CHAPTER XIX
THE INQUISITION IN CARTAGENA

I. The establishment of the Tribunal. II. Early cases tried. III. Internal controversy and witchcraft.

I

Soon after the establishment of the Inquisition in Lima, it became evident that, on account of the great extent of the viceroyalty, it would be difficult to bring all the accused and the necessary witnesses to the capital for trial. On the 28th of April 1600, the inquisitor Antonio Ordoñez wrote to the king suggesting the establishment of tribunals in other cities. In his opinion, the tribunal of the Inquisition of Lima, should have as its district the archbishopric of Lima, the bishoprics of Cuzco, Quito, and Panama, and the kingdom of Chile; and two other tribunals should be created: one in the city of La Plata, which should have jurisdiction throughout the bishoprics of Charcas, Tucuman, and Rio de la Plata, and the territory of Santa Cruz de la Sierra; and another in Bogotá, which should have as its districts the bishoprics of Popayan, Cartagena, Santa Marta, and Venezuela.

Archbishop Lobo Guerrero wrote to the Council of the Indies, and advocated a plan similar to that suggested by Ordoñez; and, after more or less mature deliberation, the council decided to establish a tribunal of the Inquisition at Santo Domingo and another at Cartagena. These were prominent ports, where foreigners seeking to enter Spain’s American possessions might be expected to land, and where it was, therefore, desirable to have means for detecting and punishing heresy. It was, however, finally
determined to make Cartagena the seat of an inquisitorial tribunal, and to subject to its jurisdiction the archbishoprics of Santo Domingo and Bogotá and the bishoprics of Cartagena, Panama, Santa Marta, Porto Rico, Popayan, Venezuela, and Santiago de Cuba. The decree establishing the Inquisition at Cartagena was dated February 25, 1610.

The inquisitors appointed to organise the Inquisition at Cartagena were Juan de Mañozca and Mateo de Salcedo. They reached Seville in the beginning of June 1610, and embarked at Cadiz on the 29th of the same month. The voyage to the island of Guadelupe lasted thirty-four days, and on the 9th of August they arrived at Santo Domingo. The few days during which they remained at Santo Domingo were filled with visits of ceremony, and with various exercises in honour of the inquisitors. While here they appointed Juan Nuñez Tenorio to be the commissary for this part of their district, and on the 4th of September they entered upon the journey to Cartagena. On this voyage they encountered severe storms, and after six days arrived at their destination. Here the ceremonies of Santo Domingo were repeated. They sent the decree establishing the tribunal to the governor, and were then visited by a representative of the governor, by the majority of the municipal council, by the royal officials, and by officials of the cathedral, representing the bishop. Towards evening of the day of their arrival, the governor sent two large boats that were furnished with rugs and velvet cushions, with a delegation of distinguished persons to accompany the inquisitors to the shore. On landing they were saluted by the fort and by the vessels in the harbour, and were received by Governor Fernandez de Velasco, General Francisco Vanegas, the secular and ecclesiastical cabildos, and all the persons of distinction in the city, who accompanied them to the Franciscan monastery, which had been selected as the most commodious place for their residence. The soldiers, who were
stationed along the streets through which the inquisitors passed, saluted them by dipping their flags and discharging their firearms. From the monastery, the inquisitors sent to the bishop and the governor the royal order concerning their reception, and after this had been deliberately considered, the prelate and the other authorities went mounted to the monastery, on Sunday, the 26th of September, and escorted the inquisitors to the cathedral; and on entering the edifice, they were received by the singing of the *Te Deum* and by the celebration of a solemn mass. At a certain point in this ceremony, the notary ascended the pulpit and read the powers, provisions, and decrees issued by the king and the inquisitor-general; and at the conclusion of the mass the inquisitors were escorted back to the monastery in the same manner and order that had been observed in proceeding to the cathedral.¹

Since there was no edifice in Cartagena that might properly furnish permanent quarters for the Inquisition, the construction of a suitable building was undertaken, and three houses were rented for temporary use. Then, on the last day of November, the inquisitors went again to the cathedral to read the edict concerning the faith, which was at once an exhortation and a fundamental rule for the proceedings of the Inquisition. It specified, as persons to be reported and corrected, Jews, Mohammedans, Lutherans, and the Illuminati; and enumerated the various heresies and vices for which persons might be called to account.²

II

Immediately after the publication of this decree, the inhabitants of Cartagena manifested a certain reluctance to approach the tribunal; but a little later the universal

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¹ Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición de Cartagena de las Indias* (Santiago de Chile, 1899), 46-50.

