

day Saints and the confiscation of its property, says:

"How far the courts would sustain Congress in legislation in the line of this opinion is an interesting question. Take the great cattle corporations, for instance, provided any of them have territorial charters. It would seem that this decision would increase the ability of Congress to force them to a greater obedience to the law. Or take the lumber companies that are taking timber from Government land—can this decision be interpreted to cover them?"

Such enactments and decisions as those referred to are like crevasses in the swollen river, which threaten the land with inundation and destruction.

### OUR CHICAGO LETTER.

What with German Lutherans, Dutch Catholics, and Scotch-Irish-Americans, we are having quite lively times here at present. The labor troubles are not prominent, though the question is far from settled. The cooks and waiters are now in the field. The "Culinary Alliance" and the "Gargymede League" are realities as organizations. The black man joined his white brother in the strike, but strikes won't settle the race issue. The Scotch-Irish Congress in Pittsburg claimed General Sheridan as one of their race, and also General Grant. The Dutch Catholics claim that this continent is theirs by reason of priority of discovery. The German Lutherans claim that all modern civilization is attributable to themselves. The yankee is left nothing to lay hold on, though Wendell Phillips said the yankee would catch a silver dollar if it were at the other side of Sheol.

Just at present, however, we are all torn up over education. Illinois and Wisconsin passed laws compelling education in the English language, and that is what stirs the bile in the bodies of the followers of Martin and Leo.

These compulsory education acts which are now causing so much excitement in religious and political circles are apparently very mild and moderate enactments. The Illinois act was approved May 24, 1889, and was drafted by a mixed committee of Romanists, Lutherans and agnostics. It occasioned no alarm at the time. Mos-back Catholics, narrow-gauge Lutherans and predestinating presbyters all approved it. The Wisconsin law was or is almost a copy of the Illinois law. In that State there was no opposition to the law at first, except that a few patriotic Germans construed it in the light of an insult to their race. But in our time history is being made very fast, and from May, 1889, to May, 1890, covers a period of American history which future historians will refer to as a marking point in the world's affairs. And judging from recent developments in the courts of the United States, people who are alive to what is going on around find in these education laws the germ of the most intolerant

absolutism. Here is the clause of the Illinois laws which occasions all the alarm and excitement.

"Every person having under his control a child between the ages of seven and fourteen years, shall annually cause such child to attend for at least, sixteen weeks, at least eight weeks of which attendance shall be consecutive, some public day school in the city, town, or district in which he resides. \* \* \* "For every neglect of such duty, the person offending shall forfeit, to the use of the public schools of such city or district, a sum not less than one nor more than twenty dollars, and shall stand committed until such fine and costs of suit are paid. But if the person so neglecting, shall show to the satisfaction of the board of education, or of directors, that such child has attended for a like period of time, a private school, approved by the board of education, or of directors of the city, town, or district in which such child resides, \* \* \* then such penalty shall not be incurred."

On reading this first clause there seems to be in it but little to find fault with, and one year ago even that little was not then seen. The whole secret lies in the words "approved by the board of education." The act then empowers an education board to decide what is or is not a school. If this board were so minded it might decide that the Washington Catholic University was not a school in the sense of the Illinois education act. But it might be said no board would so stultify itself, and that is what people did a year ago. A year, however, brings changes, and we have seen what the Supreme Court of the United States have done in the case of Idaho citizens, and in the case of the Latter-day Saints Church in Utah. When the Supreme Court of this Republic virtually tries to decide that Mormonism is not a religion what could be expected from an education board composed of anti-Mormon politicians in deciding what a school should be. Such a board would decide that the Brigham Young Academy was not a school, and there is but a step from condemning that to condemning the Washington University. In fact, it is the developments in Utah which have aroused the instincts of self-preservation in Dutch Catholics and German Lutherans. Governor Thomas in his official reports and in his newspaper interviews had a good deal to say on educational matters. If he has perused the reported proceedings of the Wisconsin Catholic Convention in Milwaukee he will find something to put in his pipe to smoke and to give him inspiration for his next official document. But as the business of that convention was all transacted in German, perhaps Governor Thomas will regard Wisconsin as outside the United States. It was a good joke on American papers to compel them to translate news from the *Germania* and *Stats Zeebly*.

The Milwaukee assemblage was officially denominated "The State Convention of the German Catholic Benevolent Society," but it was in reality a political convention. Wm. Casper, one of the principal speakers, wanted the constitution

of the Central Catholic Society so amended that it could take part in politics. He delivered a long speech denouncing anti-Catholic legislation and wound up by saying:

"Politics does not belong in the church, but so long as our clergy cannot mix in politics it is our duty to do so. And I hope, gentlemen, that after the convention you will go to your homes and set about at once to organize. If men opposed to us are nominated for political offices oppose them. Do not suffer them to go to the legislature. The men there must do us justice."

Mr. Spaurhorst of St. Louis, president of the federated Catholic Society of the United States, spoke next, and spoke in no uncertain terms. He said:

"This is a land of liberty, we are told, and why should we not have the liberty to educate our children as we please? Why should any State arrogate to itself the right to dictate to us how we shall educate them or to what school we shall send them? I am not in favor of our societies being dragged into politics, but of course the history of our country teaches us that a great many queer ideas have been brought into politics in our time, and we must be prepared to meet them and deal with them. They tell us that this is a government of the people and for the people, but we all know that it is not so. The Catholic Church loves liberty and promotes it and we must stand by that church against all the foes which assail it. Truth must conquer, and if we maintain the truth and maintain our liberties we also shall conquer in the fight."

Judging from this the gentleman from St. Louis reads the Utah papers, how else could he know that this government is not for the people. Utah and Idaho are the only places where the U. S. government has trampled on popular rights, and where political adventurer vagrants call themselves American patriots, and, incredible to relate, it is at the instigation of such vampires that the Congress of the United States turned out laws worthy of the Spanish Inquisition or of the penal practices in Ireland. No wonder the practical farseeing German sees danger ahead.

Bishop Fleisach, who is a popular churchman, told the convention that as Catholic societies they could not mix in politics, but that as individual Catholics each could constitute himself a society "to defend liberty of conscience, truth and freedom of religion."

But the plumed knight of the convention was found in Bishop Katzer of Green Bay. His speech had the effect of rousing the phlegmatic Teutons to almost Celtic impetuosity. His speech was a long and exhaustive one. The following copious extract will give a fair idea of the speaker who was the soul of the convention. Here it is:

"I believe that no single Catholic society, nor any assembly of Catholics who are here present should go away without saying something about this obnoxious Bennett law. I speak to you today because the assembly must take action upon this subject and in order to give you my ideas about this law. This law is the step by which the State has gone beyond