overthrow Juarez came back to power. He was succeeded by another liberal, Lerdo de Tejada. Then followed the revolt of General Porfirio Diaz, who, basing himself on the old aristocracy and the army, as well as foreign concessionaries, maintained himself in power as dictator for a period of 32 years.

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beginning of the modern struggle. But the Porfirian system carried with it the seeds of its own dissolution. This brings us to the modern struggle. In 1910 began what is now known as the Mexican revolution.

When Francisco I. Madero led the revolt against Diaz under the slogan of "Effective suffrage and no re-election," a movement was being initiated of far deeper significance than that indicated by the inadequate slogan. The slogan merely expresses the uncertainty of the bourgeoisie under Madero. With these forces were fused the agrarians led by Zapata—and, at a later stage, the newly-born working class. It was one of the greatest movements in all Latin-American history. All the forces of progress in Mexico were with it.

The church, of course, was with the enemy.

No sooner had the Madero movement triumphed than Francisco de la Barra, installed as provisional president after the flight of don Porfirio,



A PEEK EACH WEEK AT MOTION PICTURES



"TIN GODS."

THIS picture has its merits. Even the story is different. Not the "busy-business" man who deserts the wife in the "eternal triangle," but, for a change (and the relief of abused husbandhood) the politically ambitious wife neglects the husband in this drama. The husband goes to South America and to pieces—to be saved by a fiery dance hall girl. An old theme, 'tis true, but remodeled to a thrilling climax with a tragic ending, which also is an unusual procedure for American pictures.

Thomas Meighan is the leading actor. His performance is not more than an adequate one—he has done better—and to be fair, no more can be said for Eileen Pringle, who acts ambitious womanhood. But the picture rises to one above the average with the acting of Renee Adoree. Her characterization of the passionate Latin dancing girl is, in the opinion of this humble critic, as fine a job as a director could ask for. This gifted lady who helped to make "The Big Parade" what it was, is an actress the equal of any in American films.

"Tin Gods" is no great picture—but you've seen worse. It's showing (until Monday) at the "Chicago."

—W. C.

"THE AMATEUR GENTLEMAN."

DIPLOMATICALLY, "with reservations," I advise you to see this picture. We liked it. Not that we want you to acquire the genteel qualities of a "gentleman," for that is what the story deals with, but because of the other worth-while features about it. It has real pictorial beauty: the old English settings are a delight; old English customs, views of the life of the times, dress of the period and the architecture are all a setting which almost make the story unimportant. And it is unimportant, but it moves quite speedily even though with considerable clap-trap attached to it.

The son of an inn-keeper and champion boxer of England, on coming into an inherited fortune, desires to become "a gentleman." He convinces his father of his manhood by beating him in a boxing match (these scenes are most interesting if you are interested in the manly art of squashing noses). On his journey to London he falls in love with a "lady," acquires a valet, who becomes also his social mentor, and after many adventures (which, because of the old English settings, are quite interesting), learns to his sorrow that "gentlemen are born—not made." Ho-hum! But he gets the "lady" "for keeps" and, being a blond, it seems that even at



THOMAS MEIGHAN
in "Tin Gods." A Paramount Picture.

that early date gentlemen preferred them.

We recall a scene in this picture of three monocled "gentlemen" viewing a painting. The arrangement of this scene was so striking pictorially that we advise you to carefully look for it if you see the film. Richard Barthelmess does a good job of his leading part, his "lady" friend is above the average and the director deserves a vote of thanks for his job and especially his choice of photographers.

—W. C.

"VARIETY"—Excellent, say most critics including ours. Coming to Chicago week of Sept. 13 (Roosevelt Theater.)

"MOANA"—A thing of beauty.

"BATTLING BUTLER"—G. W. says "fair."

"THE ROAD TO MANDALAY"—The road to boredom.

"MARE NOSTRUM"—Just stale war propaganda.

"UP IN MABEL'S ROOM"—Ah, that's something else again!

"MANTRAP"—Has nothing to do with "Up in Mabel's Room."

"SEÑOR DAREDEVIL"—You'll be sorry if you go.

"THE SON OF THE SHIEK"—Valentino's last picture (Uptown).

"LA BOHEME"—A. S. says "fine."

"The BAT"—Sh... spooks!

"PADLOCKED"—G. W. says "well... if you can find nothing better."

NOTE: Only Chicago theaters showing a program for one week are listed. Pictures of current week changed Monday.

... Among the deputies imprisoned by Huerta after the dissolution of congress there was not a single one who belonged to the catholic party. Finally, an outstanding clerical, don Francisco Garcia, was named special magistrate to judge the deputies of the dissolved congress. (Calero, "Un Decenio de Politica Mexicana," p. 128.)

The New Magna Charta.

It is not surprising, therefore, that when the present Mexican constitution was adopted in 1917, following the overthrow of Huerta by the revolutionary forces under Carranza that the old anti-clerical provisions of 1857 were re-affirmed and even improved upon. This is the constitution which President Calles is now trying to apply in the face of reactionary catholic rebellion.

The Mexican revolution clashes naturally with the church because the church in politics represents everything that the revolution must sweep away. The present chapter of our story has shown us that the church not only intervenes in politics but that at every critical stage of Mexican history the church has fought militantly in the very forefront of the reactionary enemies of Mexican progress.

(The next chapter of "The History of the Catholic Church in Mexico" will show how the church has systematically allied itself with foreign enemies threatening the very independent existence of the Mexican nation.)