

EDITORIAL

TAFT TO MERRY DEL VAL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ONE day last week, it happened at the time that the violent gale was blowing up the South Atlantic coast, a particularly violent gust of wind blew open one of the windows of the White House. It happened to be a window of President Taft's private office. Papers, documents and books lay about on tables, desk and floor. The gust that blew the window open must have eddied against the walls and around the furniture, and must have carried out some of the papers, and scattered them down Pennsylvania Avenue. At least that is the theory by which the startling fact is explained of a draft of a letter—addressed to the Cardinal Secretary of State Merry del Val, at the Vatican in Rome, and, presumably, judging from its tenor, written by President Taft,—being found blown about along the avenue.

Without either assenting or denying that the letter was from the President to the Cardinal, we here reproduce it:

“Your Excellency may have wondered at not having received a report from me on recent events in my secular bishopric known as the United States and Dependencies. I can assure your Excellency it was not for want of a will. Is your Excellency familiar with our American humorist, the late Mark Twain? He tells of his experience upon having tried to ride a Mexican broncho. When, lying prostrate on the ground, he recovered his breath, he laid one hand upon one sore spot, the other hand upon another spot, and then realized that he was many hands short. That was my experience the day after last election. I was thrown so heavily! I carried only two measly States! I had more bruised spots than I, and you, and the whole College of Cardinals, including all your Excellency's staff on the Vatican's Department of Secretary of State, together have hands. The bruises were mental as well as physical. Your Excellency will sympathize with me and pardon my not writing. The neglect was only in seeming. I was anxious to communicate and confer with your Excel-

lency. Now that I am recovering my breath, my first thought is to report, and also humbly to make a suggestion or two, and put a question—a question that has been greatly perturbing my slumbers.

“I shall begin with the question.

“Your Excellency will remember the promptness with which I thanked the Vatican for the distinction conferred upon this secular bishopric of America by the appointment of three new Cardinals. The Vatican press in this secular bishopric had shown me elaborate tables demonstrating the hugeness and balance-of-power-holding extent of ‘The Catholic Vote!’ The election bruises of which I still smart throw some light on this ‘Catholic Vote.’ What became of it? I have been confidentially informed that this ‘Catholic Vote’ is extensively affected by the pestilence of the hissing snake of Modernism, hence, is not deliverable, and is very quick to resent any suspicion of their being ‘voting cattle’—such is the unbecoming language that is becoming rife in this country among the natures who are rebellious against Authority, and presume to follow unauthorized light. These facts, it is, that prompt the question which I wish to ask:—Were three new Cardinals too few, or were they too many?

“The question leads to the suggestion that I desire to make, in the interest of the speedy annexation of this secular bishopric to the Temporal powers of the Vatican. In order that my suggestions be understood by your Excellency allow me to recite a few facts.

“Pursuing its unregenerate and heretical theories the government of this country has enacted certain laws on marriage and kindred matters. According to these laws marriage, contracted in ways provided by the law, is valid, and the issue of such marriages is legitimate. My recently converted sister-in-law has argued with me how utterly heretical and deserving of the stake are people who enact, and those who uphold such blasphemous laws. She tells me that your Excellency holds that the purity of the family cannot be preserved with marriages that are contracted before civil officials or heretical clergymen. However this may be, and I defer to your Authority that that is so, the laws of this secular bishopric are as I stated. Now, then, a photograph of the certificate of baptism of a boy Stephan, son of Joannes Homa, dated Trenton, N.J., Feb. 4, 1912, contains the following statement by the

baptizing official, Father Carolus Radoczy: ‘Parents contracted marriage before a Calvinistic preacher which is nothing (void) by the latest decree of our Pontiff Pius X., therefore the boy is illegitimate.’—This photograph has raised a storm. Father Radoczy’s act is denounced by the hissing snakes as a criminal libel upon the child, and upon its mother, and as a violation of our laws, and as an attempt to repeal these laws by one not authorized to legislate under our Constitution.

“More recently, last November 27, 1912, the *Christian Herald*, an organ of Satan quoted Father Phelan as saying in the *Western Watchman*: ‘We would like to rack and quarter Protestantism, we would like to impale it and hang it up for crows to build nests of; we would like to tear it with pincers and pierce it with red-hot irons; we would like to fill it with molten lead and plunge it into hell fire a hundred fathoms deep’—This also is being used by the hissing snakes. They say that ‘racking,’ ‘quartering,’ ‘impaling,’ ‘hanging,’ ‘tearing with pincers,’ ‘piercing with red-hot irons,’ ‘filling up with molten lead,’ ‘plunging into hell-fire’ is what your Excellency’s temporal power has in store for all who disagree with it in this secular bishopric, so soon as its annexation shall have been accomplished; and they add that the prospect is a sliding back into the dreary mental despotism of the Dark Ages.

“A third fact, that I deem it wise humbly to lay at your Excellency’s feet, also took place last year. It was the utterance, printed by Father John L. Belford in his *Brooklyn Nativity Mentor* of last April. The Father said of the Socialist: ‘he is the mad dog of society and should be silenced if need be with a bullet.’

“These incidents should suffice to make my suggestion clear. It is that your Excellency endeavor to cause a reef to be taken in the zeal of the representatives of the temporal power of the Vatican in this country. I know that what animates them is the desire to hasten the day of the triumph of the temporal power of the Vatican. I know that if that day had arrived, I would not now feel bruised as I am. But for that very reason I submit that excessive zeal may mar the plot. To act and utter themselves now, as these Fathers do, is, meseems, a letting the cat out of the bag. That can only delay, if it does not block for all time the advent of the day when this bishopric will enjoy the glories that your Excellency contemplates for it.

“I remain, with distinguished consideration, your Excellency’s devoted and humble servant, etc.”

If Taft wrote that letter, the conclusion is that the fall he received has not impaired his thinking powers. Cato, thou reasonest well.

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