

for from two to fifteen days. When the ceremony is of a solemn character owing to the number of persons taking part or any other circumstance, the promoters, as well as all other participants who disobey the warning of the authorities to disperse, will be sent to gaol at the disposal of the judicial power, becoming liable to imprisonment for not less than two nor more than six months.'

As is known, a ruling based on this provision, issued during the period when Senor Corral was Minister of the Interior, went to the intolerable length of forbidding the reading of the burial service at the graveside within the precincts of the cemeteries.

It seems that open-air religious demonstrations are a question of police and ought not to be forbidden in so sweeping and absolute a manner.

There is no reason in logic or fairness why political, Masonic, and fraternal societies should be permitted to hold open-air demonstrations, with all their insignia and emblems displayed, and why the same privilege should be denied to religious bodies.

The question ought to be purely one for police regulation, and no doubt the clergy themselves, at any rate in the large cities, would find it prudent to use the privilege, if it were again to become available, somewhat sparingly and with all due precautions to prevent regrettable collisions.

But the absolute legislative prohibition seems irrational and despotic, and all the more irritating in that it involves an unfair discrimination.

The same, more or less, may be said about that clause of the Law of December 14, 1874, which prohibits the clergy to appear in public in their clerical garb, nay, which prohibits them to wear in the streets, if the

provision be literally interpreted, the slightest badge of their office.

Here again the law takes too much upon itself. If, as we have pointed out, the members of secret or fraternal societies are permitted to parade the streets, wearing their uniforms and regalia, there is no just ground for prohibiting the clergy of the various denominations from appearing in a distinctive garb, if they see fit. The matter is one which should be left to the clergy's own discretion and common sense.

In all these respects, it seems that the Catholic community of Mexico, the community chiefly affected, may legitimately aspire to the same liberty as is enjoyed by their co-religionists in the United States.

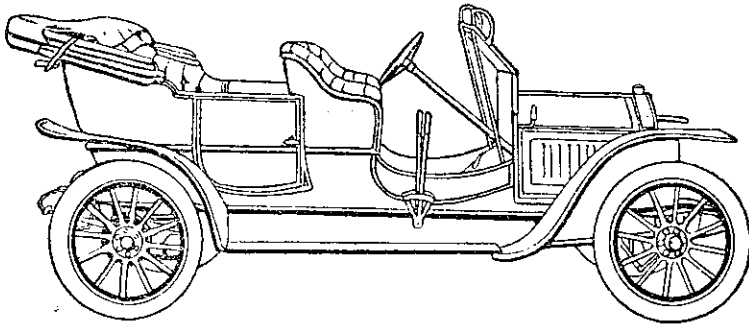
In the United States, the religious Orders of men and women enjoy unrestricted freedom to establish themselves and to live according to their rule; religious parades and processions in the streets are not under the ban; nuns are seen on the thoroughfares of the great American cities wearing the garb of their Orders, and occasionally, as in processions, both secular and regular clergy appear also in public in their sacred vestments or habits.

There is no reason why the same conditions should not prevail in Mexico.

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