

promptly went beneath the political surface. Then, like a bubble, up rose Senor Romanones as Premier. He swiftly broke and vanished. Then, for a brief space, Senor Moret rose to the troubled surface again and clutched the bauble-emblem of power. We next see it in the hands of a Senor whose name is variously rendered De Armijo and De Ramijo. The cable-men had not time to make sure of his name when, lo! 'gray flits the shade of power' from his relaxed fingers. And now (according to Monday's cable messages) he is succeeded by Senor Alaura, who (it is added) 'will treat the Church and the Vatican with deference'. It is said that Englishmen never quite master the difficulty of riding on an Irish jaunting-car. It is by no means the only Irish difficulty that they have failed to master. But a seat in the Spanish Ministry just now seems to be still more insecure—to be as jolty and uncertain as a seat on a champion circus mule. Anticlerical Ministries in Spain during the past few months appear to have been spending most of their time upon the tan-rubbing embrocation into their bruises. Harrying the Church does not seem such easy and profitable work there as on the other side of the Pyrenees. These are the outstanding facts of a situation in regard to which the cables and some of the English daily papers have been for some time past giving us some very false and misleading ideas. For the present, we merely caution our readers that in Madrid, as in Paris, the swiftest channels of external communication are in the hands of the enemies of the Church. They are merely echoes of the Masonic and anti-Catholic 'Heraldo.' And (to use a Celtic proverbial saying) one might as well 'go to the goat's house for wool' as go to such journals as the Madrid 'Heraldo' for a fair and faithful statement of the facts of the Masonic campaign against religion in Spain.

There is perhaps more than a little significance in the fact that, both in France and in Spain, the periods of governmental war upon religion have been periods of astonishing ministerial instability. France has had nearly forty Ministries since its rulers started the twenty-five-year-old campaign to 'hunt Christ out of the Government of the country.' Spain has had four Ministries within some two or three months—a swiftness of lightning-change that even the Third Republic could hardly rival. In the Monarchy, as in the Republic, 'a resolute and well-organised minority' may (as Lecky said of France) force their policy on a majority who are 'for the most part languid, divided, or unorganised.' But the country would be the loser. For in France (as Lecky has pointed out) public interests have been 'profoundly affected by constant fluctuations among its chiefs'; 'grave evils have arisen from inexperience and nominal power; a lowered tone' has entered into public life; liberty has waned; the brilliant talent of former days is no longer at the nation's service; the introduction of the principle of spoils to the victors has degraded the official system; the lack of professional honor among 'diplomats and other officials' is a most sure and 'ominous sign of deterioration in public life'; and the country is suffering from instability 'where steady continuity is of the highest importance.' Continuity of general policy, and especially of foreign policy, is hardly to be expected of Ministries that appear and disappear with the abrupt and frequent squeak of a Jack-in-the-box. A consistent foreign policy made France respected abroad in the days of Henry IV., Richelieu, Mazarin, Louis XIV., and Cardinal Fleury. To-day, the pigmy politicians of the 'Bloc' have inaugurated a reign of plunder, proscription, and persecution, set Frenchmen at the throat of Frenchmen, and plunged the country into a state bordering on civil war, merely to gratify the hatred entertained by a dark-lantern fraternity against religion. And like spaniels they effusively lick the

hand that slapped their face at Fashoda, and meekly kiss the hob-nailed boot that kicked them on the Rhine. How are the mighty fallen! And how God avenges Himself upon the nations that, in their rulers, raise their sacrilegious right hand against Him!

Another Bogus 'Oath'

Once upon a time (so ran the Grecian story) the morose and angry Ajax contended with Ulysses for the conquering armor of Achilles. The Greek princes decided in favor of Ulysses. Thereupon Ajax stormed and raged and fumed like a Vesuvius. On his way from the council hall he came across a flock of inoffensive sheep, browsing harmlessly by the roadside. In his blind fury he fell upon them, imagining them to be the princes who had given the award against him. Then he turned his blade against himself, and died a suicide.

In the recent Federal elections, the morose Australian Ajax (to wit, the 'yellow' section of the community) strove with might and main to capture the armor of Achilles—to secure for themselves the place of power in the supreme councils of the Commonwealth. But the Greek princes (that is, the body of the electors) awarded it elsewhere. Thereupon, an angry Ajax of the 'yellow' men (the Grand Master of the Victorian Orangemen) strode out with a tempest in his brain. He came across a useful and inoffensive Catholic benefit society—the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Fancying in his paroxysm that in striking them he smote the authors of the adverse award, he fell upon them and mauled and clubbed them with a hideous accusation. Said accusation was this: that the members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians take a diabolical oath that winds up with this screech from the Abyss:—

'And in revenge for the sufferings of our forefathers and protection of our rights, I further solemnly swear to aid as best I can in exterminating and extirpating all Protestants and heretics out of Ireland or elsewhere; to hunt, pursue, shoot, and destroy all Protestant or heretic landlords, proprietors, or employers, and also to hunt, shoot, pursue, and destroy all landlords or proprietors belonging to the Church of Rome should he or they evict his or their tenants from the house, land, home, or holding of theirs.'

Fee-faw-fum!

The first part of this absurd and clumsy fabrication is palpably built upon and probably intended as an offset to the oath 'to exterminate the Catholics of Ireland', which (according to Plowden and such Protestant authorities as Lords Gosford and Holland, Henry Grattan, William Sampson, Arthur O'Connor, and sundry other authorities, including some eye-witnesses) was taken by early Orangemen during the first reign of terror organised by the lodges. (2) The sham 'oath' attributed to the Ancient Order of Hibernians was originally attributed, we believe, to the Ribbonmen. (3) No such oath was ever taken by the Ribbonmen. And no oath of any kind has ever been taken by the Ancient Order of Hibernians, or by any Catholic benefit society. (4) The 'oath' given above has the evidence of its fraudulent character lying as manifest all over it as marsh-weeds upon a swamp. It opens, for instance, with the assertion of three favorite Orange calumnies: (a) that Catholics are free to commit perjury as they please; (b) to disregard all oaths of allegiance to any Protestant authority, and (c) to massacre any person, whether Catholic or 'heretic', that happens to stand in their way. The clumsy forger of this 'oath' also forgot an elementary precept of caution when he used the common Protestant designation, 'the Church of Rome'—a title which Catholics in English-speaking countries practically never employ. (5) The publication of the rules of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and official disclaimers of that clumsily fabricated 'oath', settle the story spread by the Grand Master of the Victorian Orangemen, on the 'authority' of a rabbit-brained

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