

PICTORIAL DOCUMENTS OF THE SIXTEENTH
CENTURY BY NATIVE ARTISTS
OF ANCIENT MEXICO.

BY THE EDITOR.

PROFESSOR Frederick Starr's attention was attracted by a passage in A. F. Bandelier's book on Mexico, to the existence of some curious paintings preserved near Cholula, Mexico. They were made by artists of the Cuauhtlantzinco Indians in the sixteenth century, soon after the arrival of Cortez, and are accompanied with explanations in their native language. The report declares that the Indians owning them guarded their historical treasures with great jealousy, and never allowed a white man to see them. If this remark is true, Professor Starr was more successful than his predecessors; for he was kindly received and no one forbade him to photograph the pictures, which consisted of a series of forty-four sheets of about 16×12 inches each, pasted on two frames of stretched cotton, some ten feet long and one yard high, illustrating the history of the tribe during the time of the conquest.

It was a happy inspiration which sent Professor Starr on his mission to this old Aztec village, and the humor and good-naturedness for which he is noted among all his acquaintances was probably an indispensable condition of his success and served the purpose of making public pictorial documents of great importance which otherwise would have been utterly lost; for soon after his visit a fire occurred in the town hall, and many of these invaluable pictures on one of the frames were destroyed by the flames. It is only to be regretted that owing to a misinformation in Bandelier's *Mexico*, Professor Starr expected to find only two pictures, each 16×12 inches, and was therefore unprepared to photograph all of them on separate plates, having taken only a dozen plates 5×7 with him. He did what he could under the circumstances, and

The Clerical reaction in Europe is a necessary consequence of the system of State Socialism which has arisen in the last twenty-five years. It can be defeated only by destroying this monster, the "State," and by substituting for it a public power with functions definitely circumscribed, such as orthodox liberalism wishes to do. As long as the modern State is as omnipotent as the *ancien régime*, and like it wishes to impose a religion upon its citizens, so long will it be an object of Clerical scheming, and we shall have a true and proper Clerical reaction, that is, Clericals in power and the arbiters of the destinies of nations. This is the true Clerical danger of Europe.

photographed the entire series in as large a size as the plates at his disposal allowed. He describes his expedition to Cholula, and gives detailed information concerning the pictures in a bulletin recently published by the department of anthropology of the University of Chicago, and we here present our readers with fifteen of the most interesting pictures, which tell their own story.

The Pueblo of San Juan de Cuauhtlantzinco is situated between Puebla and Cholula in the State of Puebla. It lies within sight of the tramway connecting these two cities, near the station of Los Arcos, on the Interoceanic Railway. The town is purely Indian, and contains about 1,500 inhabitants. The Aztec is still



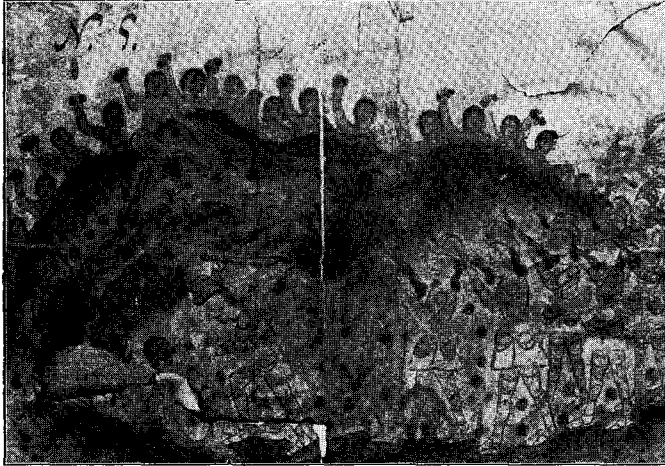
I. HOW THE INHABITANTS OF MEXICO WERE CONVERTED TO CHRISTIANITY
BY PRINCE SARMIENTO.

the daily language of the people. The whole district hereabouts was, when Cortez arrived, occupied by tribes of Nahautl speech.

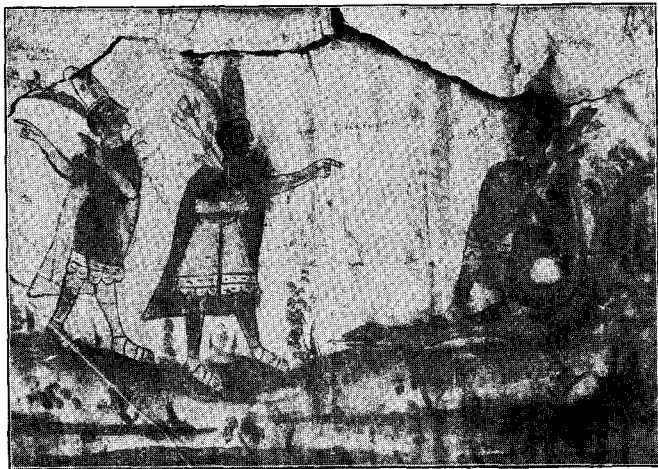
The custom of pictorially recording great events of their history was a habit practised by many Mexican tribes, as may be learned from similar productions, some of which have been published by Alfred Chavero in natural colors and in full size in his *Antiguedades Mexicanas*, under the name of *Lienzo de Tlaxcala*. This practice is referred to by Bernal Diaz, who says that the ablest painters of Mexico were sent to draw representations from life, of the countenance of Cortez, his captains and soldiers, the greyhounds, guns, and other equipment of the Spanish army.

