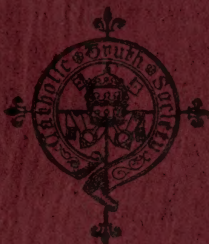


THE FERRER CASE

BY

HILAIRE BELLOC



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THE FERRER CASE

BY HILAIRE BELLOC.

THE readers of the following lines may remember that in the month of October of the year 1909 an explosion of excitement and anger took place simultaneously in a certain number of great towns with regard to the execution of a Spanish criminal of the name of Francisco Ferrer.

This man's name had been hitherto unfamiliar to all but a narrow circle of people, who were interested in his educational work and in his remarkable personality. He was very well known in the town of Barcelona, near which he had been born, in the suburbs of which he resided, and which latterly had been the scene of his political efforts. But he was not in any sense a public figure in Europe, nor were the public in general acquainted with his name.

Of a sudden, within two days, that name was talked and shouted about in Paris, in London, in Rome, and in one or two other great cities where secret organization can be prompt and thorough in its action; and it filled public attention to the exclusion of almost every other subject. In Pisa an attempt was made to burn down the cathedral. In London a hostile demonstration was made outside the cathedral in Westminster; in Paris a large mob was gathered, great injury was done to municipal and private property, many policemen were wounded, and one was killed. In Rome the Mayor of that City (a Jew from Liverpool) publicly expressed the horror which (he said) was felt by the Roman people at the execution of Ferrer; and the Press of Europe, or at least that part which is most generally quoted, was in the same note. The English Press was, indeed, somewhat more independent, many important papers reserv-

ing their judgement and others frankly admitting that it was no affair of ours. But on the other hand, the English Press was less accurately informed than the Press of any other country, and took for granted much more unanimously than the Press of Paris, Vienna, Madrid, or Berlin the falsehoods which had been industriously circulated by those who sympathized with the criminal.

Now that we can look back upon that strange episode, we see it marked by certain characters which every man of independent judgement and common sense, no matter what his philosophical or religious opinion, must recognize.

In the first place it was organized; it was not spontaneous. It is self-evident that a spontaneous explosion of sympathy with an unknown person cannot take place. It is further self-evident that a spontaneous explosion does not take place in five or six widely separated centres at the same moment. That the movement was organized artificially is further proved by the fact that it was put an end to as secretly, as suddenly, and as abruptly as it was aroused. The moment the facts began to leak out, the moment the truth about Ferrer's life became known, the same power which had spoken in Rome, in Paris, and in London discovered the topic to be uninteresting, and dropped it. It became impossible save in a sporadic fashion, and in quarters either Catholic or obscure, to print anything upon Francisco Ferrer, unless indeed such information were a repetition of the old falsehood.¹

Now, not only did this incident bear the plain character of organization, and of secret organization: it bore a character which very often accompanies phenomena of that sort in Europe—to wit, that its whole energy and meaning was an attack upon the Catholic Church. The cry in favour of the condemned criminal was identically the same as the cry against the Faith. No one joined in it save from hatred of the Catholic Church, or under orders from those, or duped by those, who hate and would destroy the Catholic Church. Conversely, no

¹ Thus the present writer having written to *The Daily News* suggesting the production of proofs for and against Ferrer, that paper printed several violent letters in his favour. A list of the witnesses against him, with an abstract of their testimony, was then sent, and the editor of *The Daily News* suppressed it.

Catholic, not even those isolated and ill-informed Catholics who in Protestant countries are so easily deceived by the falsehoods round them, joined in that demonstration. It was nothing more nor less in its inception, character, and meaning than an attack upon the Church. The weapon used was a familiar one. First, the assertion that a great injustice had been done—and that presented in a light which made the deed seem inhumanly wicked; next it was suggested or asserted that the authors of this monstrous iniquity were the priests of the Catholic Church. In precisely the same manner are the events of the past of Europe presented by those who hate Jesus Christ and the Institution He founded. The mark of persecution—and especially of persecution by falsehood—was stamped upon the whole business.

It is well that Catholics living in non-Catholic and often anti-Catholic surroundings (as they do in this country) should on an occasion of this sort have the plain truth put into their hands; and since it would be quite impossible to get that plain truth in an ordinary magazine or newspaper that was not Catholic in direction, the present writer has thought it might be of some service to set down the facts upon the Ferrer case in this pamphlet.

