

Spanish vs. American.

BY J. W. THOMAS.

Spain is not as large as Texas, and of her 17,650,234 inhabitants, 12,000,000 cannot read or write. Think of a community where only one person in three or four can read! It is a rare thing in this country to find a person who cannot read and write, and it is becoming more rare year after year.

Yet Spain is a Christian nation and this country is not. That is the difference. I regret to know that a great many otherwise intelligent people do not know this fact. We often hear our religious friends speak of the United States as a Christian nation. Spain is a Christian nation—one of the most intensely Christian of all the nations of the globe. What Spain is, Christianity has made her. And Christianity would have made the same of the United States if it had been as Christian as Spain. She is not quite so Christian today as formerly, especially in regard to the things of this world. For the church once owned Spain, but does not today. The pope, however, holds a heavy mortgage against her, and that is thought to be the reason his holiness asked the United States to allow him to act as arbitrator. He pretended that he was interested wholly in behalf of suffering humanity, but he has never told why he was not interested in the starving, dying, filth- and disease-stricken people until he saw the United States actually going to war in their behalf, although his church had carried on a pitiless, inhuman butchery for three long years!

A careful study of the history and present condition of Spain by those of our countrymen who are disposed to complain at and belittle our own country, would be a splendid object lesson. A workman here who receives from \$1.50 to \$4 per day, such as carpenters, masons, smiths, etc., receives only 45 cents to 60 cents per day in Spain. This means that the poor people, and they are nearly all poor in Spain, live just that much below the standard of living in this country. Things that are of common, daily use here, are luxuries "out of sight" in Spain. For instance, it is said that every person in Spain eats, on an average, 49 pounds of meat a year; while here in America each person eats 120 pounds. Each American eats 16 pounds of butter a year, while it is said that in Spain they do not eat any. Each Spaniard uses 5 pounds of sugar and 4 pounds of coffee in a year. Each American uses 43 pounds of sugar and 115 pounds of coffee. This means that the American people are better fed and clothed than the Spaniards, and that they are correspondingly more

industrious and thrifty and intelligent.

The per capita debt of Spain is \$94, and her per capita wealth is \$460; while our per capita debt is only \$14, and our per capita wealth more than \$1000. What must be the rate of taxation in a country as small as Spain, with a population of only 17,650,234, and maintaining a standing army of more than 300,000! This is very much the condition of all European nations. This means a good deal. The people of the United States should learn to look on the bright side as well as on the dark side.

Spain was once the greatest nation on earth, the most enterprising, the most progressive. It was through the valor and enterprise of the renowned Ferdinand and Isabella that Columbus, sailing Spanish ships, discovered the western continent. But the glory of Spain has vanished. What is the cause of this immense change from the first place among nations to the verge of dissolution? For there are grave apprehensions in Spain today, among those in power, that there is to be a change, if not in the form of government, at least in the rulers.

Historians tell us that Spain is 400 years behind the progress of nations. And the question might be put in this form: What is the cause of this national stagnation, or lack of progress? As I said above, Spain is a most intensely Christian nation. Nearly everybody belongs to the Roman Catholic church, and the very few Protestants are not allowed to hold public services. The same would be true in this country if everybody belonged to the same church, whether Catholic or Protestant. For it is the nature of churches to be conservative. They would not be true to their bible if they were not most conservative, or non-progressive. The most prominent feature of biblical teaching is conservatism; to think lightly of the things of this world, and think more of the life to come. In fact, this idea is so prominent that it is even sinful to be full of plucky business. The parable about the man who was about to build a new barn is to the point. This conservative spirit, or the lack of proper business enterprise, has led the church to make one irreparable blunder. It has succeeded in putting itself on record as opposed to progress, to science, or any change of any kind which will not bring about a universal stagnation of business and society.

