

means, because the large foreign population at that time contributed a considerable number of the adherents claimed. The declared free-thinkers and atheists numbered 25,011, while those classed as "unknown" are given as 20,015. If to the numbers claimed by the missionaries we add these, and include the Mohammedans, Buddhists, Jews, and "others," we have a grand total of 149,850, less than one per cent. of the total population of the country. This is the most astonishing fact in all Mexico.

The better class Mexicans are firmly and sincerely Catholic. The middle class Mexicans are equally so, though from this class have come the few deserters from their Faith, and these prefer atheism to any form of Protestantism. Even the poor and lowly of the countryside cling stubbornly to their Church. This has left only the unfortunates of the city slums as subjects for the Protestant missionaries, who, lacking any spiritual attractions, have held out material inducements, paying small sums to the poor they could hire to attend their services, and later dispensing from their abundance food and clothing and schooling, all of which the Mexican clergy could not do because prohibited by law and inhibited by poverty.

For half a century the Protestant missionaries have flocked into Mexico, spending millions, and practically subsidized by the Government, for it gave them churches taken from the Catholic Mexicans. Yet for all their efforts and their millions they can show but a miserable little group of apostates, most of whom, when chilled with the shadow of death, will call for a Catholic priest and endeavor to make their peace with God.

The Protestant missionaries hailed the Carranza revolution as a heaven-sent instrument for the destruction of the Catholic Church, and in spite of the fact that the movement was entirely an outburst of organized criminality and bestial villainy, they supported it before the American people on the platform and in the press, in all of which they were effectively assisted by the publicity agents of the Administration in Washington. In many States in Mexico the clergy, pitifully few at best, were driven out, the occasional individual remaining being in disguise and in peril of his life. Later they returned, though they are subjected to such various petty persecutions as the fancy of the Socialist authorities may suggest. Only recently an Archbishop, when passing from his residence to a waiting automobile, was arrested for wearing his cassock.

In addition to engaging in personal persecution, the Socialists are attacking the proprietary interests represented by schools, hospitals, and other beneficent institutions. Let religious instruction be given in the institution or a religious person have access to it, as in a hospital, and the authorities will seize the place under the pretext that it is church property. If the property be owned by some private person, it may be taken out of hand, unless some powerful influence exists to intervene and secure a respite. In some places corporations were organized to hold these properties, and there the Government has resorted to the sardonic joke of a pretended law-suit, carrying the matter to the so-called supreme court, where, of course, the owners lose. Even Socialists themselves will laugh at anyone expecting to find other than one-sided justice in a Socialist supreme court. In one State alone the values of these institutions are variously estimated at from ten to twenty millions. That Catholic schools, hospitals, and other institutions should have been established to that extent in the face of a hostile Government and prohibitory laws speaks volumes for the charity and liberality of the Mexicans and is eloquent testimony to their efforts to educate their children.

It was the values invested in these institutions during the Spanish regime that excited the criminal greed of the so-called Liberals of the past century. With varying fortunes they fought until the armed assistance of the United States enabled them to triumph under the leadership of Juarez.

To justify themselves and their enterprise, Juarez and his fellow-bandits invented and circulated the most abominable falsehoods against their enemies, principally for circulation in the United States, whose prejudices were well understood and whose aid was necessary to success. These falsehoods have passed into history and are accepted as true by the average American, though but little investigation is needed to discover how utterly baseless they are.

The ragged ruffians that acknowledged Juarez as leader committed the most outrageous crimes in their progress through the country. Outrages unnamable, pillage, and assassination were the order of the day. With the final triumph of Juarez the pillaging was reduced to a character of system under the authority of his decrees. The numerous schools, hospitals, and other institutions were closed, their inmates dispersed, their property scattered, and their funds stolen. The buildings were sold for mere trifles of their real values, were used as barracks and stables, or were left to fall into ruin. The political friends of Juarez profited, and their children, many of them,

during the last revolution, paid the penalty for the sins of their fathers in exile and poverty.

The economic ruin, the poverty, the misery, and the ignorance to which Juarez reduced his country are indescribable. And Mexico doubtless would have remained in that condition had it not been for Porfirio Diaz. But while Diaz had the intelligence to foster and favor the material development of his country by foreigners and foreign capital, he lacked either the knowledge or the courage to grant his people religious liberty. The consequence of this folly was his own overthrow, for when he needed friends he found he had none. He had none because he had rejected deliberately the good will of the vast majority of his people. The vast majority of the Mexicans are Catholics, as shown, and Diaz had offended them most grievously by enforcing the anti-religious laws and by adding to them such laws as that forbidding a religious service at a grave.

In spite of hostile laws and persecutions the Mexicans were able, during the rule of Diaz, to replace a part of the property of which they had been robbed by Juarez. Mexico became prosperous, thanks to the foreign enterprise and capital, and wealth again appeared in the country. Yet during all the reign of Diaz the Socialists were active, seeking an opportunity to start a revolution and again reduce the country to ruin. At last, aided by the armed forces of the United States, they succeeded.

