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EDITORIAL

PRELITICAL FICTION, SOCIALIST FACT.

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THE first thing done by Archbishop W.H. O'Connell of Boston, upon his return last month from Europe, was to submit to an interview, which, properly syndicated, made its appearance in a number of papers—the Boston *Sunday American* of September 17 among others.

Among the estimates of the situation in Germany, with regard to the conflict between the Social Democratic and the Roman Catholic political streams, the Archbishop said this:—

“Elsewhere in Germany I knew that there was neither faith nor fidelity, that there were parts bitter with the hatred of class, and cold to everything except greed and gain. But Westphalia and the Rhine knew nothing of all this. The happy folk, who during this octave of Corpus Christi thronged the churches to overflowing and made the villages echo with their canticles of Christian joy, wore upon their faces neither frown nor scowl, but the frank happiness of contented lives satisfied by their holy religion.”

This was said on September 17, regarding the situation in Westphalia and the Rhenish province, two strongholds of Roman Catholicism. The people led “contented lives”; no “hatred of class” disturbed their countenances; “No Socialist need apply” was virtually written on the faces of the people. Thus did Archbishop O'Connell report the situation.

But, alas for politically prelitical reports! Within a fortnight the election returns most disrespectfully gave the lie direct to the Archbishop.

Dusseldorf is the chief town of Rhenish Prussia, one of the two provinces above reported as inaccessible to the Socialist “hatred of class.” The population of the town is close to a quarter of a million, mostly Roman Catholic. With a large collection of Roman Catholic churches, notably a church of Jesuits, Dusseldorf had long been the Gibraltar of the “Centrum,” the Roman Catholic party of Germany. In other places

the Social Democracy effected a breach, and often made havoc with “things as they were.” Not so in Dusseldorf. Since the foundation of the present German Empire, Dusseldorf had remained unswervingly Centrum—unconquerable, even unapproachable by the Socialist forces. That is now all changed, from bottom up. The radical change was officially and solemnly recorded on Friday, September 29, on the by-elections of that day.

Karl Haberland, the Social Democratic candidate for the Reichstag, polled 39,246 votes; while Dr. Friedrich, the candidate of the Centrum, and, suggestively enough, a bank-director, could muster up only 36,111 supporters—and was defeated.

The day when prelatical fiction went undisputed is gone by. To-day facts overtake the fiction in short order—and mop the earth therewith.

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