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FRANCISCAN MISSIONS OF NEW MEXICO 1740-1760

By HENRY W. KELLY

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH-STATE CRISIS *

THE HISTORY of New Mexico from the founding of Santa Fé in 1610¹ until the panic-stricken exodus of the Spaniards in 1680 was filled with a running quarrel between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities over the common ground of mission jurisdiction, a quarrel that from time to time boiled over, and then subsided to a simmer until the next crisis gathered force. This futile struggle did much harm, for the real welfare of the missions was neglected while padre and governor exhausted themselves in charges and counter-charges, the framing of long reports and vindictory memorials, which showed no trace of compromise, and resulted in little that was constructive.²

New Mexico in the eighteenth century was, on the whole, spared the evils of these household quarrels. However, the middle of the century saw a serious flare-up of the old trouble, the embers of which did not cool for many years after. In previous chapters on the missionary activities among the Moquis, Navajos and Apaches, we noticed some slight intimations that the secular and ecclesiastical powers were not always smoothly coördinating. The Franciscan charges that the governors were harming the missionary program by non-support and positive hostility were only

* Or "The Pot and the Kettle."

1. Lansing B. Bloom, "When was Santa Fé Founded?" *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, April, 1929.

2. For a detailed study of the Church-State problem in the seventeenth century see the following works by France V. Scholes: "Church and State in New Mexico, 1610-1650," *Historical Society of New Mexico Publications in History*, (Albuquerque 1937), VII; "The First Decade of the Inquisition in New Mexico," *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, July, 1935; "Troublous Times in New Mexico, 1659-1670," *ibid.*, April, 1937; "Problems in the Early Ecclesiastical History of New Mexico," *ibid.*, January, 1932.

faint echoes of the terrific storm that broke all over the Custodia in 1749 and 1750.

The governor at the time that this Church-State crisis came to a head was Tomás Vélez Cachupín, and it dragged on through the terms of his successors, Marín del Valle and Mateo Antonio de Mendoza.³ One must keep in mind throughout this entire controversy that the historian is unfortunately forced to view matters almost entirely through the window of a Franciscan convent. The plethora of Franciscan documents on the struggle and the contrasting scarcity of documents showing the secular side of the question make it difficult to form opinions and pass judgment with the desirable impartiality.

In 1749 Fray Andrés Varo, then an old man, having come from Spain as a padre in 1718 and having been custodian twice, went to Mexico for the provincial chapter meeting. He wrote, as we have seen, a report in January of that year concerning the status of the Custodia, followed by another in March of the same year stressing the supreme necessity for a presidio in the Junta de los Ríos region. These reports were presented to the viceroy, and Fray Varo returned to New Mexico, custodian for the third time.

Meanwhile, "the fire of persecution was burning extinguishably against the religious of the Custodia," led by Governor Cachupín, whose ire was increased by the knowledge of Varo's two reports. Later in 1749 the viceroy, as a result of Varo's reports, sent Don Juan Antonio de Ornedal y Maza to New Mexico in the official capacities of presidial inspector and *juez de residencia*. Ornedal joined the Cachupín faction, and "hell conspired with all its fury to exterminate the religious from the Custodia." Ornedal, in league with the governor, drew up a very unfavorable report of the Franciscan administration of the missions, and recommended drastic reforms. In December, 1749, the viceroy sent to the Franciscan provincial, Jimeno, a certified copy of

3. According to Bloom, "The Governors," 155, the terms of these three governors were: Tomás Vélez Cachupín 1749-1754; Marín del Valle 1754-1760; Mateo Antonio de Mendoza *ad interim* governor during 1760.

Ornedal's slanderous report. The provincial in March, 1750, replied to the viceroy, refuting piecemeal Ornedal's charges, at the same time sending the copy of his report to Custodian Varo, ordering him and the missionaries to reply in detail to the damning charges. The provincial's somewhat generalized rebuttal would then be bolstered by special facts from the scene of the trouble.⁴

Also in March, 1750, the venerable Fray Carlos Delgado, then seventy-three years of age, in retirement from active missionary life at the hospice of Santa Bárbara in Mexico City, wrote a sizzling denunciation of the secular power in New Mexico. Too old to work any longer in the field, he wielded a savage pen in defense of his Order.⁵

The other principal champion of the brown-robcs, Fray Andrés Varo, did as his provincial requested, and in 1751 returned a very bulky collection of documents in defense of the Order and denouncing the secular power. This collection included a long, comprehensive report by Varo, supported by shorter reports by the Vice-Custodian Manuel Trigo and Frayles Andrés García, Juan Sanz de Lezaún, Manuel Vermejo and Juan José Oronsoro. The veracity of these reports was solemnly ratified by numerous attestations "in verbo sacerdotis." In order doubly to assure the viceroy of the truth of their statements and to lend an impartial touch, the padres included the sworn testimonials of numerous prominent colonists praising their unselfish and devoted attention to duty.

For some reason Jimeno did not send this Varo collection to the viceroy, probably considering them too bulky, the time inopportune or his own report of 1750 sufficient. These documents gathered dust for a decade in the archives of the Franciscan headquarters, the succeeding three provincials failing to make use of them. In 1761 Provincial Serrano, acting under superior orders, as a result of continued trouble in New Mexico, dusted off these reports, written and col-

4. Report of Provincial Serrano to Viceroy Cruillas, 1761, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 479-480.

5. Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 425.

lected by old Varo ten years before, and made a resumé of them including long quotations from Varo's report, in addition to other letters and reports written by New Mexican missionaries between 1758 and 1760, which he sent to the Viceroy Cruillas.⁶ I feel that this short description of the authors, nature and chronology of the numerous reports on this dispute is valuable in eliminating confusion when they come up for study in the course of the chapter.

In the first place let us see what Ornedal, the presidial inspector and judge of residencia, said in his famous report and what the padres said in self defense. The original report of Ornedal has not yet been located, but its contents are known because each charge was minutely listed and refuted by the Franciscan writers. The padres considered Ornedal as legally incompetent to make such an all-embracing report, for he came only as presidial inspector and to take the residencia of the outgoing Governor Codallos (1743-1749), having no authority to investigate the conduct of the missionaries. The provincial considered him only as a private, voluntary informer whose charges were general, unspecific, contradictory and containing little truth and impartiality.

Ornedal began by charging the missionaries with grave neglect of their duties, failing to say Mass and administer the sacraments over long periods of time, and frequently deserting their posts to indulge in trade for their own benefit.

Secondly, Ornedal charged that, through neglect of the padres, the Indians had not learned to speak Castilian, although the law provided that they were to be taught, and that they did not exert themselves to learn the native dialects, the only real way of effectively Christianizing the Indians. The Indians usually put off confession until the hour of death because they naturally disliked having to recount their sins through an interpreter. Ornedal claimed that the root of the trouble lay in the disregard that the Franciscan custodians had for the right of royal patronage enjoyed by the governors. The custodians moved the religious about from mis-

6. Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 480-481.

sion to mission, making exchanges or filling vacated posts without explaining the reason for the change or receiving the governor's approval. A religious was not allowed to remain in one place long enough to learn to understand the native dialect, much less to speak it, with the result that the padre did not reach his charges effectively.

In the third place, Ornedal accused the missionaries of searching the houses of the Indians and forcing them to give up grain that they had stored to feed their own families. The padres extorted this supply in addition to the swollen harvests that they received from the fields of corn and wheat that the Indians raised especially for the support of the missionaries. The padres, seizing the Indians' sheep, forced them to weave fabrics of wool and also of cotton, for which they received no pay. Ornedal went so far as to say that, unless virtuous religious were sent to the missions, the Indians would soon flee and join the heathen, for all their property had been taken.