² This document is printed in Medina, *La Inquisición en Cartagena*, 50-69.
willingness to find the conduct of one's neighbour not quite correct caused a flood of complaints and charges to be poured into the office of the Inquisition. One of the abominable features of the tribunal of the Inquisition is discovered in the fact that it presented to all persons a temptation and an opportunity to exercise with impunity the very general propensity of human beings to accuse their fellows of evil. It was impossible in the beginning for the Inquisition to act on all the charges that were brought to it, and arrest the persons accused, on account of the lack of an adequate prison. Another hindrance consisted in the difficulty of finding persons fitted by their education to perform the various functions required of assistants to the inquisitors; for the town of Cartagena had at the period in question, the beginning of the seventeenth century, not more than five hundred inhabitants, and the number of persons who had a legal or a theological training was extremely limited. Since this was true of Cartagena, it is easy to understand the difficulty that was experienced in finding proper agents or commissaries in the less populous parts of the district.

Clothed with their extraordinary authority, the inquisitors very early manifested a desire to have their precedence recognised by the civil and ecclesiastical officers; and since there was no universal acceptance of this view, a new element of discord was introduced into the community. The prestige of the institution depended to a certain extent, on its ability to deal, without delay, with the cases that were presented to it; and in order that it might be equipped for this purpose as early as possible, it proceeded to construct a prison in one of the houses that had been procured for its temporary use. But during the first three or four years the cases tried were neither very numerous nor very important. There were in all not more than thirty. Two of these were Augustinians, two Franciscans, who were tried for propositions thought to be heretical, and six were women,
who were accused of sorcery. Still, on the 2nd of February 1614, an auto-de-fé was celebrated "with much applause and satisfaction of the whole city and of many persons who assembled that day from the region about the city to see a thing so new in these parts." ¹

The power of the Inquisition to confiscate the property of its victims, and turn it to the uses of the tribunal, placed in the hands of the inquisitors a source of income quite independent of the royal treasury. They were thus subject to the temptation to condemn the accused who were wealthy. In the first auto-de-fé, Luis Andrea, a mestizo, who was charged of having a compact with the devil, suffered confiscation of his property, besides various other penalties. Andrés de Cuevas was condemned to one hundred lashes, perpetual banishment, and to contribute three thousand pesos towards the expenses of the Inquisition. The early punishments of the Inquisition in Cartagena were imposed for utterances thought to be heretical, for witchcraft, or for other real or fancied offences that might very well have gone unpunished. A widow named María de Olancaga was condemned for calling upon the devil in an affair of love, with the design of marrying a second time; Isabel de Carvajal, for a similar invocation for the purpose of finding out whether a certain man who was absent from Cartagena would return. Juan de Cárdenas was sixty years of age, and when asked to take part in a play celebrating San Ignacio, he said, "Valga el diablo al Padre Ignacio," and for this remark he was tried and condemned by the Inquisition. For the majority of the cases examined by the inquisitors the punishments imposed were more severe than the offences justly merited.

Cartagena was disturbed not only by the prosecutions

¹ Letter by Salcedo to the Council of the Indies, February 18, 1614, quoted by Medina, La Inquisición en Cartagena, 82. The description of this first auto-de-fé of Cartagena, which was sent to the Council of the Indies by the inquisitors, is printed in Medina, La Inquisición en Cartagena, 83-92.
of the Inquisition, but also by conflicts among the various ecclesiastical factions, which ranged themselves into two hostile groups. The Franciscans, the Augustinians, the Mercedarios, and the Jesuits formed one party, and the Dominicans supported by the bishop constituted the other party. If the hostility did not result in a physical conflict, it was nevertheless a serious war of words. From the pulpits, the opponents denounced and insulted one another in a most violent and unseemly manner. The inquisitors attempted to intervene to abate the scandalous conduct of the opposing parties, and to induce them, if not to abandon their hostility, at least to make their pulpit harangues more moderate. But the flame of theological hatred could not be easily extinguished.

