

EDITORIAL

## EVENTS IN SPAIN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**W**HAT is it that is going on in Spain?

Here is a country long, and centennarianly so, Catholic. Down the centuries, Spain has come as the burg of a creed-political system that, once everywhere in power, crumbled everywhere else. Only the other day the human conscience, from one end of the civilized world to the other, was shocked by a repetition of one of those acts that Catholic Spain has been proverbial for—the judicial assassination of Ferrer after a trial that matched the days of the Inquisition at Toledo. Almost immediately a transformation set in. The Ultramontane or clerical ministry was overthrown; a liberal ministry was set up; it was followed by the election of a liberal parliament; and, events following fast and following faster, measures were inaugurated, amid national plaudits, at that, that first threatened, and then actually brought about a rupture between the Spanish and the Vatican Government.

Here is a revolution, for good or for bad matters not to the subject in hand.

The visionaries, those to whom “Cause and Effect” is a closed book, the mentally unballasted who seem to attribute events to “currents of air,” are prone to look at such things, as those now transpiring in Spain, as portents—some, the bigots, looking at the things as a visitation of heaven, and as an evidence of Satan being let loose; others, the professional atheists, as the result of a “mental effort” achieving “intellectual emancipation”;—one set bemoaning the “catastrophe,” the other set turning hysterical somersaults of joy. Those who are not visionaries, but lack the Socialist key to understand what happens all around them, are looking perplexed at Spain.

The Socialist, equipped with the key that unlocks all sociological secrets, neither moans, nor cuts capers, nor yet is perplexed. He is not misled by the some times sincere, other times insincere, all times false slogan of “moral principles.” He

knows that all “moral principle” is the reflex of material necessities. He looks below the foam. In this instance the material facts at bottom of the revolution in Spain are tersely condensed in the statement made on July 31 by Señor Juan Riano, the Spanish Minister to the United States.

Señor Riano’s statement is to the effect that the present national movement in Spain is “not anti-clerical commercial.”

According to the existing Concordat between Spain and the Vatican certain religious societies were granted by Spain the privilege of carrying on various kinds of business in the country without taxation. This freedom, religiously enjoyed by the religious societies, effected a burden upon all those Spanish business firms who did business in the same articles without the cloak of religion. The grievous burden was borne with secret grumblings until it became too heavy to bear, owing to the inrush of the religious business Societies whose occupation was made illegal in France, or impossible in the Philippines. So many “religious” commercial establishments, run by monks and nuns, all operating without the disadvantage of taxation, moreover, all of them turning their religious external as a lever to exploit the workers whom they employed more severely than the lay employers dared to do, convincingly argued with both bourgeois and proletarians against “things as they were.” Material interests clashed against material interests.

In the clash the Catholic bourgeois and wage slaves were enlightened. They, very likely, like Daniel O’Connell of Ireland, are still willing to take any dose of religion from Rome, but decline any longer to swallow as religion that which is no more religion than any other political or business enterprise. Contrariwise the Vatican, essentially a political concern, knowing too much to take any stock in its own pious homiletics against the “groveling materialism of Socialism,” realizes that without the “sinews of war” its political rule is a thing of air,—and strenuously objects.

Spain is moving, not by dint of either “Satan” or “Enlightenment.” Spain is moving by dint of the material course of events, the world around, that compels Progress.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded August 2011

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)