Fourthly, Ornedal claimed that the padres so neglected their high calling that they engaged publicly in trade among themselves and the Indians. The chief articles of trade were the woolen and cotton cloths that the Indians wove, and should they fall short in their quotas the padres would confiscate their buffalo robes and buckskins. If the unhappy Indians tried to complain to the civil power, they were threatened with flogging and other dire punishments. The padres were forced to resort to these objectionable practices because their annual sínodos arrived greatly curtailed, and Ornedal advocated as a remedy that the governor distribute them in the future to insure proper allocation.

Turning from this series of charges, Ornedal, in his fifth point, became more constructive. He advised that the missions at Santa Fé and El Paso del Río del Norte, where the populations were predominantly Spanish, be taken out of the hands of the Franciscans and turned into regular parishes, served by secular priests under the episcopal power of the bishop of Durango. It was the regular policy through-

out colonial Spanish America to replace the missionary type of regular clergy with secular priests when a frontier area became sufficiently civilized and settled with Spanish colonists and domesticated Indians. The missionary was to move on into new territory.

Ornedal claimed that both these settlements were prosperous and well established, yielding revenues far in advance of those needed to support one or more religious. He claimed that the obventions in Santa Fé exceeded two thousand pesos, including what was produced by the *pié de altar*, which consisted of Mass fees contributed annually by the presidial company. The revenue of El Paso was even greater, approaching two thousand five hundred pesos. By replacing the two religious at each villa by one secular priest at each place, the Hacienda real would be relieved to the amount of four stipends, for the secular clergy would be supported by the bishop and the parishioners.

Lastly, Ornedal devoted a large part of his report to a scheme of retrenchment and consolidation. In order to ease the burden of the *real hacienda*, he suggested reducing the number of religious in the New Mexico missions, having one padre take care of three neighboring missions, instead of maintaining one in each mission. The following were the missions affected, arranged by groups, each group to be served by one padre.

1. Puxuque [Pojuaque?], Tesuque, Nambé.
2. San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, San Juan de los Caballeros.
3. Cochití, San Felipe, Santo Domingo.
4. Santa Ana, Sía, Jémez.
5. Ácoma, Laguna.

This plan would release nine missionaries from service, saving the Crown nine sínodos.

Ornedal also advised retrenchment in the El Paso region where the four missions of Real de San Lorenzo, Senecú, La Isleta and El Socorro were situated very close to El Paso, the most distant being only four leagues away. The four

religious should be replaced by one secular priest and two assistants, or, as an alternative, their number cut down to one for the four missions. Although Ornedal did not visit the Junta de los Ríos missions, he proposed similar retrenchment there, one padre to administer all six of the missions.⁷

This searing denunciation with its drastic proposals of secularization and retrenchment aroused a storm of protests from the Franciscans, the sources, number and chronological order of which have been reviewed above. Consolidating these various reports, we are given a minute refutation of each of Ornedal's points, the net result of which is to clear the Franciscan reputation and show the inadvisability of his reforms.

The padres vigorously denied the charge that they neglected their religious duties and frequently deserted their posts to indulge in trade. The missionaries were men tested in the zeal and care with which they performed their duties, and such charges were ridiculous. The only time that a padre left his post was when he was designated by the custodian, at the governor's request, to accompany the soldiers and vecinos as royal chaplain on expeditions against the predatory heathen. He also was permitted to leave his post occasionally for proper and legitimate reasons after authorization from the custodian. In his absence his flock was cared for by the padre at the nearest mission. Given these restrictions there was no opportunity for the padre to sally forth at will on commercial enterprises even if he were so inclined. Fray Varo did not hesitate to admit that, as every human organization had its flaws, the Franciscan order had its quota of unworthy members. There were dissolute and ungovernable (*relajados y discolos*) *frayles*, those who, overcome by the common inheritance of human frailty, did not live up to the high ideals of the Order. He mentioned especially "two *frayles*, who, as men, sinned, but all the *frayles* being men are not like those two sinners." On the other hand

7. My authority for Ornedal's report is the report of Provincial Ximeno to the Viceroy, March, 1750, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 441-456, *passim*.

the superior prelates and the custodians took special care to eliminate the evils and punish the guilty friars, a close watch being kept on the conduct of all the missionaries. Ornedal characterized the whole staff of the Custodia by the weaknesses of a few of its members, and even those *discolos* were not guilty of a great many of the charges laid upon them.⁸

Ornedal's charge that the padres had not only failed to teach the Indians Castilian, but had failed to learn the native dialects, struck at the very foundation of the mission program. If his charge was true, the padres and Indians, being unable to exchange ideas except through interpreters, the whole scheme of conversion and instruction was a farce. There is general agreement among the Franciscan champions that the vast majority of the Indians did understand Castilian well, and were able to confess in that language, a condition resulting from the constant diligence of the padres and the desire of the Indians to learn.

Ornedal's charge "that not a single Indian in any of the missions, receives during his life any other sacrament than that of penance and then only at the moment of death and by an interpreter" was a gross distortion of the truth. He expanded what was an unusual case into a prevalent condition. Varo admitted that there were a few Indians who stubbornly refused to confess in Spanish, preferring their own tongue, and it was they who would postpone confession until death using an interpreter. Varo cited the example of one Indian who appeared eager to become a Christian, made rapid strides in the instruction, but, when all prepared for baptism, refused to receive it in spite of all the arguments and pleadings of the padre. So obdurate was the Indian that Varo exclaimed in exaggeration, "Heavens, what an Indian!" (*Válgate Dios que Indio!*) The Indian held out for years, yielding only at the approach of death, exclaiming "now's the time, now's the time, for I am dying." These examples were the rare exceptions, and most of the Indians confessed at

8. Ximeno Report, 1750, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 441; Varo Report, 1751, B. N., Leg. 9, Doc. 17, Folio 13v and 17.

least once a year, to comply with the precepts of the Church.

The padres did not acquit themselves very well of the charge of failure to learn the native dialects, of which the Queres, Tewa and Tigua were predominant.⁹ They denied the truth of Ornedal's charge, but failed to come out with a strong, positive assertion of their knowledge of the native tongues, arriving at such a conclusion only by indirection or inference. Padre Varo probably came nearest to the truth, yet he was contradictory. He claimed that most of the ministers understood the native dialects, and "more than three" both understood and spoke them, but that none of them had a complete mastery, although enough of one to fulfill their duties. In this "more than three" group was one unnamed padre who "understands and talks it [the Indian language] as perfectly as the Indians." We are left with the impression that this matter of Indian dialects was a sore point with the padres, an impression that is strengthened by the frequent references to the use of interpreters. The padres certainly do not stand acquitted if, out of twenty-five missionaries in the Santa Fé region of the Custodia, only three or four were able to understand and speak the native dialects. However, their assertions that the Indians understood Spanish stands on firmer ground, and after all it was really more desirable to make Spanish the common language, for its general usage would intensify and accelerate the program of conversion and cultural assimilation of the Indians.

Ornedal laid the failure of the padres to learn the native tongues to their frequent shifting from one mission to another. Varo, dodging the issue, said that thirty years of experience in mission administration had convinced him of the wisdom of these periodical redistributions. He insisted that the custodian was under no obligation to submit his plans for distribution of the missionaries to the governor, who illegally was attempting to expand his powers of patronage. The change of atmosphere had a freshening effect on both the padres and the Indians. In fact, the Indians of

9. See earlier, Chart in Chapter II.

one mission petitioned a former custodian for a new padre, not because their present one was lax or oppressive, but merely "because the padre has been with us for a long time." I think that we will all agree that Padre Varo's psychology was sound.¹⁰

Against the serious charges of enforced personal service, extortion of Indian property and general oppression the padres piled up convincing proof of their innocence. Ornedal employed glittering generalities, blanket denunciations, almost entirely unsupported by specific instances of such oppression. From the earliest missionary times it was the custom for the Indians to cultivate a field called "the father's." This the Indians did voluntarily and gladly, for they were burdened with no obventions as were the Spaniards. The padre's *milpa* yielded only enough to meet his indispensable requirements, not a swollen harvest. As proof that the Indians planted the padre's milpa willingly the case was cited of one group of mission Indians who refused to accede to the request of their over-scrupulous minister that they cease to trouble themselves with his plot, but instead supply him at their pleasure from their own harvests. The Indians wanted to continue the cultivation of the padre's plot, for he often supplied them with corn when they were in need.

