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EDITORIAL

## CUMULATED TRAVASSOSISM.

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**S**OME people may have wondered to see the Republic, soon as it took possession of the seat made vacant by the Monarchy in Portugal, turn its attention to the priests, monks, nuns and “religious orders” and chase many of these out of the country. The wonder surely grew at the reports describing the bitterness that, in many instances, accompanied the process. Why such hurry, why such a display of rancor? probably is a question put by not a few. The more recent occurrences at the Portuguese settlement of Macao in China, where the marines on board Portuguese battleships, striking for better conditions, placed at the head of their demands the expatriation of the “religious orders,” and themselves proceeded to enforce that particular demand, probably intensified the wonder still more.

Only the least thoughtful of wonderers will leap to the conclusion that the conduct of the Portuguese in these several instances and widely separate localities is an evidence of perverse wilfulness. The more thoughtful will realize that individuals may be guilty of wilfulness, not mass organizations; and that, when acts that seem tainted with wilfulness are committed in such instances there must be a reason, a good reason, that must be looked for deeper down.

There was no wilfulness in the Portuguese acts. There was deliberateness, wisdom and justice. The point may be best understood here in America by accounting for the Portuguese acts against the “religious orders” and the clericals as the inevitable consequence of “Cumulated Travassosism.”

Readers of *The People* will remember the case of the Portuguese priest in New Bedford, Father Travassos, and the sequels thereof. Travassos sought to break up a family among his parishioners by falsely stating to the wife in the confessional that she lived in concubinage on the ground of her not having been married by the

church. He pronounced the civil marriage null and of no effect, and so wrought upon the woman that she left her husband. Fortunately she was not wholly the priest's dupe, and, upon being informed by other sources that her marriage was legal, returned to her husband and confessed to him what had happened. The husband, although also a Catholic, but neither being a dupe, forthwith instituted proceedings against the priest. The priest's statements in the confessional were allowed by the court and the priest was mulcted. The matter did not end there. What may be called "The Travassoses" then sought to have a law passed in Massachusetts rendering inadmissible evidence upon what a priest says in the confessional. The attempt failed of course; and, so far, "Travassosism" has been blocked.

Otherwise in Portugal. "Travassosism" has there had its own way. It was a law unto itself. The clergy placed itself above the law. What the consequences were one can easily figure to himself by considering what the consequences would be in America if Father Travassos had prevailed in Court, or if "Travassosism" had succeeded in a legislative scheme whereby, not the penitent's confession would be inviolable, but the priest's illegal and criminal manoeuvres. The consequence would be that in the long run, not one person or a dozen, but the majority of the people would bear the marks of a whip wielded in secret by a virtually political body that enjoyed immunity. When such practices have had time to multiply, then the cumulation of mischief becomes national, then a sentiment is engendered that causes masses to move as one man with directness, precision, relentlessness. When, to the "Travassosism" herein outlined, the additional fact is added that the so-called "religious orders" are but mercantile associations under the cloak of religion; when the natural consequence is considered that such associations exploit the mantle by becoming the most merciless oppressors of their proletarian victims;—when all this is considered then it is obvious that the hour was bound to arrive when the sufferers would RISE against that combined despotism of politics and business ambushed behind religion. What followed was free from Wilfulness. It was Redress.

The conduct of the Portuguese marines at Macao, of placing the removal of the "religious orders" at the head of the list on a list that contained the demand for higher wages, is a pathetic page in history. By the light of that page is revealed the deep social, political and economic evil at bottom of the recent scenes in

Portugal—scenes that have been enacted before in other places, and that are bound to be re-enacted wherever Travassosism is allowed to cumulate.

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