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The Menace

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OUR PLATFORM
Clippings and Contributions Wanted
REV. THEO. C. WALKER, Editor

On Mexican Catholicism

In 1824 a republican form of government was inaugurated in Mexico. Appreciating the danger which threatened her, Rome spared no effort to tighten her grasp; but in 1857 another bold and forward step was taken, when the amended Constitution was proclaimed. Under it were enacted the "Laws of Reform," which decreed an absolute divorce between the Roman Catholic church and Government of Mexico, thereby granting freedom of conscience and religious worship to all. However, declarations of freedom do not make men free, and today Mexico's millions are in a bondage to the priests.

In view of the magnificent churches, the palatial manner in which archbishops, bishops and many priests live, it may be interesting to consider the cost of being a Roman Catholic in Mexico.

Shortly after birth the baby must be "baptized." For this ceremony we understand that two dollars and a quarter is charged. Remembering the wretched dwelling places, the extreme poverty on every side, the amount seems exorbitant, but having before her the terrors of limbo—the dark pit where dead babies go if they have not been sprinkled by the priest—what mother would refuse to make any sacrifice? When the little one is about five or six years of age the call comes for the confirmation fee, and for other expenses incidental to the great occasion. Soon childhood and youth pass and the time arrives for marriage. Again the church claims her rights, and the amount required is an insurmountable barrier to many. We are told that the servant class are required to pay from fifteen to forty dollars, the price varying according to the amount of holy water and incense used. Civil marriage is now free, but the priests teach that those guilty of it commit blasphemy against the church. In consequence they are excluded from the fold and lose all hope of salvation. Can we wonder that through fear of the priests and inability to meet the demands, many become a law unto themselves in establishing the marriage relation? Dr. A. T. Pierson thus strongly emphasizes this point: "Nearly one-half of the men and women in Mexico living as husband and wife have no legal relation as such. The avaricious priests demand such enormous fees for pronouncing the marriage ceremony that the poor are unable to pay them."

All along the journey of life, notwithstanding the regeneration claimed as a result of "baptism," and the virtues of confirmation, there is constant need for other precautions against the result of sin. A scapula must be placed around the neck, so in case of sudden death the Virgin will grant the protection of angels. From time to time, other charms must be added, all of which have miraculous powers of preservation under different conditions, and all

of which require an equivalent in money. Crosses, rosaries, relics, images, pictures of saints, and numerous other articles are regarded either as aids to or objects of devotion, and must be purchased. Some images are said to have miraculous power. One, called the Virgin of Remedios, is the patroness of all in misfortune. She is hired out by the day for enormous sums. Images of less power can be had for less money, and a sick bed is not unfrequently surrounded by them. The use of candles also adds considerably to the expense of being a Roman Catholic. One day in the year these are blessed, and on this, as on many other "holy days," the people do no work. A visit to a candle-shop was a very interesting experience. All kinds were seen, some worth as much as fifty dollars. We were told that seven hundred dollars' worth of candles were burned in one church during a few hours on a special feast day. Candles are in constant demand. They are burned at home before images and pictures; they are carried in church, held in the hand while prayer is being offered, and are then left in little places prepared to receive them; they are burned for the helpfulness of the dying, and to light the dead to purgatory. The sale of "Indulgences" is also a source of income to the church and of poverty to the people. Lotteries are sanctioned by the church, and it is said that children sell the tickets on the streets as if they were newspapers. We are also told that on Christmas one may kiss the Christ-child for five cents, and so obtain a blessing, while on Good Friday in all the churches Christ lies in state with a contribution plate on his body.