Padres Vermejo and Lezaún, after their unfortunate experience with the Navajo-Apaches at Cebolleta and Encinal in the spring of 1750, were stationed at the missions of Zia and Santa Ana respectively. They have left us some interesting information on this matter of the padre's milpa. Quite logically, this sowing could not be excessive, for the object was to keep the Indians docile, and to do so they had to be brought to love their minister. In 1750 at Zia the fields planted for Fray Vermejo yielded sixteen *fanegas* of corn (a fanega equals 1.56 bushels) and less than two fanegas together of chile and beans. This harvest was an unusually

10. Varo Report, 1751, B. N., Leg. 9, Doc. 17, Folio 5v-6v; 13v-14v; Ximeno Report, 1750, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 445.

abundant one as the *alcaldes* and Indians could testify. The *alcalde* of Jémez could testify that the Indians of that pueblo never sowed more than two fanegas of wheat for their padre, which that year yielded thirteen fanegas. At Santa Ana the Indians in 1750 sowed for Padre Lezaún one-half a fanega of wheat and a cupful (*como una jícara*) of corn, the barn-bursting harvest from such an abundant sowing being easily visualized. In the other missions the most that was sown for the padres was three or four fanegas as the *alcaldes* could testify. Sometimes the padres did not get a single grain of wheat due to frequent plagues. In 1749 Vermejo had to support himself on *guaiabes*,^{10a} not having any wheat. There was no use in gathering a harvest greater than the padre's own needs, for there was no market, and the surplus would only spoil. Only a few of the Indians of each pueblo worked in the padre's field, and while so occupied they were fed at his expense.

The missionaries did not extort extra supplies of corn from the homes of the Indians or steal livestock from their corrals, for the Indians would not stomach this injustice, and would lose respect for them and the religion that they taught. At Ácoma and Zuñi the Indians willingly supplied their padres with fresh meat daily because they had large flocks of sheep and goats.

Equally false was the charge that the padres forced the Indians to spin and weave large quantities of wool into *mantas*. Where did the padres get all this wool to keep the poor Indians busy? They had no flocks themselves. In the *Rio Arriba* district, that is, north of Santa Fé in which nine missions were located, neither the Spaniards nor the Indians raised sheep in sufficient numbers to yield a sizeable wool crop. The truth was, according to Padre Vermejo, that a sheep was killed every fifteen days for the padre's support.

10a. Guaiabe is a Pueblo Indian term for their wafer-like corn bread. Well ground corn (not wheat) is prepared in a thin batter; then on a flat stone, well heated over the fire, the Indian woman quickly spreads a handful to cook, and deftly folds the sheet as it is finished. It tastes like "corn flakes," and Vermejo might easily have fared worse; but protracted use of unleavened corn might weary one who was accustomed to leavened wheat loaves.

The wool was pulled from the pelt by two *semaneros*, who kept half for themselves, the balance being woven into clothes for the padre. In the nine missions of *Río Abajo*, where wool and cotton were more plentiful the Indians did weave a few mantas to meet the padre's needs, but in no such stupendous and excessive quantities as Ornedal reported.¹¹

The padres showed themselves very thankful for the sínodos which the Crown sent annually. Ornedal claimed that the padres engaged publicly in trade because their salaries arrived greatly curtailed. This was untrue, and Ornedal, in order to support such a statement, would have to have had access to the Franciscan records which in fact were not available to him. The medium of exchange being mantas, buffalo robes and buckskins (*gamuzas*), the padres did obtain enough of the latter from the nomads to meet their necessities not taken care of by royal aid and the yield of the padres' fields.¹²

Ornedal, not content with heaping lies upon the good name of the Order, gave the missionaries no credit for the good work that they were doing. He made no mention of the missionary activities among the heathen, of their willing service as army chaplains, whenever called, on the campaigns against the nomads or of the physical labor that they themselves did in constructing and repairing convents and churches with no aid from the civil government. Fray Vermejo in the fall of 1750 was working personally with his Indians in building a new church and repairing the convent that had fallen into disrepair. At Santa Ana, Fray Lezaún, when he took over the mission, found the church half crumbled. In the short time of two months, under his direction, the Indians extracted *vigas* from the mountains, made adobes and restored the church perfectly.¹³

11. Ximeno Report, 1750, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 446-447; Vermejo-Lezaún Report, 1750, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 82, Folio 3v-4v; Varo Report, 1751, B. N., Leg. 9, Doc. 17, Folio 15v; Trigo Report, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 69, Folio 7.

12. Ximeno Report, 1750, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 449; Varo Report, 1751, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 17, Folio 12v-13; 15v.

13. Vermejo-Lezaún Report, 1750, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 82, Folio 5v.

In order to lend their assertions more validity in the eyes of the viceroy, the padres obtained about a dozen testimonials, all given during the summer and fall of 1750, by prominent laymen in the kingdom. It is interesting to note that every testimonial was given by an ordinary vecino or an ex-official, a former alcalde mayor, an alférez, a captain or lieutenant of the presidio. The absence of testimonials of officials then in office is explained by a decree issued by Governor Cachupín in 1750, which was intended to gag the padres. This decree forbade the alcaldes mayores under any condition to issue certificates to the padres under penalty of a two hundred peso fine, deprivation of office and other drastic punishments. In this way the padres were unable to refute the charges made by Ornedal and the governor with testimonials of good conduct from the alcaldes. This decree was confirmed by all of Cachupín's successors, through the term of Governor Mendoza in 1760. So effective was this censorship that Franciscan provincials in Mexico got very little news from the northern part of the Custodia. Varo's famous report of 1751 would not have reached the provincial had it not been smuggled out by a religious. The Franciscans were forced to send their official mail among the papers of the Holy Office with which the governors dared not tamper. This decree accounted for a decade of Franciscan silence in the Church-State quarrel, between the time that the Provincial Ximeno in March, 1750 sent the viceroy the first refutation of the Ornedal charges and the final recapitulation sent to the viceroy in 1761 by Provincial Serrano.¹⁴

For this reason the padres in 1750 were forced to obtain testimonials from men who would not incur the penalties connected with such a service. The testimony of the colonist Gerónimo Jaramillo, "a native of this Kingdom of New Mexico and one of its conquerors," is typical of that given by all. This old follower of Vargas was proud of his title of conquistador, which lent his testimony added prestige. Many

14. Vermejo-Lezaún Report, October 29, 1750, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 82, Folio 5; Serrano Report, 1761, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 496-497.

of these rude, old Spaniards found the pen unwieldy and their grammar and spelling very rusty as they laboriously scratched down the testimonials. One of them, Diego Torres, was forced to dictate his testimony, affixing his signature with great difficulty. Jaramillo, for fifty-six years a resident of New Mexico, vouched for the good conduct of the padres; the careful performance of their religious duties; that the Indians sowed only enough for their essential needs; that the Indian weavers supplied them with only a bare minimum of sheets and mantas; that they exacted no obventions from their charges; extorted no property, and did not engage improperly in trade.¹⁵

