

**THE LIFE AND TIMES
OF MIGUEL HIDALGO
Y COSTILLA**

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The life and times of Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla by Arthur Howard Noll & A. Philip McMahon

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PREFACE

THE celebration this year in Mexico of the centennial of the *Grito de Dolores* has caused those who are interested in Mexican affairs to ask: What was the *Grito de Dolores*? and who was Hidalgo, that he should be called the Father of Mexican Independence? The answers to these questions that may be obtained from general histories are thoroughly inadequate and wholly unsatisfying at this period, when Mexico is receiving universal attention. Such histories present Hidalgo in the light of an insurrectionist, a fanatic perhaps, who had the temerity to lead a revolt against the regularly constituted Government of one of the Spanish dependencies in America, and whose public career was ended by the defeat of his cause and his own death within a year. They fail to show any relation between his insurrectionary movement and the establishment of a wholly factitious Mexican Independence eleven years later; nor do they reveal a relationship with constitutional government in Mexico, and the rise of a self-conscious commonwealth to a respected place among the nations of the earth. They

fail not only to give a satisfactory reason why Hidalgo should be singled out from the host of self-sacrificing heroes of the revolutionary period of Mexican history to bear the distinctive title of "The Father of Mexican Independence," but also to explain why he is entitled to a place among the world's great heroes who have lived and died for the cause of human freedom.

Since this book was begun, it has come to the knowledge of the authors that an adequate biography of Hidalgo does not exist in his native land, where his name is a household word, and where the *Grito de Dolores* is annually celebrated on the sixteenth of September with unbounded popular enthusiasm; and that there is a danger of his becoming purely a legendary character.

The following pages are written for the purpose of furnishing a more satisfactory answer to the above questions than is at present available in this country. For a more detailed account of Mexican political history than is absolutely necessary for the setting forth of the life of Hidalgo, the reader may be referred to "A Short History of Mexico," and "From Empire to Republic,"¹ which have

¹Both published by A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago.

been freely drawn upon for the account of the historical conditions which made the life of Hidalgo significant. The historical works and papers of Dr. Nicolás León, Gonzalez Obregon, and other Mexican writers have also been consulted. The late Dr. Henry Charles Lea, author of "The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies," was not in sympathy with Hidalgo, yet, by his account of the process of the Holy Office against him, he has furnished some valuable aids to a proper appreciation of the life-work of the martyred hero.

Valuable contributions to the preparation of this work have been made by Mr. A. Philip McMahon, chiefly through his investigation of a vast number of original documents relating to Hidalgo and his times, in the possession of Mr. W. W. Blake in the Mexican capital; and those researches fully entitle him to acknowledgment as co-author.

A. H. N.

University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, August, 1910.