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EDITORIAL

THE CHURCH IN MEXICO.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A UNIONPORT, N.Y., correspondent writes to correct us in the matter of a recent article headed "Priests Blamed for Mexico's Trouble."

With the proper poise of the man, who manfully respects himself, and, therefore, respects others, our correspondent does not feel satisfied with asserting, he feels the necessity of furnishing proof; in the best sense of the term "Christian spirit," he tells us we are "misinformed," and expresses the hope that we may "repent soon"; finally, as a typical illustration of the wreckage of the thinking powers that political Roman Catholicism, or Ultramontanism, accomplishes in some quarters, the proof that our correspondent furnishes us of our misinformation is a leaflet, "General Intention for February, 1913," issued by the New York *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, and entitled "The Church in Mexico."

In the first place, the article complained about—"Priests Blamed for Mexico's Trouble"—was not an editorial, that is, an official utterance, nor a special correspondence from some Socialist contributor. The article was a news item reporting what was being said in Mexico. The article could be attacked, upon the score of incorrectness, only by charge and proof that the opinions, alleged to be current in Mexico, were not being uttered. This our correspondent does not attempt to do.

But we wish not even remotely to seem to hedge. We shall proceed upon the theory that a Socialist educational publication like the *Daily People* should not, therefore does not, publish even a news report without in some way standing sponsor for the correctness of the same, unless the item is simultaneously repudiated. We shall admit that the report in question, by being published uncontradicted, had, in a way, the endorsement of the *Daily People*. We shall presume even further, to wit, that, by publishing the report, the *Daily People* endorsed the correctness, not

merely of the despatches concerning what was being said in Mexico, but that what was being said in Mexico was itself correct; that the treacheries and assassinations which served as the orchestration for the downfall of Madero's administration were partly prompted by Ultramontane machinations.

Our correspondent is entitled to our reason.

First, as a general proposition, the citizen of our century is compelled to form an opinion upon a number of things, the majority of which fall not under his own personal observation. In doing so he goes by the rule of probability. We are not now in Mexico; have not been there for over thirty years. Whether our correspondent ever was in Mexico we know not, he surely is not there now, any more than ourselves. Consequently—in forming an opinion upon present happenings in Mexico, our correspondent proceeds, exactly as we do, by the rule of probability.

Secondly, also as a general proposition, the rule of probability is not an arbitrary affair. It is dominated, as all reason is dominated, by logic, crystallized in the elemental tenets of the Law of Evidence.

Coming, now, down to concrete propositions, is the opinion our correspondent arrives at dominated by the elemental tenets of Evidence? Let's see.

The proof our correspondent supplies us of our being misinformed—the article on “The Church in Mexico” from *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart*—contains passages denunciatory of the constitution and laws of Mexico for “confiscating the property of religious orders”; denunciatory also of “Freemasons,” to whom the said obnoxious constitution and laws are imputed; and denunciatory of the “agrarian Socialism” which is raising its head in Mexico. The article, furthermore, contains the information that before the election of Madero, “a new National Catholic Party was formed with the approbation of the Bishops,” and that the new party “would have elected all their candidates” but was defeated by frauds; finally, that “there is danger of attempts to suppress this party and to enforce the anti-religious laws.”

Elemental tenets of Evidence turn the proof which our correspondent furnishes us of our being “misinformed,” into strong presumptions of fact and law that our opinion is well founded.

What business has an organization, which claims to be the representative of Jesus, with property? Did not Jesus order: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon

earth,” but “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven”? And did not Jesus explain the mighty reason why: “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”?

What business have Bishops—dignitaries who claim to speak and act for Jesus—to set up, or approve, a political party? Did Jesus not say: “My kingdom is not of this world”?

Does not the admission that the “new National Catholic party” (the party that was started with the approbation of the Bishops for the purpose of recovering the “confiscated” property of the religious orders, and other wise re-establishing the clerical temporal power){,} does not that admission warrant the expectation of seeing the new party, anxious to save its program from suffering shipwreck, commit any and all the iniquities that the Modernists—that powerful and most enlightened and pious element among Catholic dignitaries, against which Ultramontanism is fulminating its darts—accuse the Temporal Powers of the papacy with?

Finally, was it not a member of Ultramontane Catholicism, the Rev. Father John L. Belford, who, in his Brooklyn *Nativity Mentor* of last March characterized the Socialist as “the mad dog of society,” and stated expressly that the said mad dog, if he can not be silenced otherwise, should be “silenced with a bullet”?

By all the rules of probability, controlled by elemental principles of Evidence, the Bishops of Mexico, as reported from Mexico, considered the Madero Administration a mad dog; and, unable to do so in any other manner, took a hand in silencing the “mad dog” with a bullet—not an uncommon argument with Ultramontanism, or politico-business Catholicism, as the fate of the Brunos, the Savonarolas, the Joans-of-Arch, and scores of other unsilencable “mad dogs” attests.

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