The padres vigorously opposed Ornedal's plan to replace them in Santa Fé and El Paso with secular priests. Provincial Ximeno claimed that Ornedal was not in a position to obtain detailed information concerning the church revenue produced in these towns. He could only have determined that sum by an examination of the books kept by the missionaries at each place, a privilege that he did not enjoy. His statements that the obventions of Santa Fé produced two thousand pesos annually and those of El Paso two thousand five hundred were gross exaggerations. In 1748 the total obventions at El Paso came only to one thousand two hundred pesos and neither villa was in a position to be converted into a curacy.¹⁶

This attempt to introduce secular clergy was only one more phase of a long, complicated and bitter struggle that had been dragging on within the Church, namely the attempt of the nearest episcopal authority, the Bishop of Durango, to extend his jurisdiction over New Mexico. The quarrel started in 1725 when Bishop Crespo visited the Custodia, penetrating only as far north as El Paso, where he exercised his functions without much opposition. However, in 1730, on his next visit he came all the way to Santa Fé. In several of the missions the friars refused him permission to adminis-

15. B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 76, Folio 2-13, *passim*.

16. Ximeno Report, 1750, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 450-451; Varo Report, 1751, B. N., Leg. 9, Doc. 17, Folio 20v.

ter the sacrament of Confirmation, acting upon instructions from the custodian, Fray Andrés Varo, who in turn was obeying superior orders. Bishop Crespo began legal proceedings against the padres. The trial dragged on interminably with appeals and counter-appeals, the advantage swinging from one side to the other. Bishop Elizacochea continued to prosecute the case of his predecessor, and brought it before the Council of the Indies. He visited New Mexico in 1737 without any recorded opposition, leaving a record of his passage on Inscription Rock (El Morro) near Zuñi. The law suit begun years before by Crespo, was still simmering in 1750. The padres evidently suspected, with good reason, that Ornedal was an agent of the bishop, and were determined not to subordinate their Custodia to the Durangan mitre, which in their eyes would be to its prejudice. Santa Fé was removed over four hundred arduous leagues from Durango, a distance too great to enable the bishop, without the elaborate organization of the Franciscans, to exercise effective control, and the missions were too poor to support parish priests, who would have no royal sínodos. Moreover, the Franciscans dreaded the thought of being subordinated to a strange authority after two centuries of autonomy, a subordination which might ultimately result in their complete removal.

The bishop, regardless of the undecided state of the lawsuit, by 1750 had succeeded in placing *jueces eclesiásticos* at Santa Fé and El Paso, and was collecting tithes.¹⁷

Ornedal's "economy streak" in the New Mexico missions involved cutting down the number of missionaries, and therefore the number of sínodos, by having one padre administer several missions instead of only one. To a person with an eye to slashing expenditures, having casually glanced at a map of the missions, Ornedal's plan would seem quite sensible and long overdue, for the neat little churches, designating missions, look but a stone's throw apart. However,

17. Bancroft, *History of New Mexico*, 240-242; Twitchell, *Leading Facts*, I, 437; Varo Report, 1749, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 57, Folio 5v-6; Ximeno Report, 1750, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 450.

such a person would be guilty of over-simplified and perfunctory thinking. Such, in fact, was the opinion of the padres of Ornedal's scheme. He traveled along the *camino real* in comparative ease in a carriage or on horseback, visiting only a few of the pueblos and getting no conception of the difficulties of travel off the beaten track. He had only a rough idea of the locality and accessibility of many of the missions. He did not consider that the missionary might be called upon at any hour, night or day, in all sorts of weather, to make sick calls or say Mass. "They are exposed to great danger and peril at all times, having to cross rivers in canoes often at night and at times when their waters are in flood and very rapid." Certainly any one who has traveled considerably in present day New Mexico will agree with Padre Ximeno in his estimate of the difficulties of travel. Even today one need only desert the main highways to experience the many obstacles that beset the traveller; the stickiest, most slippery mud in existence; red, death-dealing torrents of water suddenly rounding the bend of a dry *arroyo*, caused by a cloudburst miles away; earth shaking electrical storms and deep snows in the winter. All these the padre experienced, on foot or horseback.

The missionary could not possibly attend to all his multifarious duties under the conditions suggested by Ornedal. He could not answer all the simultaneous calls in different missions for his services; he might reach a dying Indian too late to aid him. "The Catholic Kings, in their Christian and pious zeal, do not desire to save the royal funds at such expense to the spiritual welfare . . ." of their subjects.

Besides the damage to the spiritual welfare of the Indians that this excessive retrenchment would have caused, the provincial reminded the viceroy that the missionaries, as human beings, needed some earthly consolations. He cited a passage from the mediaeval Spanish law code, *Las Siete Partidas*, that no friar should be sent off alone, for he needed the company of others "to comfort him, and give him strength to struggle with the devil, the world and the flesh, which are the

enemies of the Soul, for he who lives alone is miserable." Alfonso the Wise knew his practical psychology, and the law that he perpetuated was dusted off in an effort to alleviate the loneliness of friars living in a remote valley, thousands of miles from Spain, five hundred years after that monarch's reign.

Ornedal ignored both the laws of the Church and the *Siete Partidas* when he intended a solitary man to care for two, three or even four missions. Yet he showed himself inconsistently lenient when he suggested that the missions of the El Paso region be erected into curacies, for he gave the curate two ecclesiastics to bear him company. Ironically the provincial asked, "Is this, perchance, because the sack cloth worn by the religious is woven in a loom of less account?"¹⁸

We have seen how the padres defended their reputations from the charges heaped upon them by the Cachupín-Ornedal clique and, with one exception, the ignorance of native dialects, they acquitted themselves in a convincing manner. But they did not confine themselves to the defensive, for the Ornedal report and trouble with the governor had aroused their anger, and they struck out on a vigorous offensive. The Franciscan counterblast was bitter to the extreme, and innumerable charges of all varieties were heaped upon the secular authorities. Again, in making evaluations, one must constantly keep in mind that we see the governor and his henchmen only in the lurid light of the Franciscan denunciations, but even after making a liberal discount for clerical exaggerations, the hands of the secular authorities appear far from clean.

Governor Cachupín, Ornedal and the *alcaldes* exercised a cruel tyranny over the Franciscans, the Indians and the *vecinos*, in fact the whole Kingdom groaned under continual oppression. Listen to the wail that Padre Varo, like another Jeremiah, sent out of the desert:

18. Ximeno Report, 1750, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 451-454.

Oh land and Kingdom of New Mexico! So long oppressed, humiliated, and persecuted, so often not governed, but tyrannized over by these unworthy chiefs, who, having been honored by our Catholic and most zealous Kings with the governorship for the purpose of establishing peace, administering justice, upholding the law of God, protecting the poor, especially the unhappy Indians and defending the community of Christians from the heathen who surround it on all sides, do not do so.¹⁹

Padre Carlos Delgado in his blistering report "concerning the abominable hostilities and tyrannies of the governors and alcaldes mayores toward the Indians to the consternation of the Custodia," indulged in an even more sweeping denunciation:

I declare, that of the eleven governors and the many alcaldes mayores whom I have known in the long period of forty years that I have served at the mission called San Agustín de la Isleta, most of them have hated, and do hate to the death, and insult and persecute the missionary religious, causing them all the troubles and annoyances that their passion dictates, without any other reason or fault than the opposition of the religious to the very serious injustices which the said governors and alcaldes inflict upon the helpless Indians recently received into the faith, so that the said converts shall not forsake our holy law and flee to the heathen, to take up anew their former idolatries.²⁰

Most of the governors looked upon their office as a commercial enterprise, although forbidden by law to indulge in trade while in office, using every minute of their term to amass a private fortune. Many came burdened with debts, obsessed with the one idea of putting themselves on their feet financially and ignored completely the welfare of the province. The resources of the Kingdom were few and slim, and exploitation of the Indians, through the alcaldes mayores,

19. Serrano Report, 1761, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 483.

20. Delgado Report, 1750, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 426.

was one of the few ways to acquire wealth even to the extent of fifty or sixty thousand pesos in the five year term.²¹

Perhaps the most flagrant form of exploitation to which the Indians were subjected by the secular authorities was the oppressive system of personal service. According to law the Indian was to be treated as a free laborer and paid for his work. These *semaneros* served in shifts for the period of a week at the end of which time they were replaced by another shift. They were mainly household servants performing various tasks about the residences of the governor and the *alcaldes*. The Indians serving the governors were drawn from the missions up stream (Río Arriba) during the warmer months, that is from Easter to All Saints' Day and from down stream (Río Abajo) during the colder months, from All Souls' Day to Easter, for many of the northern pueblos were snow bound during the winter. The new shift arrived every Sunday at the Royal Palace in Santa Fé, consisting of five men and five women. The men cut and hauled firewood, and performed other menial tasks. The principal employment of the women was the grinding of corn on their stone metates. No Indian escaped this service, not even the young neophytes that were being instructed by the *padres*. The *semaneros* had to come as best they could, on foot or horseback, often many leagues, in all conditions of weather, the suffering being especially intense in winter when a heavy blanket of snow covered the Santa Fé region.