After all life has been spent in a continual strain to meet the moneyed demands of the church, supplemented by endless prayers and confessions to the priests, penances of various kinds, such as crawling up church stairs, beating the body with knotty cords and thorny sticks, wearing spiked shoes, etc., etc., in almost endless variety, it would seem that one might be allowed to die without any further effort. But, no; some one must hurry for the priest in time for the "last confession," the administration of "extreme unction." Nor does death end the expense, for the loved one must be buried in consecrated ground, and the priest must be paid to bless it. Formerly all burying grounds belonged to the church, and to the very poor a space was rented for a certain length of time. Without the money there could be no burial, so the relatives would beg in the street for the needed amount. If the priest's presence is desired at the grave he must be well paid. Then there is the expense of masses for the repose of the soul, to be followed by continued offerings for release from purgatory. All sorts of devices are in use for securing purgatorial money. Pur-

gatorial raffling is a means of securing small offerings. Ladies are appointed to go from house to house soliciting contributions, sometimes only three cents a chance. Purgatorial insurance companies are plans by which the living may make provision for a certain number of masses to be said after death. On November 23, designated as the Day of the Dead, masses are said for the repose of all souls in purgatory. After services in the cathedral in Mexico, toys are sold outside the church peculiar to the occasion. Among those may be mentioned coffins, in which a body flies up when a spring is touched; tiny hearses with coffins, skeletons, skulls, face-similes of the image of the soul in purgatory which is seen inside of the cathedral on a contribution box, red flames, contortions and all—only with the difference that the one is intended for the children to eat, being made of sugar, while the other is for contributions. Thousands of dollars are spent annually in prayers for the dead, while the living are dying of hunger. The cost of getting a soul out of purgatory varies according to the ability of the interested ones, but it is said, no matter how much money is paid, priests seldom announce that the sufferer is released from torment.

So remorselessly have the Mexicans been held in priestly bondage that there is no liberty of soul. All sense of personality—that which brings us into such close tender relationship with the Father—has been crushed. Life's teaching has converged into one point, the yielding of implicit obedience to the will of the priests. Through fear of them, we have seen that, rather than be married by the civil law when unable to pay the priests, the great majority of the poor class dispense with any marriage service. In the confessional everything must be told, no family secrets, no confidences of any kind withheld. Under such conditions, ruined homes as well as bondage of souls are also part of the great cost.

Dr. John Watson (Ian MacLaren) is not usually charged with bigotry; rather is he thought of on the side of liberality. Yet his words concerning Romanism express with condensed power some phases of the subject we have tried to present. He says: "The priest, with his interference between God and the soul, and his insolent private tyrannies, is the natural foe of the Gospel. The war of Rome means the subjugation of national independence, interference with family sanctity, the denial of individual liberty and steady opposition to every form of light."

Poor, down-trodden Mexico! Our neighbor, indeed, but has she not fallen among those whose only thought seems to be for their own gain? As we think of her, how applicable seems the story of the man on the road to Jericho! In the light of the noble, self-sacrificing services rendered by the Good Samaritan, shall we not heed the command, "Go thou and do likewise"?

The science of government cannot be learned in parochial schools.

Dr. Draper concludes one of his works with these words, directed against the Roman Catholic church: "Will modern civilization consent to abandon the career of advancement which has given it so much power and happiness? Will it consent to retrace its steps to the semi-barbarism, ignorance and superstition of the Middle Ages? Will it submit to the dictation of a power which, claiming divine authority, can present no adequate credentials of its office; a power which kept Europe in a stagnant condition for many centuries, ferociously suppressing by the stake and the sword every attempt at progress, a power that is founded in a cloud of mystery; that sets itself above reason and common sense?"

HON. H. F. BOWERS—DEAD.

Not dead, but gone into camp with the immortals.

Early in the history of The Menace Mr. Bowers declared his sympathy and friendship, but said his age and health would not permit him to be active.

He put the paper in touch with several of the Old Guard of the American Protective Association, and we flung the flaming torch of a new defense of American liberties into the camps of the "mighty men of old," and The Menace found exceeding favor, and glad hands, because of this nobleman's endorsement.

His experience in fighting the common enemy—the institution with the boycott, the pincers and the torch—caused him to draw near in such an affectionate friendship, that The Menace was shocked to hear of his death, though we knew the good man was living on borrowed time.

