

[R1300 : page 62]

"ROGUE CATCH ROGUE."

This old adage is now being illustrated in Italy. For centuries Roman Catholicism has devoured the substance of the Italians for masses for the dead and for the living, until they are poor as well as ignorant and superstitious. Latterly pride and independence are reviving, and the civil government, anxious to be known as one of the great powers of Europe, has spent money lavishly upon the army and navy. As a result, between the demands of the Pope and of the king for taxes, and between their threats for the present and for the future life, the people are in bad condition – nationally and individually the Italians are on the verge of bankruptcy.

The king shrewdly sees that to enable the people to pay the taxes he demands, they must be relieved of some of the Pope's taxes for masses, etc. Accordingly, as a financial measure, he has recently cut off some of the Papal revenues, and thus inflicted fresh "torment" upon "the seat of the beast."

The following is the cable dispatch:

"ROME, March 19. – The laws for the suppression of religious guilds and fraternities, which have existed for centuries, and for the abolition of chaplains in hospitals, asylums and prisons, began to go into effect in February last. The result is extraordinary. Until two Sundays ago there were 5300 masses celebrated in Rome every Sunday. The number is now reduced to 800. One hundred and fifty-two churches are to be closed also, and their altars demolished.

"The pictures and statues, except such as the State thinks proper to reserve for public [R1300 : page 63] galleries, are to be sold by public auction. In the rest of Italy they will be destroyed, and not even remote villages will be exempt from this stern decree.

Steps are also to be taken to prevent officers and soldiers from attending mass on Sundays, military duties being imposed on them during church hours. All sacred names are being erased from the school books and sacred emblems removed from the schoolrooms.

"These laws have created the utmost bitterness among the clergy. The Pope is resolved to spare no efforts to assist emigration to America and Africa. An enormous number of ecclesiastics have been receiving salaries from religious institutions now suppressed."
