

## Current Topics

### Monsignor Seipel About Again

Monsignor Seipel, Chancellor of Austria, who has been confined to hospital since the attempt made to assassinate him some time ago, has now recovered and is about again. He left the hospital on the eve of his silver jubilee in the priesthood, and returned to the Franciscan monastery in which he lived in preference to the stately mansion assigned to the high office filled by him. The people crowded in thousands to the monastery to offer him their congratulations in the Church of the Sacred Heart, where his jubilee was to be celebrated. The Most Rev. Archbishop Sibilis, Nuncio Apostolic to the Austrian Republic, was present, and the Cabinet Ministers and members of Parliament were there in full force. The aristocratic families of Vienna, members of the professions and callings were as well represented as the populace; for all felt delighted to have the saviour of Austria back again. The respect felt for him at Rome was manifested in the presence of the whole Diplomatic Corps, representative of most of the countries of the world. At the conclusion of Mass the Nuncio left his throne and advanced to Monsignor Seipel's prie-dieu to read to him the message from his Holiness the Pope. The Holy Father recalled all the head of the Austrian Government had done for his country, and he thanked Providence for having preserved Monsignor Seipel from the attempt upon his life. He expressed the hope that the wounds, which were thought mortal, would soon allow the Chancellor to take up once more the duties of his office. As far as the silver jubilee was concerned the Pope assured the celebrant that he participated in it with as much joy as he had heard the news of the attempted assassination with sorrow. His Holiness concluded by congratulating the Chancellor on the silver jubilee of his ordination, and wished him many active years in the priesthood.

### An "Irish" Criminal

When Mahon, the English murderer, was being tried for his life several British newspapers "starred" the case under the heading, "The Irishman in the Dock." As a matter of fact, Mahon was not an Irishman. He had nothing Irish in him. He was un-Irish in every quality, attribute, and characteristic. Some of the Home papers report that he was one of Lloyd George's Black-and-Tans; and indeed the crime for which he was hanged was worthy of a member of that infamous force. In one sense the action of the newspapers in calling him an Irishman and in emphasising the falsehood that his crime was an Irishman's crime is too trivial to merit notice. In another sense, however, it is important as it shows the rooted, unreasoning hatred of Ireland with which these journals are consumed. When they discuss an Irish question they ride to judgment on the back of anti-Irish prejudice; and the meanness that peeps out at us in small things becomes a monster in great issues. The contemptible spirit that moves them to refer to an English murderer as an Irish criminal also counsels them to speak of an Irishman like Bernard Shaw as the great "English" dramatist and of the Duke of Wellington as the lean "Englishman." When Irish genius makes its mark it is claimed for England; but when an English criminal happens to have an Irish name his crime is proclaimed as an Irish disgrace. The conduct of journalists who stoop to tactics of this kind differs little from that of "Civis," the local falsifier of historical testimony, except that they do their ignoble work with a certain amount of ability.

### The "High Sign"

The secret society is an abomination condemned by the Church irrespective of whether it is clothed in the pharisaical respectability of English Freemasonry or the brutal arrogance of the Orange Lodge. The surprising thing is that the civil population tolerate it so easily, as its activities are directed invariably against the interests of the people as a whole. Every country in the world is menaced by secret societies. In England and the Dominions the Masonic Order predominates to the extent that it is almost impossible to point to a position of trust that is not filled by a member. This kind of thing has the worst possible effect upon the character of the individual and upon the interests of the community. It makes for inefficiency, wire-pulling, and general corruption. Under such conditions the public servant, in the last analysis, is not the servant of the public but the servant of the oath-bound secret society that secured his appointment. Prior to the war the German military authorities forbade army officers to join secret societies; and it was only after the French Masons by their bungling and conspiracies had brought their country face to face with defeat that the Government had to get rid of them and fill their places with honest able men of the type of Marshal Foch. The possibilities of the secret society in the civil life of the community are well illustrated by the following extract from *America*:

"A Protestant preacher and a member of his choir in New Jersey were murdered some time ago. At once the police authorities began to search for the murderer. They made a stir. They followed clues. They had theories. They interrogated a multitude. Accounts of their activities filled columns of space in the newspapers. Eventually a neighbor, locally called 'the pig woman' from her occupation, stated, so it was reported, that she had been near the scene of the tragedy on the night it occurred and that she saw a woman holding in her lap the head of the dead minister. Was that woman taken before the grand jury? Was the other woman arrested? Or were the detectives called off? Was police activity ended? Were the newspapers silenced? Was the crime hushed up? Is the 'high sign' stronger than the law? Not long after this event, the son of a rich baker in New York State killed a poor sailor. He admitted the killing. He was arrested and tried for murder. He pleaded not guilty. But he made no defense, introduced no witnesses, did not himself testify. He was declared not guilty. Is the 'high sign' stronger than the law? More recently an architect in a Maryland town, who was separated from his wife, bought a pistol and asked the hardware dealer to show him how to load it and fire it. Some days later, after he had time to learn how to use the weapon, he called at the house where his wife was, went up to her room, had an interview with her, and when he came downstairs she was dead, killed by a bullet. He was tried before three judges. They declared him not guilty. Is the 'high sign' stronger than the law? Just before Congress adjourned a representative from a Western State and another man went one night in a sedan automobile from Washington to Virginia. They parked the machine by the roadside near Alexandria. Shortly afterwards two constables came along, peered into the sedan, and discovered the visitors in the act of perpetrating an unmentionable crime. The policemen arrested the Congressman and his companion, and took them to gaol, after refusing bribes offered to let them go. At the trial the constables testified under oath to what they had seen. In the face of that testimony the jury acquitted the accused. Is the 'high sign' stronger than the law?"

### The Klan and Protestantism

"The Ku Klux Klan is a purely political body, based upon no economic law, no foreign policy, no fundamental

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