Though foreigners and foreign capital suffered severely, it was the Church which bore the brunt of the attack, and while the Socialist anarchists have embodied in their constitution all the mad theories common to their school, they have given special and vicious attention to religion, devising clauses intended to drive it from the country. The great majority of Mexicans are Catholics, and the great majority of Mexicans deeply resent these wanton attacks upon that which they consider most sacred. They realize the futility of resistance, because on three important occasions their resistance has been stamped upon by the powerful United States Government. Though they are powerless to assert themselves, being unorganized and unarmed, yet they can, and always have, and always will, refuse to support any government that insists upon oppressing them. This leaves every Mexican Government dependent upon the forces it can hire, and hired forces are notoriously unstable, for they will follow the highest bidder. This accounts for the ease with which the many Governments of Mexico have been overthrown. Diaz endured for so many years because he was supported by the threat of American intervention, and when that support was withdrawn he fell.

The greatest factor in the Mexican problem is the religion of the people, who are firmly attached to their Church. It is the greatest factor because the people deeply resent the efforts to destroy it. It is the greatest factor because the people never will be satisfied until the oppressive anti-religious laws are repealed, and the same religious liberty granted as is enjoyed by all religions in the United States of America. It is the greatest factor because it is the determining factor, and it is the only factor which will solve the problem regardless of all the others.

FRANCE

CARDINAL MAURIN AND CHURCH PROPERTY

To the Faithful of his archdiocese of Lyons, Cardinal Maurin has addressed a letter, which La Croix of Paris correctly describes as a great document. The resumption of diplomatic relations between France and the Holy See furnished the eminent prelate with his theme. The patriotism of a true Frenchman and the faith of a great pastor and a loyal son of the Pope can be traced in every line. The main points of the Cardinal's letter can be thus summarized.

French Catholics, he says, have given a cordial welcome to the resumption of diplomatic relations with the Holy See. From this happy event they augur the most beneficial results both for the Church and their country. They realize that the Nuncio, chosen by Benedict XV, represents him as his envoy at Paris, adds to his extraordinary gifts of mind and heart the sincerest affection and sympathy for France. Moreover French Catholics are convinced that the higher authorities in the Government, taught as they have been by the lessons of the War, are animated by kinder sentiments towards the Catholic religion.

But, continues the Cardinal, it has been said that France, in thus renewing diplomatic relations with the Vatican, means to deal exclusively with a question of foreign policy, and that the hostile legislation which in the past was devised with such a spirit of injustice and persecution against the Church, is to undergo no change. But, even though the Government should only slightly alter the laws already passed, the Cardinal hopes that after the lessons of the War, a serious effort will be made to bring back to the country a reign of justice and peace. The Church of France, boldly adds the prelate, has been

deprived of her real estate and other goods. Other resources of that kind, she may not acquire, since the Government does not recognize in her that "civil and moral personality" which is derived from the Divine law which rules her, and from the very fact of her existence. Thus the Church finds herself in a most precarious situation. Surely L'Union Sacree, that hallowed union which, during the War, linked all Frenchmen in the defense of the country and binds them still in the task of reconstruction, does not forbid Catholics openly to express the wish that the Church should enjoy the same privileges, liberty and peace which she finds in so many other lands. Respect for that hallowed bond cannot prevent them from entertaining the desire that property acquired by Catholics and applied to definite ends, should return as speedily as possible to the purposes for which it was primarily obtained, and to which it was solemnly dedicated.

The Cardinal reminds the Faithful that episcopal and parochial properties, belonging to the Ordinaries and the parishes under the provisions of the ecclesiastical law and used strictly for ecclesiastical ends, have been taken away from them and handed over to the departments and communes for relief work. To his intense sorrow, the Cardinal has seen himself deprived—and what he says for Lyons can be said for almost every other diocese in France—of valuable real estate whose sole purpose was to promote educational and charitable work among priests and Faithful. He has been deprived of the property dedicated to the instruction of his seminarians, of Catholic boys and girls; destined for the care of aged and sick priests, of the poor and infirm. He finds it almost impossible now to come to the relief of his seminarians, his impoverished clergy, the children of whom he is the pastor. Under the pretext that all the real estate, the property of the homes and houses of which Catholics have been despoiled, must now be used for government relief work, the enemies of the Church are making a bold attempt to silence protests, and hypocritically complain that Catholics are violating the law of Christian charity when they merely claim that which by every right of justice and honor belong to them.

The Catholic Church, boldly adds the Archbishop of Lyons, does not need to be taught the lessons of charity. Least of all can she admit as her teachers those who, for the works of charity in which they may engage, never "untie their own purse-strings," but have recourse to revenues from confiscated property and homes, or draw copiously from the resources of the public treasury.