In Cartagena there were only two inquisitors, in spite of the great extent of the district covered by their jurisdiction. The other officers were an attorney, a secretary, a constable, a treasurer, two advisers, and a warden, who performed also the duties of a messenger and a porter. The lack of a sufficient number of subordinates, or assistants, in the different parts of the district, led the bishops to complain that in their bishoprics the matters of faith were neglected. The Bishop of Panama referred to the friar Francisco de la Cruz, "who was burned in Lima by the Holy Inquisition," and called attention to the case of the friar's son, the freedom of whose life scandalised all the world. In the extensive bishopric of Cuba, the bishop assumed that the licentiousness which prevailed was due to the absence of supervision by the Inquisition; and the lack of subordinate officials here as well as in other parts was due to the difficulty, or impossibility, of finding satisfactory persons to perform the required functions; for those appointed to be commissaries "made a bad use of their commissions," and it was believed that an investigation "would reveal many things unworthy of their profession and office." ¹

¹ See Medina, La Inquisición en Cartagena, 117, 118.
The affairs of the Inquisition were not more satisfactory in Cartagena than in the remote parts of the district. The inquisitors were unequally yoked together. Salcedo was a man of much experience, who had passed into the period of inaction and drivelling reminiscence. He was continually recounting the work of the Inquisition in Aragon, where he had been the attorney, and also the various events of his experience in that kingdom. Mañozca, on the other hand, was a young man of vigorous mind, great ambition, and unlimited daring. His aggressiveness, his willingness to work, and his unbounded self-confidence made him the real head and effective force of the Inquisition. Whatever ill-will the Inquisition provoked in the community was directed to him. He was the head and front of the offending. He set out to humiliate the bishop, and to dominate the civil government; and this last undertaking was facilitated by the mild and generous disposition of the governor, Fernandez de Velasco. But, in spite of his patience, the governor at last turned and appealed to the king. He made known his attempts to maintain friendly relations with the inquisitors, and the ineffectiveness of his example and long-suffering to preserve the peace desired. The tribunal had gone so far towards making itself feared and the master of all affairs, that the country was terrorised by the aggressive action not only of the inquisitors, but also of their servants and slaves.¹

III

A striking phenomenon of the early years of the seventeenth century was the appearance of witchcraft. The witches greatly disturbed the communities where they appeared, and their presence in great numbers offered one of the very serious problems, which the inquisitors had to face. When a person of his own will

¹ Medina, *La Inquisición en Cartagena*, 129.
was blasphemous or heretical, the case was simple, and the inquisitors had no doubt as to the propriety of punishing him; but when a woman was drawn into a league with the devil, and the devil operated through her to the confusion and terror of her neighbours, a more complicated question presented itself. The devil, who was the offending spirit, was not an ordinary person to be cited before the tribunal; and in view of the existence of a league between him and a woman, in which the woman was the subordinate member, the officers of the tribunal might naturally raise a doubt as to the justice of punishing the woman.

The energy displayed by Mañozca in conducting the affairs of the Inquisition, and his attempt to override the bishop and the governor, raised against him a large number of enemies, who, by reports to the Council of the Indies, sought to break down his authority and effect his removal from office. They emphasized especially accounts of his immorality, conscious that such reports would have more weight with the council and the king than tales of the harshness with which the Inquisition had been administered. The Prince of Esquilache was commissioned to halt at Cartagena on his voyage to Peru, and to make inquiries concerning the state of affairs in that province, and particularly concerning the conduct

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1 Referring to this subject, Medina calls attention to the book by Gaspar Navarro, which was printed in Huessa in 1631, and which was called *Tribunal de superstición ladina, explorador del saber, astucia y poder del demonio, en que se condena lo que suele correr por buen* en *hechizos, agüeros, ensalvados, vanos saludos*, etc., in which the author described with much erudition "the subject-matter indicated in the title of the work, the reading of which is indispensable for an explanation of the beliefs of the Spaniards of the seventeenth century" respecting the treatment of witchcraft. Medina refers also to Alonso de Sandoval’s *Naturaleza, historia sagrada y profana, costumbres y ritos, disciplina y catecismo evangélico de todos etíopes*. The author was rector of the Colegio de la Compañía de Jesús de Cartagena, and his book was published in Seville in 1627. In it "one finds described *in extenso* whatever appertains to those negroes who were tried by the inquisition" (*La Inquisición en Cartagena*, 121).
of Mañoza. Although Esquilache's report was favourable to the inquisitor, still adverse accounts from other quarters continued to reach the council in considerable numbers; and an order was finally issued, requiring Mañoza to present himself before the council. The inquisitor, therefore, sailed for Spain near the end of July 1620, and three months later he appeared in Madrid. With the letters of commendation which he had received from his friends in Cartagena, and other documents, he made so effective a defence that in the following April the inquisitor-general wrote to the Inquisition in Cartagena that Mañoza would return to his seat in the tribunal.