The people in China are also very religious. They call our Christian friends who go there to preach the "true gospel" to those benighted heathen, "foreign devils". And I think it is a very good name. Those Chinese are even more Christianlike than some of the lowly Nazarenes who go there to prose-

lyte them. The Chinese devotees say the foreign devils build railroads and telegraph lines, which is offensive to their gods, and their gods send famine and pestilence on their fair land. This is thoroughly Christian. I say the most prominent teaching of the bible is conservatism. "He that believeth" (Mark xv. 16, John iii. 18), etc. The Christian scheme of redemption is built on faith, and faith nips investigation in the bud. But without investigation, without change, without trying to make everything better, progress is impossible. Faith just simply slips every man's head into a halter and hands the reins to the priest or preacher. There is nothing more offensive to them than a lack of faith; because even the humble Nazarenes have found out that there is nothing more dangerous to their superstition than an honest doubter.

To comprehend the moral status of the Christian Spaniard, one has only to look at the conspiracy against the Maine. Even if we knew nothing of the Spanish character except that act of treachery and cowardice, it would be sufficient to locate them from the standpoint of morality and civilization.

There is an old saying that "it is an evil wind that blows nobody good". And although war is a most dreadful calamity, this war between Spain and the United States has revealed to the world many important facts. And the fact that the most Christian nation in the world is the most degraded, morally and intellectually, is, to my mind, the most prominent fact revealed.

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The Zeitgeist.

BY CHARLES CLARK MILLARD.

To Secularists, Freethinkers and liberal people generally, the outlook is encouraging. This is a favorable time for summing up the existing points in our favor, and to encourage ourselves and our fellow workers by making a rational forecast of the future. And therefore I propose to notice some of the facts which surely indicate the spirit, or thought of the present time.

First, the great Methodist Episcopal church, second only to the Roman Catholic in the number of its members, has almost ceased to increase its membership. The gain during the past year, according to their own report, was only one-sixteenth of one per cent. The American Bible Society has reached its culmination, and has moved into much smaller and cheaper quarters with a debt of \$100,000 hanging over it; and the Foreign Missionary Society has reduced the number of its "hangers on", and is hopelessly in debt. On this subject the Kansas City Journal says, editori-

ally: "The annual cry of a deficiency in the funds of the various missionary boards is heard, but the cry is more sharp and bitter than usual. The Baptists are \$100,000 behind, and the Presbyterians \$300,000 behind, with other denominations and boards in bad condition, but not equally bad. The Outlook frankly admits that these deficits are due to a growing skepticism of the needs of missionary work and of the economy of missionary administration. If missionary efforts were devoted to the transmission, to less favored nations, of all the better elements of our civilization, instead of busying themselves with the inculcation of metaphysical dogmas, or the cultivation of a certain emotional excitement, it might be easier to show the average man why he should contribute of his substance to support them. But missionary efforts of any sort will not succeed greatly when accompanied by whisky and a disposition to rob the heathen of his land."

A popular daily paper reflects the opinion of those who pay for it. The manager gives them what he thinks they want, and if he publishes the facts about missions, the opinions and conclusions of the higher critics, and the historic facts revealed by cylinders and tablets which prove the books of Daniel, Esther, Jonah and Ruth to be religious or historical romances, or as Prof. Briggs says in the North American Review, "inspired fiction", it is because the people want just such reading. And such articles are continually appearing in the great New York dailies and are republished by the secular press generally because they strike the keynote of popular thought.

That such is the attitude of the secular press is proved by such items as the following, taken from the Literary Digest of June 4: "At a recent meeting of the Lutheran Synod of New York, a resolution was adopted deprecating the unfavorable attitude of a large portion of the secular press toward an extreme theological liberalism, as though it represented progressive scholarship and the true spirit of Christianity; while the evangelical orthodoxy, which reflects prevalent Christian faith and theology, is continually misrepresented and opposed, and commending only such secular journals as treated respectfully and reverently the common orthodox faith of the Christian world."

The Christian Advocate, in noticing this resolution, expresses the opinion that it is time other denominations were taking similar action.

Another sign of the Zeitgeist of the present is the decline of revivalism. What was known as the baptism of the Holy Ghost has become a matter of memory, except