

ANTI-CLERICAL AGITATION IN SPAIN.

THE humiliation of Spain in the war with the United States has given a basis to various movements for reform in the land of the Don, politically, socially, and ecclesiastically. One of these movements, headed by Don Sigismundo Peyordeix, is attracting considerable attention in church circles, and according to the *Frankfurter Zeitung* is developing rapidly both in extent and in intensity. The agitation is anti-clerical, but not anti-Catholic. According to the same journal, Don Sigismundo sees in the Jesuit order the chief source of the ills that have befallen the church and the people of Spain. Originally a priest in Barcelona, he has now, in conjunction with a number of other dissatisfied ecclesiastics, organized a formal crusade against the *status quo* in the Spanish church. His official program is announced in these words: "We are Catholic, but not clerical; on the contrary, anti-clerical." The organ of the movement has been a weekly journal called *El Urbioire*, so named after a famous mountain fastness which neither the Mohammedans nor the French were ever able to subdue. In addition to this journal, Sigismundo has recently published a larger work against the Jesuits, entitled "*Crisis de la Compania de Jesus*," and is developing great literary activity in non-Spanish periodicals also. The first organ of the movement having been suppressed, a new periodical was called into existence, called *El Cosmopolita*. In a recent indictment of the Jesuit order the Spanish agitator designated twenty-four points, in which he considers a reform necessary. Among these are the following: Alleged decline of the true worship of God and of the true following of the crucified Savior; exaggerated and idolatrous reverence for the saints; the worship of the Sacred Heart and other objects of adoration; decrease in the practice of Christian virtues, such as righteousness, wisdom, temperance; and the increase of external religious exercises that appeal only to the senses, such as

processions, festivals, and the whole body of ceremonies; decrease in love and care for the poor, and the growth of the desire for riches, power, and influence; neglect of the Gospel and the traditions and an increasing exaggeration of churchly authority and especially of the power of the Vatican; simony and favoritism in the papal and episcopal government; the prominence given to political trickery in the management of church affairs, and the deterioration of love, justice, and holiness in the leaders of the church; tyranny on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities over the lower clergy and the people. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* quotes Don Sigismundo as saying:

"Against all these weaknesses and evils, which indicate a terrible degeneration of Christian spirit in the church, I have determined to raise my voice day and night, with the permission of my superiors or without this permission. These evils spring from the spirit of Anti-Christ, and to fight this I do not need the permission of Pope or bishop; the call of God and my conscience are sufficient authority."

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He also makes it a point to attack the enforced celibacy of the priests, declaring that while celibacy is a good thing in itself it is such only when it is adopted as a matter of free choice and not of compulsion. With reference to the outcome of the agitation and of the present condition of affairs, he writes further as follows:

"What will be the consequences as far as the future is concerned? This is hard to say beforehand. In the church there is a schism threatening. The Primate of Toledo and the Archbishop of Saville are the two opposite poles in the Spanish church. The former aims at a reintroduction of the Inquisition, and the latter strives for the same freedom of the clergy that prevails in the United States. In political circles there prevails an opposition to

the liberal spirit of the lower classes, and the higher classes are sighing for the Inquisition. In economic affairs suffering is rapidly increasing and immorality is making rapid strides. Corruption in official circles caused the catastrophe in Cuba and in the Philippines, and Spaniards, monks, and Free Masons have all acted like robbers. Spain is the most unhappy land on earth because it is ruled by the Jesuit order. The people are without faith or confidence, without manhood, without strength, without law, without science, even without the sense of honor. The highest that this country can do is to hope that the vulture of Jesuitism may soon cease to devour the vitals of this people. However, as it seems, there is the dawn of a new day, when the people will take terrible vengeance on those who have materially and morally ruined their fatherland." – *The Literary Digest*.