Unless Mr. Bowers has left on record the history of the association while he was its trusted head, many political and strategic facts will be lost with him.

One of the prized communications from Mr. Bowers is the resolution addressed to the French prime minister tendering congratulations on the overthrow of the Catholic power and the fact of an open road for the French people, freed from the superstition, paganism, and the traditions of a corrupt church.

When we realize the power and malignity of the hierarchy, both as a political and financial force in American life, our admiration is unbounded for the man Bowers and those who followed him.

With what solicitous tenderness did he write to this office when he became aware of our purpose and plans. He knew what we were up against from his own experience, but he did not realize that the "Beast of Rome" had had its claws clipped by the A. P. A. and the hierarchy had a wholesome fear of an aroused public sentiment.

The American nation will never consent to come under the yoke of the Vatican without a desperate fight, and the arousal of the sleeping republic will not be half so hard as it would have been, but for the labors and sacrifices of Hon. H. F. Bowers and his magnificent company of patriots.

Mr. Bowers was to have visited The Menace next summer, and we had begun to anticipate his coming and his counsel. Brave, true hearted brother and friend! A kindlier spirit never lived and no more heroic soul ever set itself to the accomplishment of a national and patriotic work than his. We can only hope that in some way he may visit us clothed with greater wisdom and power, now that the limitations of the flesh are removed, and make us certain of his visitation by the touch of the vanished hand, that reached out to us in love and confidence across the states, from his home in Clinton, Iowa.

Note.—Mr. Bowers organized the A. P. A.s, who fought a good fight and kept the faith, and now the master mind has fallen asleep, but his works follow him, and another generation will build his monument.

The bishops are opposed to prohibition—because nine-tenths of the saloon and brothel keepers are Catholics and contributors to the support of the hierarchy.

Open Letter to Roosevelt

By JUAN ORTIZ GONZALEZ

Not long ago you accused the Y. M. C. A. of unfairness because its constitution does not place Catholics on the same footing nor grant to them the same privileges as to Protestants. I myself would consider it a better and wiser policy to concede to them the same privileges provided they would pledge themselves both to maintain its Christian and uncertain constitution and to accept the Christian Bible.

I believe that such a policy would accomplish far reaching and incalculable good, bringing into closer relation Catholics and Protestants, dispelling mutual misunderstandings and prejudices, and promote the universal brotherhood of man so long and earnestly desired by Christians throughout the world.

At the same time, I must say in passing that as a Roman Catholic theologian I cannot explain the conduct of Archbishop Ireland in this matter except by thinking that he was playing a very shrewd trick in order to mislead public American opinion and to expose as sectarian the Y. M. C. A. A great many Americans taking the words and acts of Archbishop Ireland on their face value may be induced to believe that if the Y. M. C. A. should grant to Catholics the same privileges as to Protestants, the former could become members of this institution, when Archbishop Ireland knows as well as I do that such is not the case. Even admitting the hypothesis that the Y. M. C. A. should grant not only the same privileges but even greater ones and should give the leadership of the organization to Catholics, Catholics could by no means become members of the institution.

Every Catholic who goes to hear heretic preachers on religious topics or joins with them in acts of worship commits not a slight offense and one easily forgiven but he commits a heinous and mortal sin. Archbishop Ireland knows as well as I do that I can corroborate my assertion by the testimony of hundreds of the soundest and most reliable Roman Catholic authorities, which testimony I am willing and ready to furnish if you desire it. It is really astonishing to me how easily the Roman Catholic hierarchy succeeds in concealing the ugliest and narrowest aspects of the Roman Catholic doctrine and how easily they are able to mislead keen politicians and alert public writers as they so often do in the United States.

But rather than put any stress on that incident, already past, I intend to point out to you some cases of plain unfairness, which no one criticizes because they are committed by the Roman Catholic church.

The Roman Catholic church dares to say to a Protestant, by no means can you marry a Catholic, unless the marriage be performed by a Catholic priest, and an oath taken that all children born of the union shall be instructed in the doctrines of the Roman Catholic church and be reared as Catholics; and neither you nor any important paper in this country accuse it of unfairness, narrowness and sectarianism.

