

have all been filled with articles and letters denouncing the expulsion proposal, as well as with the records of official protests against it sent to President ROOSEVELT from Catholic Young Men's Societies, Catholic Federated Societies, and various other bodies of representative laymen. Numbers of these expressions of Catholic lay opinion must have come under the notice of this New York correspondent, so that when he alleges that the Catholic laity of America sympathise with the demand for the expulsion of the friars he makes a statement that is wilfully, deliberately, maliciously false.

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Two brief quotations must also suffice to illustrate the animus and palpable anti-Catholic bias of this representative of the Yellow Press. And, first, we will take his statement as to the reasons for the hostility shown to the friars. 'The friars became obnoxious,' he says, 'because of their greed and their tyrannical rule, as well as by reason of their immorality.' The charge of greed has been refuted over and over again in American papers, while as to immorality the correspondent has already asked us to believe, on the strength of the evidence he quotes, that any immorality that existed made the friars popular rather than unpopular. The true cause of the unpopularity of the friars has been clearly stated by Governor TAFT on more than one occasion. In an article on civil government in the Philippines contributed to *The Outlook* of May 31, he says: 'The feeling of the people against the friars was wholly political.' And in a Note delivered to the Vatican in the course of the negotiations about which the correspondent professes to know so much, Governor TAFT expressed the same idea, with probably more strength than was called for, in these words: 'They have become detested by the Filipinos on account of their solidarity with the Spanish Government in all the revolutions which have taken place in the country.' The suggestion that it was the greed or immorality of the friars which brought about their unpopularity has never once been made by any official representative of the United States, yet the New York writer rejects the official statement and prefers the insulting and degrading explanation which is based on wholesale charges of greed and immorality. Precisely the same animus is shown in the explanation put forward for the alleged failure of the Vatican to fall in with Governor TAFT's proposals. 'The failure of the Vatican,' he says, 'or of the Committee of Cardinals to take the course he desired is due partly to Papal politics, the power of the four Orders being very considerable, and their hostility being dreaded by certain candidates for the Papal succession who took part in the negotiations.' The simple truth is that in this matter the Pope was in a very obvious dilemma. If he refused to accept the TAFT proposals, the enemies of the Church would say that the Pope was hostile to America and opposed to American institutions; if, on the other hand, he unconditionally agreed to the demand for the expulsion of the Orders, the whole world would regard his action as justifying and endorsing the foulest of the foul charges against the friars. This explanation of the Pope's hesitancy was published in American Catholic journals, and we ourselves saw it in the New York journals; but this correspondent had to burrow deeper for some more sinister motive, and so alighted on his theory of 'Papal politics' and 'Papal succession'—an explanation which is manifestly absurd, seeing that the Pope himself was the supreme authority in all the negotiations, and he need have no fear of anybody's influence in the matter of 'Papal succession.'

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This writer's disregard for the truth and his strong anti-Catholic proclivities being thus clear and evident, it is scarcely necessary to add that the one bit of evidence which he does adduce in support of the vile charges of immorality against the friars becomes also strongly 'suspect.' It is taken from a volume which he admits has not yet been discussed by the American public, but which this privileged correspondent in some mysterious way is amongst the first to get access to. It is a purely one-sided statement, and a statement in which the most damning evidence is given by one man, who, more likely than not, has a 'history' and a special reason for his evident grudge against the priests. At any rate, common sense and fair play alike suggest the wisdom of receiving these statements with extreme caution, and we ask our readers and the public generally to hold their judgments entirely in suspense on these accusations

until the accused have had a fair opportunity to reply. In the meantime, we quote one or two absolutely impartial and disinterested testimonies as to the work and worth of these much-maligned men.

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The correspondent of the *Washington Post*—one of the most influential of American dailies—after describing the friars' devotion to the sick and pointing out that statistics of the periodical cholera epidemics show that the Orders generally lose more than 30 per cent. of their own number, remarks:—'While the slanderers of the priests are journeying about the world for their own recreation, those same friars are at their posts, visiting their plague-stricken people and following them through the grave into eternity.' Governor TAFT himself, in the article already quoted, bears emphatic testimony to the great educational and religious work they have performed. 'Great credit,' he says, 'is due to the religious Orders for the work which they did in Christianising the archipelago and in bringing about the civilisation which to-day exists in them.' While the following testimony of the Rev. John A. STAUNTON, a Protestant missionary in the islands for many months is particularly to the point, showing as it does the high standard of piety and devotion instilled into the people by the much-abused friars. The excerpt is taken from *The Living Church*, the leading organ of the Protestant Episcopal denomination in America:—'Again and again I have watched children and adults at devotions which are both simple and earnest, and undoubtedly sincere. Often I have passed native houses after nightfall and stopped to listen to the family prayer in which all the members of the household were engaged, or to a child's voice asking the Santo Nino (the Holy Child JESUS) to "bless father and mother and brother and make me good." Day after day the churches are filled up before day-break with reverent worshippers attending Mass or receiving Holy Communion. Is not all this religion; and good religion, too? What would be the most likely effect of our attacking this system—more religion, or less? To ask the question is to answer it. If one should ask me, what is the value of the prevailing religion from a moral standpoint, I would say that I believe the Americans who are here should be the last to ask this question. If it comes to a comparison of the effect of religion upon life in these Philippine Islands, the native need not fear the result.' As a contemporary well remarks: 'Whatever offence the landed proprietorship of the powerful religious Orders may have occasioned, the general body of the clergy must be good, zealous men, or their parishioners would not deserve this missionary's praise.'

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'Is there no truth at all, then,' it may be asked, 'in these charges of immorality. Are there no scandals in the Philippines?' We cannot give a better reply to these questions than the answer made by a Spanish-American Bishop to a similar query addressed to him when on a visit to the United States. We quote his words as given in the *Ave Maria*: 'Always be slow in giving credence to the evil reports that reach you concerning the faithful of other lands. In many cases these reports originate in ignorance or malice, and are spread in the same way. And one falsehood may be made to do service for fifty years. . . . Our priests, whatever may be said to the contrary, compare favorably with the clergy in other parts of the world. Yes, I know how they are regarded in the United States. We have occasional scandals, of course, as you have here. "It must be that scandals come." But let me tell you something else. Whenever a priest gives scandal he is required to do exemplary penance; and is invariably put on probation before being restored—if ever—to the exercise of priestly functions. There is a way of nullifying a scandal, you see, and it may be increased—made tenfold worse.' That is, no doubt, as true a statement of the extent of the alleged scandals as it is of the spirit in which these evil charges should be received. 'Occasional scandals' yes, in the Philippines as in other places, but this universal corruption which it is sought to thrust down our throats we can never believe except on overwhelming proof. The work which the Philippine friars have accomplished speaks for itself and is their best defence. A body of men with the record which they have for patient, self-sacrificing, up-hill work in reclaiming, educating, civilising and Christianising ignorant natives can never be lightly condemned.