Nothing further stated here shall be in the nature of argument or of a brief. The machinery of attack upon the Catholic Church to-day is a machinery directed by secret organization and by organized falsehood. Our defence everywhere now chiefly consists not in convincing by eloquence or by reason our fellow-men, but in printing the truth, the mere historic facts, and disseminating that knowledge as widely as possible. When we can manage to do that against the constant and tyrannical pressure of our opponents, our cause invariably triumphs.

Francisco Ferrer was born on January 10, 1859, at Alella, in Catalonia. He was therefore in his fifty-first year at the time of his execution. While yet a boy he was apprenticed to a shopkeeper in Barcelona. His employer (this was after the Franco-Prussian war and the quarrel of Spanish succession, which ended in the short republican regime) shared or professed the opinions which at that moment appeared most favourable to

advancement, and communicated—according to Ferrer's parents—his atheism to the lad put under his charge; but whether their evidence maligns an honest man or no there is no evidence to show.

Before Ferrer was of age he had broken with his family, and had begun to associate himself with Zorrilla, a political leader who worked with the Italian Freemasons and attempted to introduce their methods into Spain. Francisco Ferrer, shortly after coming of age, obtained a small position in the railway service. Here again tradition comes in (and the tradition of his own friends) to say that he used his position for the conveyance of information to the Venerables and the Brethren of the new lodges; but in this matter also we have no evidence to show whether tradition maligns him or no. He was twenty-six when a partial insurrection broke out in Catalonia. He joined it, and on its immediate suppression he fled the country, and found himself in Paris, whither Zorrilla, his former employer, had fled some years before. For ten years, that is from the year 1886 to the year 1896, he lived (with an interval of return to Spain) in a small way in the French capital. For five years more he lived under easier circumstances in the same place. He had quarrelled violently with his wife, and had abandoned her and his three children. His easier circumstances were due to his obtaining work of a modest kind in the way of teaching the Spanish language, or Castilian, which Catalonians (though it is not the daily speech of men of Ferrer's rank in the province) are quite capable of doing.

During these years he formed a narrow circle of acquaintances, which included more than one woman. The women he was not attracted to by anything so abstract as community of opinion; the men of his acquaintance were, however, without exception, adherents of the little clique which organizes the struggle against the Catholic Faith in France, and chief among them was Nacquet, a Jew; to this person and his rôle in the affair we shall further allude; and it was through Nacquet that Ferrer (only, of course, after he had become a very wealthy man) was advanced to the high position he later held in the secret society whose centre is the Grand Orient Lodge in the Rue Cadet in Paris.

The quarrel with his wife had been in part the effect of jealousy and in part a difference between the couple upon the matter of religion, and by this time Ferrer's main object in life was undoubtedly the destruction of the power of the Catholic Church, especially in his own country. He had come to feel for the Faith that persistent and tenacious hatred which marks certain characters in their dealings with religion. Those who had met Ferrer, and with whom the present writer is acquainted, are of the opinion that he was sincere in this fanaticism, which ascribes to the Catholic Church most if not all of the evils from which our modern humanity suffers. Their verdict would seem to be true, for the man's whole life, in its latter part at least, shows itself to be connected with a monomania of this kind; moreover it is characteristic of such an attitude that he should imagine the Church to be antagonistic to natural science, and that he should even think that Catholicism might be weakened by teaching its adherents the elements of chemistry, astronomy, geology, and mathematics! Simplicity of this sort is nearly always the accompaniment of fixed and sincere purpose.

We have seen that his energy and enthusiasm, which were remarkable, gained him several admirers, one or two of whom were of the opposite sex. He entered into relations, on which we have no direct evidence, with a middle-aged spinster of the name of Mesnier. Whether it were a love affair or no, upon his part or hers, it is impossible to tell. But there is no doubt that she was fascinated by his personality, for when she died at the end of the century she left him a fortune of somewhat less than £40,000. This lady died professing the Catholic religion, and left in her will directions that some portion of her money should be spent upon masses. This money Ferrer appears not to have devoted to that use. Had he done so we should surely have heard of it. He would have thought it a superstitious use, and he did not apply it. But it is quite possible that this woman, in leaving him so large a sum of money, knew that he would apply the greater part of it, as he did, to the founding of schools in Spain, for, with the exception of mentioning masses for her soul, the money was left to Ferrer absolutely, and without reserve

or direction. How far she knew that those schools would have a definitely anti-Catholic character it is now impossible to say, for there are no witnesses to the conversations between Ferrer and this woman or to the relations between them.

