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THE DOOM OF CHRISTIAN SPAIN.

BY G. W. FOOTE, EDITOR "FREETHINKER."

V. MEXICO AND PERU.

From the West Indies we now turn to Mexico and Peru. The former was conquered by the pious and cruel Cortes, the latter by the still more pious and cruel Pizarro. Millions of human beings were slaughtered, and two great civilizations destroyed, in a comparatively few years. By ruining the cities, and exterminating the classes who possessed knowledge or exercised power, the Spaniards reduced the miserable remnant of two great nations to the condition of wandering savages who had almost entirely forgotten the superiority of their ancestors.

Keats has immortalized the "eagle eye" of Cortes. But the eagle eye was accompanied by eagle talons and beak. On his way to the city of Mexico he fell upon the Cholulans. "We slew many of them," wrote Bernal Diaz, "and others were burnt alive; so little did the promises of their false gods avail them." The Spaniards worshipped the *true* god, but it did not prevent them burning their defenceless enemies alive. And it was really not the *god* of the Spaniards who overwhelmed the *gods* of these poor aborigines of America. The Spaniards had horses which the natives had never seen; they had muskets that could be fired at a distance; they had artillery that could sweep away whole ranks of men and lay protecting walls in ruins. "The nobler but weaker nature," as Froude says, "was crushed under a malignant force which was stronger and yet meaner than itself."

Mexico was a splendid city, immensely larger and finer, and considerably more populous, than Madrid. "Well might the rude Spanish soldier," says Froude, "find no parallel but in the imaginations of his favorite Romance. Like Granada, encircled, but not frowned upon, by mountains; fondled and adorned by water like Venice; as grand in its buildings as Babylon of old; and rich with gardens, like Damascus; the great city of Mexico was at that time the fairest in the world." The population amounted to at least three hundred thousand. Froude helps conceive it to have been much larger. All the European eye-witnesses agree in praising the size and beauty of this great capital, and the number and quality of its inhabitants.