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EDITORIAL

“EUGENIC” SPUTTERINGS.

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“**R**OMAN Catholics are gradually making a Catholic country of the United States” is the statement made, according to the London despatches, by Prof. Hoffman (Lewis Angelo) of Newark, N.J., at the recent International Congress on Eugenics. And which may be the premises from which the Professor proceeds? His premises are that Catholic families are more prolific than the Protestant.

It is not here the question whether Catholics be more desirable, or less so, than Protestants. The question is the eugenic Professor’s premises and conclusion.

According to Prof. Hoffman Catholicity and Protestantism are biologic manifestations. From the same biologic fact that flies are more prolific than cows, mosquitoes than horses, or cats than human beings, the Professor concludes that, seeing Roman Catholic families are more prolific than Protestant families the country is being gradually turned Catholic. It will not escape the careful reader that from alleged biological premises, Prof. Hoffman “bolts” his premises and lands into sociologic conclusions.

The country may, or may not be gradually becoming Catholic. If it is, then the cause is not the prolific quality of Catholic families—at least not the main, nor yet the only cause.

Credo are reflexes of material conditions. As Marx put it, they are reflexes of the material conditions that need such reflexes. The material necessities that lie at the foundation of creeds stare one in the face on all sides. This or that position of the litany may have to be dropped from this or that “Service—the “Collection” never is dropped. Whether one look at the creed of the Jew which promises the terrestrial reward of a long sojourn on earth to a virtuous life; or whether one consider the papal declaration that, without temporal power, the papacy can not administer its

spiritual functions; or whether one weigh the Presbyterian recently arrived-at conclusion to shorten family morning prayers because of the pressure of business;—whatever important action is taken by any creed, all will proceed from the same source. The material foundation, hence, the actual political breath of creeds is unmistakable.

"Shoemaker, stick to your last," applies not to shoemakers only. The maxim applies also to the eugenists. If these gentlemen would only stick to their praiseworthy researches; if they would only train their minds in elemental principles of reasoning and drawing conclusions; if they would only furnish the stores of their acquired information with sound facts; if they would only broaden their horizon; instead of, as so many of them do, strike with prelatical shallowness and arrogance the posture of a "priesthood," so many of them would not blunder, as Prof. Hoffman does, into the hasty conclusion that the prolific feature of the families of a creed indicates the gradual absorption of the country by that creed.

Democratic, Republican, or Socialist families may or may not be more or less prolific. The size of the respective families will not be the determining factor in the permanent triumph of these, or any other politico-economic formations, whether openly political, or covertly so, that is, "clerical." Economic evolution will take care of that. The absorption of the country will not be by the Catholic, the Protestant, the Jew, the Republican, or the Democratic political formations—however prolific the families of any of these, or all together may be. The more prolific their families, all the more recruits will Nature be raising for economic evolution to enroll under the banner of Socialism.

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