The pictures of the Cuauhtlantzinco Indians were made at the

command of their chief, Prince Sarmiento, and are the official documents of the little state at the time of the conquest of Mexico by



2. HOW THE INHABITANTS OF MEXICO WERE CONVERTED TO CHRISTIANITY BY PRINCE SARMIENTO.



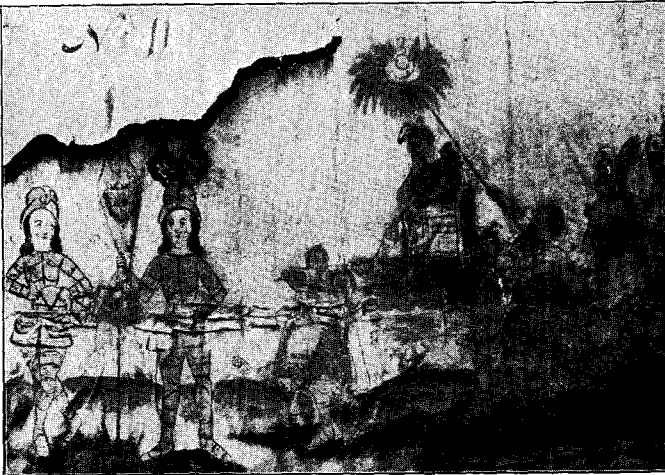
3. PRINCE SARMIENTO PREACHES CHRISTIANITY TO THE CHIEF OF THE GREEN SNAKES.

Cortez. The Prince met the Spaniards, and at once embraced Christianity ; he became a confederate of the Spaniards, to whose

cause he always remained faithful. He at once began to convert his fellow-countrymen, the methods of conversion being represented in the first and second pictures of our series.



4. PRINCE TEOPAXOTZIN BEFORE CORTEZ.



5. CACAMATZIN, LORD OF TEZCUCO, VISITING CORTEZ.

The Prince Sarmiento betook himself to a powerful monarch and tried to convert him, saying, "I am Prince Sarmiento; aban-

don idolatry, believe in God, otherwise I will destroy you, I will break you in pieces, oh, Tlamacoxpili, who art carried by a green snake; thou dost not instil fear in me. See the misfortunes and



6. THE BAPTISM OF CACAMATZIN, LORD OF TEZCUCO.



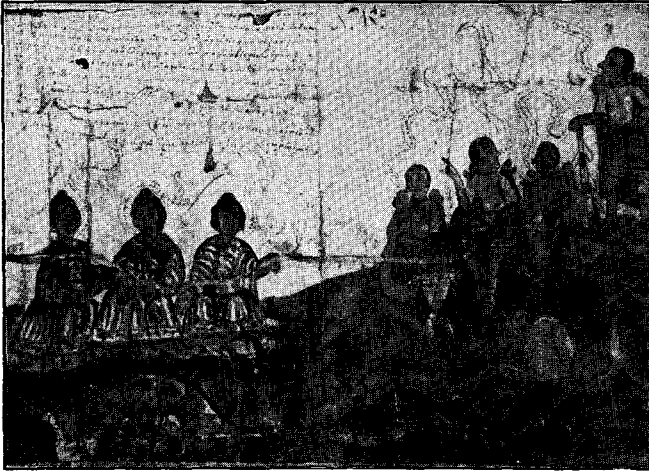
7. WORSHIPPING COPISTLIN, THE OLD GOD OF THE CUAUHTLANZINGOS.

disasters which thy vassals suffer on thy account." The scene is dramatically represented in our third picture.

Teopaxotzin, an Aztec prince who refused to believe in Chris-

tianity, was taken prisoner and brought before Cortez. (Picture 4.)

We read in Bernal Diaz that a Mexican embassy arrived,



8. INSTRUCTING THE PEOPLE IN CHRISTIANITY.



9. WORSHIPPING THE CROSS.

headed by Cacamatxin, Lord of Tezcuco, nephew of the Great Montezuma, and it is not impossible that this scene is represented in the next picture of our series, picture 5.

Citlalpopocatzin was baptised in the presence of Cortez, as represented in picture 6.

Before Christianity is officially introduced, in the gathering



10. INTRODUCTION OF MADONNA WORSHIP.



11. CARRYING GIFTS.

represented in picture 8, the painter devotes his art once more to the representation of the ancestral religion in picture 7, which, according to the inscription, represents the place where the god Co-

pistlin had been worshipped by the ancestors of the Cuauhtlantzinco Indians. Women dance on the sacred spot to the solemn strains of music made by men at a short distance.



12. THE SPANIARDS FEASTED.



13. COMMENDING HIS POSTERITY TO THE CARE OF CORTEZ.

Cortez made a cross with his own hand, by attaching his sword to a tree, for the purpose of being worshipped by Prince Tepestecatzin and his subjects, as shown in picture 9.

The introduction of the Madonna worship, represented in picture 10, apparently made a deep impression on the Cuahtlanzincos.



14. PORTRAIT OF AN AZTEC CHIEF.



15. PORTRAIT OF AN AZTEC CHIEF.

The next two pictures (11 and 12) have no inscriptions. We see in picture 11 a number of natives carrying gifts, eggs, a deer, fruit, and some drink, and in 12 a feast, apparently given in honor

of Cortez and the main priest of the Spaniards. The natives standing near a table are five prominent chiefs, all except one mentioned by name in the inscription of the picture, and among them we find Sarmiento.

Picture 13 represents the chief Tepostecatzin placing his infant child in the arms of Cortez for protection ; it is apparently a symbolical act in which an appeal is made by the native confederates of the Spanish to respect the rights of later generations.

Anthropologists and lovers of Indian lore will find these pictures interesting for many reasons, not only as pictorial reports of history, but also on account of the faithful representations of the instruments used, of the weapons employed in battle, of the ornaments worn, of the modes of worship, and all the other details of Aztec dress and habits.