Catholics are taking the Bibles out of our public schools whenever and wherever it is possible for them to do it and then discrediting this greatest of American institutions by calling it ungodly and pernicious. They are establishing their parochial schools, wherein the most bigoted Romanism is taught since foreign friars and foreign nuns are largely the teachers. Bishops have been known to compel, under penalty of mortal sin, parents to take their children out of the public schools and to send them to the parochial schools, and neither you nor any important paper have warned the nation of the tremendous and sinister influence that must thereby be exerted in the near future on American ideals and civilization.

The Roman Catholic church has organized the political rather than the religious society of the Knights of Columbus, which counts already about 300,000 members who are bound by secret oath to defend the Roman Catholic church in public affairs and in po-

litical circles. The Roman Catholic church has organized the American Federation of Catholic Societies which numbers already several thousand local centers scattered all over the country. The Roman Catholic church has organized the American Federation of Catholic Press, which includes several thousand editors and papers, and through such powerful organizations, has threatened to boycott certain business houses and various editors of daily papers solely because they are American enough to express freely what they think about Roman Catholic doctrines and practices; and neither you nor any one accuse the Catholic church of unfairness, narrowness and sectarianism.

In the last meeting of the American Federation of Catholic Societies held in Columbus, Ohio, August 20th to 24th, 1911, with a number of bishops present and under the guidance of his Excellency, the most Rev. Diomedes Falconio, then Apostolic Papal Delegate at Washington, the Roman Catholic church adopted strong resolutions to boycott the sale and prevent distribution of the Encyclopedia Britannica, the greatest product of the best English speaking scholars, published by one of the most renowned English Universities and endorsed by King George of England and Mr. Taft, President of the United States. Are such attempts fair and American? Is not this boycotting worse than any other monopoly or trust? Is it not a shame that American editors and American business houses should be boycotted by a federation of which the Apostolic Delegate has to say: "the American Federation of Catholic Societies is working distinctly under the protection and guidance of the American hierarchy and with the full sanction and the blessing of the Pope." And have you no words to protest against such dangerous encroachments?

Finally do you know the tremendous significance of the last decree of Pius X. "Ne temere," concerning marriages? Are you aware that according to this decree all Protestant marriages are considered null and void, if the marriage ceremony be not performed in the presence of and by a Catholic priest?

Are you not informed that all Protestants holding a license issued by the civil authorities and united in the bonds of matrimony by a Protestant minister of whatever denomination are considered by the Pope and the Roman Catholic church as not married?

And is it not the height of narrowness and sectarianism, and even insult, to proclaim that neither you nor any other Protestant husband is yet lawfully and canonically married?

Are there not laws in all the States of the Union condemning bigamy as a crime liable to imprisonment?

If such is the case, then what does a Catholic priest, bishop or cardinal deserve, who, knowing that some one has been married according to the laws of the country, proceeds to perform a new marriage? If such ecclesiastical dignitaries can escape punishment and avoid prosecution before the courts, why not grant the same privilege to the Mormons? Do not Mormons also claim that they are following the tenets of their own church when they are married to more than one wife?

If the civil marriage performed in the presence of, and by the civil authorities, or by a Protestant minister when the contracting parties hold a license issued by the civil authorities can be ignored by Catholics and they can proceed freely to the performance of a new marriage, then what are the legal grounds to ascertain a case of bigamy?

And if the marriage performed in the presence of and by the civil authorities and Protestant ministers is a legal and valid one, then why not prosecute and punish both the Catholic layman who marries a second wife leaving undivorced his first and the priest who well acquainted with the facts performs the ceremony of the second marriage?



TAKES A QUIET NIP.



MEETS A SISTER OF CHARITY.



HELPS HIMSELF AT A FRUIT-STAND



MEETS A PRIEST



SEES A PROTESTANT



SEES 'THE MENACE'

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