Misfortunes and scandals frequently resulted in connection with the Indian servants. The married women, who left their pueblos pregnant, often had miscarriages as a result of the hard labor and the hardships of the long journey to and from Santa Fé.²² Even more common was the disrespect that some of the governors and *alcaldes* had for the sacredness of the Indian family. They openly violated the wives and daughters with the result that many husbands repudiated their wives. Padre Delgado gives a graphic description of the callousness of the officials in this respect.

21. Serrano Report, 1761, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 486.

22. Lezaún Report, 1760, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 470-471.

The shameless way in which the officials conduct themselves in this particular is proved by an occasion when a certain Governor was in conversation with some missionaries, and an Indian woman came into their presence to charge him with the rape of her daughter, and he, without changing countenance ordered that she be paid by merely giving her a buffalo skin that he had on hand.²³

In addition the missions had to furnish every week Indians to herd the governor's sheep and cattle. They not only built corrals and sheared the sheep but furnished the poles, axes and shears. A great evil was the custom of forcing the Indians to drive the governor's cattle to Chihuahua City, over two hundred leagues from Santa Fé. Such a trip gave the Indian little chance to till his fields and care for his family.

The governors were hand in glove with the *alcaldes*, and, upon selling them their wands (*varas*) of office, advised them to join in squeezing the Indians dry. The *alcaldes* were given a free hand as long as they obeyed the governor and kept him friendly by liberal gifts. Following the example of the governors, they exploited the Indians living in their *alcaldía*. It cost them nothing to raise, harvest and grind a crop of corn or wheat, using squads of conscripted Indians. The Indians also performed other tasks; clearing *acequias*, making adobes, weeding fields and shearing sheep. The *alcaldes* rarely appeared in the pueblos, unless it was to squeeze the Indians in some way, for themselves or the governors. "Everywhere there is nothing but 'let Indians come,' 'let Indians go,' 'let Indians carry that' . . ." ²⁴

Besides this personal, *semanero* type of service the Indians were exploited in other ways. The governors through the *alcaldes* collected all the wool they could from the Indians, allotting a certain amount to each pueblo to be washed, combed, carded, spun and woven into blankets and delivered

23. Delgado Report, 1750, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 427-428.

24. Serrano Report, 1761, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 485; Delgado Report, 1750, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 427.

by a certain date. One can imagine the labor of transporting these blankets to Santa Fé, sometimes from missions as far distant as Zuñi, seventy leagues away. In 1750 the alcalde of Isleta forced the Indians of that pueblo to shear "over one thousand" head of his sheep (*mill y tantas*). The wool was distributed, a blanket required from each home.²⁵ In the same year the alcalde collected from the pueblo nearly two hundred blankets that the Indians had been forced to weave for the governor.²⁶

"For none of these immense labors do these unfortunates receive any other reward, wage, or recompense than this; that it is for the señor governor, it belongs to the señor governor, the señor governor orders it."²⁷

Not content with burdening the Indians with the hated *tejidos*, the governors had the alcaldes "buy" or extort from the pueblos large quantities of maize, which the Indians had to carry gratis to the governor's residence. Payment was usually long overdue, if forthcoming at all, and then, only at greatly reduced rates. Payment was made in kind there being no money, usually in the form of baubles called *chuchumates*,—glass beads, cheap knives and awls or a few fistfuls of low grade tobacco.²⁸

Frequently the officials made no pretense of paying, frankly extorting the maize. In July 1749 Fray Juan de Lezaún at San Felipe saw the alcalde and the lieutenant of the presidio remove one hundred and sixty-five fanegas of corn by order of the governor. The Indians carried it to Santa Fé, but received no payment. At Ácoma the Indians were forced by the alcalde, Antonio de Ruyamor, acting again under Governor Cachupín's order, to give up one hundred and thirty-three fanegas of corn, which they grudgingly stored in the convent. In October, 1749, when Governor Cachupín visited Ácoma, he discovered that the corn had been spoiled (*estaba comido de jorgojo*) and ordered the

25. Trigo Report, 1750, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 69, Folio 6.

26. Vermejo-Lezaún Report, 1750, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 82, Folio 12.

27. Serrano Report, 1761, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 485.

28. Delgado Report, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 426.

Indians to furnish a new supply. This so enraged the Ácomas that they armed themselves. Governor Cachupín, after his notorious visit to the new missions of Encinal and Cebolleta, returned to Ácoma, where, in the padres' presence, his men forced the Indians to turn over sheep from their corrals, being paid one real for the animals, whose worth was two *belduques*. Those Indians who were unwilling to sell their sheep at such a price were forced to do so. The same thing happened at Laguna. Padre Vermejo attributed the refusal of the Navajo-Apaches at the near-by missions of Cebolleta and Encinal to continue in their intention of becoming Christians to what they saw were the concomitants of Christianity.

The governors, after they had amassed a large supply of corn, blankets, and livestock shipped them to Mexico for sale. In 1750 Governor Cachupín allowed Lieutenant General Bernardo Bustamante to send a shipment of corn, extorted from the needy Indians, to Chihuahua at a time when two years of crop failures had reduced the inhabitants to such straits that they were forced to subsist on toasted strips of sheep skin (*chícharros*) and insects.²⁹

The padres were powerless to stop the injustices of the governor and his minions. When they raised their voices in protest he and the *alcaldes* persecuted and insulted them, heaping upon them false charges certified by suborned witnesses. The governor was able to force the custodian to transfer a crusading padre (an illegal use of Royal patronage) to a quiet out of the way mission, by refusing to certify the yearly sínodo estimates. If the viceroy received no certification from the governor the salaries were not sent. In addition to this, recall Governor Cachupín's decree forbidding the *alcaldes* to grant the padres any certificates, thus effectively preventing them from denouncing him or defending themselves outside the Kingdom.³⁰

The "insults, injuries, oppressions and dishonors" that the governors heaped upon the padres until they were so

29. Vermejo-Lezaún Report, 1750, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 82, Folio 8-9.

30. Delgado Report, 1750, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 429-430.

cowed that they could not defend the Indians, do not seem so terrible to the layman, in fact they appear to boil down to a few threats, bad names and protruded tongues. Padre Varo in a sanctimonious vein wrote, "there have been governors who have very nearly gone so far as to strike the padres."³¹ The worst that Governor Cachupín seems to have done was to heap insults on certain padres, brandishing at the same time a cudgel over their heads. He also threatened to banish Padres Ignacio Pino and Andrés García to Mexico, tied over the backs of mules.³² In spite of the fact that the padres had no physical means of protecting the Indians from injustice they seem to have ceased their protests and lost courage too readily.