During the absence of Mañoza, Salcedo continued the conflict with the bishop and the civil authorities, and at the same time much of the inquisitor's attention was absorbed by new cases of witchcraft. Shortly after Mañoza's return, an auto-de-fe was celebrated, March 13, 1622, at which, for the first time, a victim was burned at Cartagena. On this occasion Mañoza was the sole inquisitor, for Salcedo had died on the 27th of December 1621. The person burned was an Englishman, thirty-two years of age, a Protestant, who adhered to his heresy in spite of all efforts to convert him, and who, to quote the statement of the inquisitor, "seated himself, of his own will, without being bound, upon the bundles of wood, and remained there without moving one of his feet from where he had placed them." Of the other victims, six were witches, and the eighth was a Spaniard accused of bigamy. Mañoza, as a reward for his zeal, was promoted to the Inquisition of Lima, and Agustin de Ugarte y Saravia was appointed to succeed him. A few years later, the famous auto-de-fe of June 17, 1626, was celebrated, after elaborate preparations, which had lasted for two months.¹

¹ An account of the ceremony and of the twenty-two victims, by an eye-witness, is printed in Medina, La Inquisición en Cartagena, 175–94. In Mañoza's account of the auto-de-fe of 1623, the name of the Englishman who was burned is given as Adán Edón. See Medina, 158.
With the transfer of the inquisitor Ugarte y Saravia to the diocese of Chiapa in March 1629, Martín de Cortázar y Azcárate, the brother of the Archbishop of Bogotá, was appointed to the seat in the Inquisition thus made vacant. The other inquisitor at this time was Vélez y Argos. The expectations of the inquisitors that the mildness of the governor would permit them to dominate the affairs of the district were doomed to disappointment. That officer had gradually laid aside his pacific policy, and, with the accession of Francisco de Murga, the inquisitors found that they had to deal with one who was not disposed to be submissive, but to exercise whatever authority the law imposed upon him. In this state of things they drew out the somewhat antiquated weapon of excommunication. In this period of discouragement, the project of transferring the Inquisition to Bogotá was discussed, but without any practical result. In the meantime, Governor Murga’s reports to the Council of the Indies moved that body to cite the inquisitor Velez y Argos to appear in Madrid. Before the council he used whatever influence he could command to set aside the effect of Murga’s reports. In favour of the inquisitor was the fear entertained by the government that an unqualified endorsement of Murga’s views would tend to intimidate the inquisitors everywhere, and deprive them of the independence required for a proper performance of their functions; while at the same time it would embolden the governors to assert their power and proceed to new controversies.

The strained relations which existed between the principal authorities of the State were relieved by the death of Governor Murga. But after this event, Vélez y Argos continued his defence; the king, however, followed the opinion of his council, and decided against the return of the inquisitor to Cartagena.

These controversies employed much of the time of the inquisitors, but, in the autos de fé which followed,
they returned to their diabolic work with more than their usual ferocity; and the tales of torture which fill the later records make one wonder not merely that human beings should have done these things, but that they could have written down in calmness and cold blood detailed descriptions of the horrible suffering of their victims.

A large number of the early victims of the Inquisition in Cartagena were negroes tried for witchcraft. After the promotion of Mañozca the Portuguese Jews, who had acquired great importance in the commercial affairs of Lima, became the objects of inquisitorial solicitude. Information obtained in Peru concerning the presence of Jews in Cartagena was transmitted to that city, causing them to be subjected to vigorous persecution. One of the first victims was Blas de Paz Pinto, "a man who was beloved and esteemed by the whole city." "At the third turn," when tortured, he confessed that he was a Jew. In attempting to cure him after this exercise, it was found that parts of his body were injured to such an extent that mortification set in; some of his toes had to be cut off; and to complete the wreck, fever, lockjaw, and paralysis followed. In this state he was held, his judges reserving him for a second torture, in case he should live. But at this point he disappointed them, for eight days after his torture he died, February 19, 1637, and his property was confiscated. Some of the others had more physical endurance, for we read that Luis Fernandez Suarez suffered five turns of the mancuerdad.

By confiscating the property of persons tried and condemned, and by other means, the Inquisition, in 1659, had acquired over expenses a balance of 430,414 pesos. Hereafter, for decade after decade, it pursued its monotonous course of condemnations and confiscations; by its system of spying leading men to distrust their fellows in all the relations of life; by its outrageous punishments

1 Medina, La Inquisición en Cartagena, 225.
leaving behind it a trail of misery; and by its persecu-
tion of intellectual freedom manifesting itself as the most
diabolical of all human institutions. ¹

¹ For a list of the _autos-de-fé_, and of the victims during the later
history of the Inquisition in Cartagena, see Medina, _La Inquisición en
Cartagena_, 267 and ff.; also _Manifesto histórico de los Procedimientos
del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de Cartagena_, &c., Cadiz, 1681.