The Cardinal does not absolutely condemn what he calls "forced contributions" to the cause of charity. But far nobler does he find that charity which the Church has always exercised freely, spontaneously and in the name of love. It was the mutual love of the Christians for one another which stamped the Church as something not of earth, in the eyes of pagan and Jew in the first century. Even when the persecutions raged, the poor, the widow and the outcast were never abandoned by her. For centuries, churches and monasteries were the only asylum opened to the suffering and the poor. Today in France, countless hospitals bear the unmistakable seal, in their charters, the names they bear, the laws that govern them, the purposes to which they are dedicated, of their Catholic origin. Even when robbed and despoiled of her property and her wealth, the Catholic Church will not abdicate that mission of charity bequeathed her by her Divine Founder. In spite of the injustices of which they were the victims and the privations under which they suffered, French Catholics made a splendid contribution to the relief work so heroically undertaken by the nation during the War. The Cardinal is accused by his enemies of ignoring the laws of Christian charity. He answers that out of the funds generously contributed by the Faithful in the midst of their poverty, he has been enabled to found two orphan asylums, one for boys, another for girls, an agricultural school and an industrial high school.

Charity, adds the brave prelate, is a duty, but it must not be exercised at the expense of justice. No man offends against charity when he proclaims that the testaments of the dead are sacred and inviolable, or that real estate, homes, property, intended for specific ends, can be applied to others never thought of. As long as the Holy Father shall not have decided otherwise, it is a duty and a right to proclaim openly that church property must be restored to the Church and that those who apply that property to other purposes have no reason to complain when they face the consequences of their own acts.—America.

If you would do works meet for penance, they must proceed from a living flame of charity. If you would secure perseverance to the end, you must gain it by continual loving prayer to the Author and Finisher of faith and obedience. If you would have a good prospect of His acceptance of you in your last moments still it is love alone which secures His love, and blots out sin.—Cardinal Newman.

THE MAJESTY OF THE LAW

There is nothing more precious than law and order. Under a wise and fair administration of the just laws of the realm and an impartial enforcement of order, men enjoy security and happiness; prosperity reigns; industry flourishes; arts and sciences attain to a high degree of development; human progress goes on unimpeded; universal contentment prevails; good will is diffused through the various social strata, and the general well-being of society is realized.

This is, indeed, a charming picture, but not in the least overdrawn; for law and order are the very basis of civilization. They constitute effective barriers against injustice and wrongdoing; they stay the atrociousness of the mighty and afford protection to the weak; they place within reach of the lowliest the means of redress against overreaching and exploitation; they curb the selfish instincts that otherwise would have free play and put a check upon unscrupulous practices to which the trusting and the unwary might succumb; they prevent society from degenerating into a jungle in which the daring prey upon the timid, and in which the untrammelled liberty of the few would quickly and infallibly compass the slavery and complete subjection of the many. Law and order are the friends of men and the guardians of civilization.

Law and order are something unspeakably sacred. To the Catholic mind they are invested with an added dignity and sanctity; because they reflect the eternal law that lives in the will of the Creator, who has ordained that the world should be governed by order and harmony. When the Catholic speaks of the majesty of the law and the sacredness of order, he uses no meaningless phrase that is glibly spoken on the tongue without arousing an echo in the heart. That combination of words is weighty with profound import and pregnant with practical consequences, one of which is the ingrained respect of the Catholic for the law and its accredited organs. That respect, in many cases, has made him submit to unjust laws that outraged his liberties and violated his rights rather than raise his hands against constituted authority. He is not found among those who take the law into their own hands or who undermine systematically the foundations of order.

Because of his reverence for the law, he deprecates everything that may bring discredit to the law and thus frustrate its beneficent action. Legalized injustice, venality and corruption among those who are chosen to uphold order he laments, since they strengthen the cause of those who aim at the overthrow of the law and its administration. When the law is administered in a way that it is difficult for the poor to obtain justice; when petty crime is visited with severe retribution whilst the wealthy malefactor escapes unharmed and is allowed to enjoy the fruits of his evil deeds; when the law sanctions ill-gotten privileges and protects possessions acquired by dubious methods, anarchy takes course, for that is the soil on which its harvests sprout.

If respect for the law is not completely to be wiped out in this country, those entrusted with its administration must see that it is enforced with fairness to all; that the small interests enjoy the same protection as the large ones; that the big criminal is brought to justice as well as the little one; that the impartiality of the law shines forth with the lustre of the noontide sun. Men resort to violence when the ordinary avenues of justice are closed to them.

Of this we have an illustration in the recent happenings in West Virginia. In the midst of a peaceful community, the miners have taken up arms and marched forth in battle array to gain by the use of force certain rights to which they thought themselves entitled. Federal troops had to quell the rebellion. When war breaks out in an organized State, something is radically wrong. There would appear to be some gross injustice which the local government seemed to condone or at which it connived. But even if this is the case, the violators of the peace are not justified; yet, somehow, their action is explained. It appears that in the counties infested by the rebellion practically the whole machinery of the law was in the pay of coal operators and exercised chiefly in their behalf. Such conditions are intolerable. The law is not for the benefit of the few. Its enforcement must not be mainly directed against one class for the advantage of the other. Where such conditions prevail, men cannot respect the law. They give a willing ear to anarchy and rebellion.

Governmental action must not end with the repression of rebellion. It must not cease until the conditions that have brought the law into disrepute are thoroughly changed and reformed. Where the law is administered in a fair and even-handed way, rebellion has small chance.—Catholic Standard and Times.

Prosperity should cause us more fear than joy, and we ought never fear so much as when everything goes according to our wishes.—St. Ignatius.

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