The padres were quite justified in their complaints that the cruelties, extortions, and forced labors imposed by the secular officials upon the Indians had a disastrous effect on the mission program. An Indian could not be expected to become attached to a religion and a way of life that for him brought nothing but misery and unrecompensed hard work. Consequently, we run across the frequent complaints that many Indians in desperation apostacized, and joined the heathen, confirming them in their idolatry. When Padre Delgado went among the heathen apostates, they in bitter reply to his exhortations, showed him huge scars received at the hands of the *alcaldes*. Why should they go back to such a life?³³

It is a black picture that the padres give us of the governors and the *alcaldes*, one that must be considerably overdrawn, yet enough candor and honest evidence remain to justify the conclusion that the Indians bore the brunt of many injustices, and that the padres were their best and most conscientious friends. Because both parties in this bitter struggle took such uncompromising stands, not admitting a single virtue in the opposing camp, and because the vast majority of the available evidence is on the side of the

31. Serrano Report, 1761, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 489.

32. Serrano Report, 1761, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 493-494.

33. Delgado Report, 1750, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 428.

padres, it is only just and significant to cite two of the few available records that show the secular authorities in a more favorable light.

In September, 1742 an Indian from Nambé brought charges against two Spaniards who had invaded his melon patch, given him a beating and made off with six melons. The Spaniards were fined twenty and fifteen pesos respectively.³⁴

In 1753, while Cachupín was still governor, the Indians of San Felipe mission had arranged to buy a tract of land from a Spanish family at Angostura for nine hundred pesos. The alcalde of that district advised the governor that the Indians should be protected against fraud by the appointment of two honest, capable persons to appraise the land in question. Cachupín appointed the appraisers and the result of their investigation proved that the land had been overvalued by three hundred pesos. The governor therefore ordered the sale at six hundred pesos which was done, the Indians paying for the land in cattle, sheep, and buckskins. This incident certainly indicates that Governor Cachupín was fully aware of the customary methods used at the time to defraud the Indians, and was determined to prevent unfair procedure.³⁵

These are not unique cases, and indicate that sometimes the governors and alcaldes did have the interest of the Indians at heart.

CHAPTER VI

THE PREDATORY NOMAD

Interwoven with the many-sided Church-State conflict and of vital concern to the welfare of the missions was the relation of the secular authority with the heathen nomads. This relation was of a dual nature, positive and negative, with the emphasis on the negative side. The chief task of the governor in his capacity as captain general of the Kingdom

34. Twitchell, *Spanish Archives*, II, 212.

35. Twitchell, *Spanish Archives*, I, 401.

of New Mexico was to protect the missions, and thereby hold Spain's frontier from the attacks of the wild Indian. We have seen that at Santa Fé was stationed one of the two presidios in the Kingdom, the nearest other being four hundred miles south at El Paso. This garrison consisted of eighty soldiers, certainly a ridiculously small number to protect so vast an area against a very formidable and numerous foe.

With the exception of the Moquis, the Pueblo Indians after the completion of the reconquest in 1696 ceased to be a military problem. Experience had taught them the futility of fighting the Spaniards. The enemy lay without. The eighteenth century, as no previous period in the history of New Mexico, was one of almost constant warfare between the Spaniards and the nomad enemies—the Apaches, the Navajos, the Utes (Yutas) and in particular the Comanches. In the middle of the eighteenth century there seems to have been very little trouble from the Navajos and Apaches, the enemy par excellence being the Comanches and to a lesser extent the Utes, who often joined the Comanches in their plundering.

That the presidial soldiers succeeded in holding their own against the nomads is indeed an amazing feat. It is true that they were re-enforced by the Spanish vecinos and Indian levies from the missions, but this handful of men was the core of the military power of the Kingdom. The argument might be raised that Cortés and Pizarro conquered powerful, aboriginal empires, peopled with thousands of warriors, with not many more men than the governor had at his disposal at Santa Fé. This is very true, but it must be remembered that these two conquistadores, not to detract one bit from their amazing achievements, owed their success in large part to superior weapons, to that terrible beast, the horse, and to the enemy's superstitious fears upon which they were able to capitalize. On the other hand, the presidial soldier in Santa Fé had neither a material nor psychological advantage over his clever enemy. Mr. A. F. Bandelier sums up the situation very thoroughly:

The savage Indians grasped the utility of the horse and of firearms with much greater vigor than sedentary tribes, and the complaint is often heard that the Apaches as well as the Comanches were better armed and better equipped than the few Spanish soldiers, who pretended to defend New Mexico against their incursions!¹

The Comanches were master fighters. Using guerrilla tactics, extremely mobile on their swift, hardy ponies, armed with up-to-date firearms, they struck suddenly and disappeared before the soldiers at Santa Fé could saddle their horses. Unlike the Incas and the Aztecs they indulged in no suicidal frontal attacks in mass formation, but fought by surprise attacks, ambushes, cutting down small detachments, and raiding isolated Spanish settlements and outlying missions. As an indication of the desperate straits to which the Spaniards were reduced by the Indian menace, in 1770 the Feast of Our Lady of Victory was established in which public prayers were offered, and a religious procession wound through the streets in an appeal for aid against the enemy.²

In view of the overwhelming odds facing the military power its achievements were quite laudable. The Indian menace was by no means ended in this period nor for that matter until long after the United States had taken over the Southwest,³ but the governors were constantly despatching or leading expeditions to punish the nomads. That the fighting was marked with the traditional Spanish ferocity was

1. Adolf F. Bandelier, *Investigations in the South West*, part I, 212, appearing as a footnote in Twitchell, *Leading Facts*, I, 440.

2. "Information communicated by Juan Candelaria of this Villa de San Francisco Xavier de Albuquerque, Born 1692—Age 84," *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, July, 1929, 296-297.

3. Several years ago, while I was working at a cattle ranch in San Miguel County, in north central New Mexico, I heard a vivid echo of those once terrible Comanche raiders. I was riding with a fine, gray haired Spanish American, whose family had lived in that locality for centuries. As we approached a group of weathered, sandstone boulders, standing grotesquely in the rolling prairie, he reined in his horse and pointed to them saying that there his grandfather and thirty other Mexican sheepherders had been surprised and slaughtered by marauding Comanches from Oklahoma Indian territory. This incident occurred a century later than the period that we are considering, and New Mexico was flying the flag of a powerful Republic!

certainly true, for, on March 21, 1741, Governor Mendoza issued a decree prohibiting the pillaging of the settlements of savage Indians when they were occupied by defenseless women and children during the campaign. That this decree was disregarded is indicated by the issuance of a similar decree on May 30, 1744 by Governor Codallos, prohibiting cruelty to defenseless women and children of the hostiles.⁴

In June, 1746 the Comanches raided the Pueblo of Pecos, killing twelve inhabitants, and also committing depredations at Galisteo and elsewhere. The popular clamor for military action caused Governor Codallos to ask for increased powers. After the inevitable reports and investigations the viceroy granted the necessary authority. In October, 1747 Codallos, with over five hundred men, including presidial soldiers, Spanish colonists, levies of mission Indians and Indian allies, came upon the Comanches and some of their Ute allies north of Abiquiú, and won a decisive victory. The governor reported the capture of two hundred and six enemies, one hundred and seven more having been killed. Four of the captives were shot and nearly a thousand horses captured. In January, 1748 Codallos, with a smaller force repulsed the Comanches at Pecos, although his Indian allies suffered some fatalities.⁵

Governor Codallos' successor, Tomás Cachupín, was also an active campaigner. In 1751 he marched against the Comanches, who had raided Galisteo mission. With one hundred and sixty-four men behind him he caught up with the Comanches and drove one hundred and forty-five of them into a *tular* to which he set fire. One hundred and one Comanches perished in the smoke and flames, and the balance were taken prisoners. Keeping four hostages, Cachupín released forty of the captives to join their women and children. This spectacular victory was gained with only one fatality to the Spanish force. Cachupín's success brought him

4. Twitchell, *Spanish Archives*, II, 212-213.

5. Bancroft, *History of New Mexico*, 249.

the congratulations of the viceroy, who reported the victory to the King.⁶

These victories as reported by the governors seem quite impressive, and the viceroy must have felt that his subordinates were sparing themselves no effort or danger to defend that distant Spanish outpost from the attacks of the nomad Indians. However, the viceregal confidence in the truth of the gubernatorial reports must have been severely shaken by the very upsetting and contradictory reports that reached him from the missionaries in New Mexico.

