



A History of the Inquisition of Spain (vol. 1 & 2; annotated)

Henry Charles Lea

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IN the following pages I have sought to trace, from the original sources as far as possible, the character and career of an institution which exercised no small influence on the fate of Spain and even, one may say, indirectly on the civilized world. The material for this is preserved so superabundantly in the immense Spanish archives that no one writer can pretend to exhaust the subject. There can be no finality in a history resting on so vast a mass of inedited documents and I do not flatter myself that I have accomplished such a result, but I am not without hope that what I have drawn from them and from the labors of previous scholars has enabled me to present a fairly accurate survey of one of the most remarkable organizations recorded in human annals.

In this a somewhat minute analysis has seemed to be indispensable of its structure and methods of procedure, of its relations with the other bodies of the State and of its dealings with the various classes subject to its extensive jurisdiction. This has involved the accumulation of much detail in order to present the daily operation of a tribunal of which the real importance is to be sought, not so much in the awful solemnities of the auto de fe, or in the cases of a few celebrated victims, as in the silent influence exercised by its incessant and secret labors among the mass of the people and in the limitations which it placed on the Spanish intellect—in the resolute conservatism with which it held the nation in the medieval groove and unfitted it for the exercise of rational liberty when the nineteenth century brought in the inevitable Revolution.

The intimate relations between Spain and Portugal, especially during the union of the kingdoms from 1580 to 1640, has rendered necessary the inclusion, in the chapter devoted to the Jews, of a brief sketch of the Portuguese Inquisition, which earned a reputation even more sinister than its Spanish prototype.

I cannot conclude without expressing my thanks to the gentlemen whose aid has enabled me to collect the documents on which the work is largely based—Don Claudio Pérez Gredilla of the Archives of Simancas, Don Ramon Santa María of those of Alcalá de Henares prior to their removal to Madrid, Don Francisco de Bofarull y Sans of those of the Crown of Aragon, Don J. Figueroa Hernández, formerly American Vice-consul at Madrid, and to many others to whom I am indebted in a minor degree. I have also to tender my acknowledgements to the authorities of the Bodleian Library and of the Royal Libraries of Copenhagen, Munich, Berlin and the University of Halle, for favors warmly appreciated.

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