In the eyes of the padres a consistent, wise, just and vigorous policy towards the nomad gentiles was necessary on the part of the secular authority of the Kingdom to ensure the welfare of the missions and the Spanish settlements. Franciscan reports from New Mexico not only charged the governors with gross neglect of their military duties, the reporting of expeditions and victories that had no basis in fact but with injustice and cruelty in their treatment of the soldiers, and, even worse, of directly furnishing the enemy with arms and supplies.

In order to understand the nature of this charge of gubernatorial connivance with the enemy it is necessary, briefly, to consider the economic life of the Kingdom. Agriculture and stock raising were the principal sources of livelihood for the Spanish colonists. The *vecinos*, for the most part were small farmers, raising their crops and fruits in narrow fields in the bottoms of rock-bound canyons, where irrigation was possible. They had considerable numbers of horses, mules, cattle, sheep, goats and other livestock. Mining and the manufacturing industries were of minor importance. Money was practically non-existent, and barter economy reigned supreme in this isolated, self-sufficient Spanish outcropping.

Commercial relations with the rest of New Spain amounted to but a trickle. In Padre Varo's report of 1749 he placed the total annual trade between the El Paso region

6. Bancroft, *History of New Mexico*, 256.

and up-river New Mexico at only two thousand six hundred pesos. Piñons, skins, cotton and woolen mantas, livestock and some food stuffs were sent south to El Paso and the mines of Chihuahua and there bartered for the crops, wine, and *aguardiente*.⁷

Although the extent of the trade between Spaniards of northern New Mexico and those of southern New Mexico and Nueva Viscaya was sluggish and insignificant, there was a buzz of activity in the north with the nomad Gentiles. These nomads, especially the Comanches, would come frequently from the Great Plains to the missions and Spanish settlements to trade, bringing prisoners of war, many of them boys and girls, buckskins and buffalo skins and meat. These they traded for things that they were eager to get—horses, knives, tools and firearms—all of which they effectively turned against the Spaniards on the next raid.

According to the padres, the governors and the *alcaldes mayores* not only encouraged this commerce but succeeded in monopolizing it to the great detriment of the Kingdom. Although bands of nomads came frequently to trade at the various Spanish settlements and missions, the most important event was the annual Taos fair. Every summer the nomads, particularly the Comanche nation, gathered at this northern mission in the vicinity of which was a considerable Spanish population.

These fairs must have been exciting, eagerly-awaited events in the monotonous, sluggish, life of that remote province. The news of the advent of the Comanches was noised up and down the river valley causing a flutter comparable to that of the arrival of the annual fleet at Vera Cruz. The governor and his minions gathered together all manner of goods to barter; horses, axes, hoes, awls, wedges, picks, bridles, *machetes*, knives of all kinds, powder and firearms. Although the *vecinos* and other mission Indians also attended, the governor and his "machine" controlled most of the goods to be bartered. The nomad encampment—hun-

7. B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 57, Folio 4.

dreds of tepees blooming on the gray Taos plain at the foot of the turquoise-blue *Sangre de Cristo* mountains, may very well have reminded the Franciscan chronicler of the sails of the *flota* as it approached Vera Cruz.

The fair in full swing was a vivid, strange, barbaric sight—the heat of the sun; the dust of countless hooves, boots and moccasins; the reek of men, animals and skins; the confusion of tongues; the tenseness of the atmosphere, Spaniards and Indians suspiciously bent on driving a hard bargain, yet with one eye on their weapons; and the thin blue wisps of smoke rising from the countless cooking fires. The nomads offered buffalo meat, skins and (most valuable to the Spaniards) slaves of both sexes and all ages. The Spaniards by their greed and quarrelsomeness often brought the nomads to the verge of bloodshed. On one occasion hostilities were already starting when a padre intervened and managed to restore peace. The saddest and most revolting part of this spectacle was the treatment of the female slaves. Openly, in the sight of all, before delivering them to the Spaniards the warriors proceeded to rape all those of any size, delivering the poor wretches to their new masters with an insolent grin saying, “Now you can take her—now she is good.”⁸

The padres naturally opposed this commerce with the enemy nomads. The governor and his officials by encouraging this trade, were supplying the enemy with the means of destruction. It is true that the nomads obtained some firearms from French traders in the east, and that the French occasionally appeared in New Mexico. In 1739 a small party of French traders visited Santa Fé, and in 1747 another party of thirty-three Frenchmen sold firearms to the Comanches on the Río de Jicarilla north of Santa Fé.⁹ However, the padres were quite right in saying that the gov-

8. Based on the account of Padre Andrés Varo, 1751, included in the Serrano Report, 1761, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 486-487.

9. Twitchell, *Leading Facts*, I, 438 and 440. For further information on French activities in New Mexico in this period see H. E. Bolton, *French Intrusions into New Mexico, 1749-1752*; (New York, 1917).

ernors were turning a suicidal knife on the missions and Spanish settlements by their commercial policy with the nomads. In 1748 a junta, dominated by the governor and his officials was called to determine whether or not the Comanches should be permitted to continue to attend the Taos fairs. A decision was reached favoring the continuance of the practice in spite of the opposition of the custodian.¹⁰ This trade with the enemy of the faith was clearly illegal, being contrary to Apostolic Bulls and royal decrees.

The governor by his monopoly of the trade kept prices abnormally high. Merchants and dealers from Mexico had no incentive to come to New Mexico, where they would have encouraged immigration, brought in capital and developed the province. As it was, the commercial privileges were divided between a small official clique and the nomad enemies, and the province remained poor and underdeveloped.¹¹ As Padre Varo expressed it, "These textiles [*mantas* woven by the mission Indians], antelope and buffalo skins are the principal object and attraction of the governors. They are the rich mines of this Kingdom."¹²

The padres denied the charge of the governor that they engaged in trade. The only trade in the Kingdom being that with the gentiles, it was ridiculous to accuse them of commerce, forbidden by Papal Bulls and condemned by their own preaching, commerce which would boomerang on the very missions for whose welfare they were devoting their lives.¹³

The governors with their eagerness for Indian slaves and buffalo skins followed no consistent, vigorous policy of punishing the nomads for their raids. The clever Comanches grew increasingly audacious enjoying immunity when desirous of trading, and being free to turn around and raid a place where a few weeks before they had peacefully bartered.

10. Bancroft, *History of New Mexico*, 249-250.

11. Vermejo-Lezaún Report, 1750, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 28, Folio 10.

12. Varo Report, 1751, B. N., Leg. 9, Doc. 17, Folio 16v. "Estos texidos, gamuzas y síbolos es el principal objeto y atractivo de los Gobernadores. Son las minas ricas de este Reyno."

13. Vermejo-Lezaún Report, 1750, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 82, Folio 3.

The Franciscans not only charged the governors with willfully neglecting their military duties and abetting the enemy, but labelled them as incapable, cruel and corrupt commanders. The governors were drawn from the commercial and courtly class having had little military training. Lacking experience in the art of Indian warfare they usually ignored the advice of their captains, sergeants and *alférezes*, men who had been taught how to fight the nomads by bitter experience. The commissions (*plazas*) of capable men were withdrawn if they opposed the governor and ranks were filled with green and pliable boys. Campaigns were expensive, tedious and destructive, and the governors preferred to spend the time amassing a fortune. If they did go on campaigns they were only short-lived, half-hearted affairs, from which they returned with wildly exaggerated tales of success. If anything was accomplished against the barbarians it was by the private efforts of the poor but valiant Spanish *vecinos*.¹⁴

The soldiers, settlers and Indians who were drafted for military campaigns could not be expected to fight with enthusiasm for cruel governors. The soldiers were greatly overworked and underpaid. These eighty men, paid for the service of his majesty, were used as eighty personal servants in the interest of the governor and led a wretched existence. The lieutenant of the presidio assured Padre Vermejo that the soldiers received only about one hundred pesos of the legal four hundred peso salary. This fraction they received in goods, not what they needed or wanted but what the governor chose to give them.¹⁵

Another interesting variation of gubernatorial injustice and peculation was in the allocation of cavalry mounts among the soldiers. Vermejo and other padres witnessed such a distribution by Governor Cachupín. He forced upon the soldiers the sorriest nags, for which they had to pay him twelve *pesos de plata*. This amount was pure profit, for

14. Serrano Report, 1761, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 490-491.

15. Vermejo-Lezaún Report, 1750, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 82, Folio 9v.

the Crown supplied the horses. As a result of being mounted on culls, a brave sergeant and two soldiers, "the best lads in the Kingdom," were killed by the Apaches.¹⁶

Padres Vermejo and Lezaún cited other examples of Governor Cachupín's evil nature. Early in 1750 Cachupín was advised by trustworthy reports of the advent of a large band of Comanches from the south and east. He was told that they always came by way of Galisteo and Pecos on their way to Taos, and would either trade or attack as the situation permitted. The governor ignored the warning and proceeded directly to Taos with his soldiers to meet the Indians. As a result Galisteo mission, left unguarded was attacked and ten mission Indians were killed. In October, 1750 the Apaches came twice to trade. The governor knew very well that the mules that they brought to exchange were stolen from Spaniards around El Paso, yet he permitted them to complete their business unmolested.¹⁷

The iniquity of Cachupín's predecessor, Joaquín Codallos 1743-1749, in the matter of mission defense and Indian commerce reached breath-taking proportions, according to the Franciscan reports. In August, 1747 the Comanches raided the town of Abiquiú, on the Chama river northwest of Santa Fé, killing a girl, an old woman and carrying off twenty-three women and children. Custodian Mirabal at San Juan reported the disaster immediately to Governor Codallos, who ignored the report. Under the pressure of another letter from Mirabal and aroused public opinion, Codallos finally sent soldiers in pursuit. The Indians had a lead of four days, and the soldiers were unable to catch up with them. In the meantime the irate vecinos of Abiquiú organized a posse of their own. Following the Comanche trail they found three dead women and the body of a newly born child. Seven years later one of these women was returned by the Comanches.¹⁸

16. Vermejo-Lezaún Report, 1750, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 82, Folio 10. A *peso de plata* had twice the value of a *peso de tierra*, which was the local unit of value.

17. Vermejo-Lezaún Report, 1750, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 82, Folio 7v.

18. Lezaún Report, 1760, Hackett, *Historical Documents*, III, 477.

An even more sensational charge against Governor Codallos was made by the padres. Just before the end of his term he appropriated all the powder in the presidio and sent it to Chihuahua to be sold. His successor Cachupín and the presidial inspector Ornedal were perfectly aware of this, but did nothing to remedy the situation. The Kingdom of New Mexico remained powderless for a year while predatory nomads robbed and killed on all sides!

Equally amazing and far more ironic was Codallos' order to have the stone mortars (*pedreros*) that were at Galisteo dismantled, knives and awls being fashioned out of the metal parts to trade with the nomad enemies. The Comanches hitherto restrained on account of the awesome cannons promptly attacked the unprotected pueblo, killing a number of its inhabitants.¹⁹

One last and dramatic episode of the numerous ones available will suffice to illustrate the seriousness of the Indian menace and the culpable failure of the governors to protect the Kingdom. During the same administration of the public spirited Governor Codallos the Indians of Pecos came to Santa Fé and asked permission to go eastward on the buffalo plains "into the land of the Comanches (*a tierra de los Comanches*)" to hunt. Codallos knew full well the dangerous character of this enterprise, and was advised by competent persons to refuse the permission. However, yielding to his selfish interests, he granted the license with strings attached. Before setting out on their hunt the Indians had to do some carpentry work on the governor's house, and also guarantee to bring him a certain number of buffalo tongues, evidently a great delicacy.

The preliminary stipulations having been settled, nearly the entire pueblo of Pecos started out on this hunt. They had gone only a short distance when disaster befell them. They walked into a cleverly laid Comanche ambush, and over one hundred and fifty of them were killed.

19. Vermejo-Lezaún Report, 1750, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 82, Folio 10.

Immediately on hearing the news of this disaster the lieutenant of the presidio, Don Manuel, with fifty soldiers hurried to punish the Comanches. They likewise fell into a trap in which ten Spaniards were killed, the others fleeing in disorder to the shelter of Pecos pueblo. The Comanches were so formidable because they were supplied with up to date weapons obtained as a result of the criminal greed of the governor.

As a result of this major set back Governor Codallos was forced to exert himself. A force of over seven hundred men was raised to punish the insolent Comanches, a really stupendous army considering the resources of the Kingdom. Our old *amigo* Lieutenant General Bustamante took command of the field. The expedition was accompanied by Padre Agustín de Yniesta, who served as royal chaplain, and it was he who furnished our informant Padre Vermejo with the facts. Several days out, about dawn, while the Spanish camp was still wrapped in sleep, and Lieutenant General Bustamante "was in bed as if he were at his wife's side (*estando en cama como si estuviera a el lado de su muger*)," a group of Comanches silently appeared and made off with one thousand one hundred and thirty-one horses, leaving the Spanish army very much *a pié*. A few soldiers and vecinos who were not caught unawares pursued the enemy, spurred on by the command, under the penalty of death, of the irate and sleepy Bustamante. The chase was futile and the dismounted army ludicrously straggled back to Santa Fé where the soldiers made the most of a bad situation by proudly announcing a smashing victory and repairing to the church to give thanks to God. Shortly afterwards, a group of trading Comanches rode into Santa Fé with smirks on their faces. Mocking the Spaniards, these foolhardy Indians announced that only twenty squaws and ten warriors had accomplished that amazing feat.²⁰ This story that Padre Vermejo told with such sarcastic glee borders so nearly on the ludicrous that it probably must be taken with large reservations, but it is

20. Vermejo-Lezaún Report, 1750, B. N., Leg. 8, Doc. 82, Folio 12v-13.

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certainly indicative of the spirit with which the Indian campaigns were conducted.

Out of this welter of claims and counter claims, of assertions of victories and of denials made by the governors and their Franciscan opponents, one can at least get a modicum of truth. We are safe in saying that the menace of the predatory gentiles was very serious at this time; that the military forces of the Kingdom were overtaxed and inadequate; that the enemy nomads were allowed to trade with the Spaniards; that the Spaniards lost and won victories, and that some governors were criminally negligent and incompetent in their military duties. All this is true, but the fact remains that the missions and Spanish settlements survived the ordeal, and this survival could not have been entirely in spite of the governors.

CONCLUSION

The Franciscan missions of New Mexico by 1750 had long since passed through their Golden Era, and were sinking gently into a mellow decline, disturbed only by spasmodic and ineffectual bursts of energy. The padres were looking backward, not ahead, and were content to bask in the afterglow of deeds long passed. While they concentrated on a ceaseless pot and kettle polemic with the secular power, the heathen remained unconverted, the nomad ravaged the land, and the missions vegetated.