The influence of this fortune of course changed the whole of Ferrer's life. He was now a man of large capital. He had attained, as we have seen, a very high rank in the anti-Catholic secret and Masonic Society whose centre is the Grand Orient, situated in the Rue Cadet in Paris, and it was undoubtedly this organization which worked up the artificial excitement at the moment of his death. His sponsor and introducer to this organization was, as we have also seen, Nacquet,¹ a gentleman of Jewish origin, unfortunately a Senator in the French Parliament, and the author and begetter of the unpopular divorce law which he advocated and successfully carried, under the just supposition that it would be a powerful solvent of the religion, morals, and civilization which, as a Jew, he naturally hated.

Ferrer, then (by this time a very prominent Mason, and in with the Judæo-Masonic clique in Paris), returned to Barcelona with his newly-acquired fortune and started the first of the "lay" schools, which, under the title of "the Modern School," are associated with his name. Of the schoolmistresses he employed he chose one, a certain Soledad, for his new mistress; he could not and did not marry her, but she was the last of the ladies with whom his name is associated. He left his three daughters behind him in Paris penniless, but it would be unjust to ascribe to him any love of luxury; he provided for himself and his mistress a sufficient and modest income, the rest of his capital he expended upon his favourite scheme of the "Modern School," which he had designed as an instrument against the Catholic Faith.

The first thing a reader unacquainted with Spain will remark at this point is, that a man should be permitted to found an institution directly opposed to the spirit,

¹ Nacquet's defence of Ferrer, in which his own race and Ferrer's Masonry are carefully suppressed, was published in *The Nineteenth Century and After* for November, 1909. The reader will do well to consult it in the light of the present paper.

and in some part to the laws, of the country in which he lived. Such a scheme would not be tolerated for a moment under the British, the German, or the French system of government. In France, indeed, there is a tradition of government (to which there is now some danger of reverting) forbidding any school to exist which is not under the direct control of the State, and it is certain that if—to give a parallel instance—a wealthy Irishman were to start schools in Ireland, part of whose object was to denounce the methods of English government in that country, or a wealthy Frenchman were to perform a similar act in Alsace, the British and the German Governments respectively would soon put an end to his activity. The Government at Madrid permitted the formation of these schools in the rebellious province of Catalonia, because government in Spain is far less strict, and its pressure upon individuals far less severe than in countries more highly organized; and it is an example of the penalty that Spain pays for her backwardness in organization that work of this kind directed against her own national existence can flourish.

However this may be, the *Escuela Moderna*, teaching the full doctrine which Ferrer, in common with other anarchists, openly professed—a doctrine cosmopolitan and inimical to military discipline and to all the functions of government, as well as chiefly designed against Catholicism—flourished. Ferrer gambled repeatedly and successfully upon the Stock Exchange, where his Jewish connection helped him, and his fortune continually grew; as it grew he set aside the greater part of it for his anarchist propaganda.

Impotent as the Government of Spain is against its enemies as compared with the Governments of more highly organized countries, a straw at last broke the camel's back, and that Government did attempt in 1906 to get rid of the danger. A certain Matteo Morral, a lover of Ferrer's mistress—and mixed up in an irregular way with that household—one, moreover, whom Ferrer had employed in his schools and had indoctrinated with his system—upon May 31, 1906, attempted to assassinate the King and Queen of Spain. Ferrer was of course arrested in connection with this outrage, but it is characteristic of Spanish methods that, after letting the

prosecution drag tamely for over a year, he was acquitted on June 3, 1907, and left free to continue his work.

In the early part of last year, 1909, he visited London. He stayed in Bloomsbury, and it is not uninteresting to note that among those who willingly associated with that irregular household were some of those Puritan enemies of the Catholic faith in England who are most energetic in denouncing the least departure from the strictest canons of their own domestic morality. A point was waived in favour of the woman Soledad because her protector was known as an enemy of the Catholic Faith. His friends in London were of the middle-class sort, many of them Dissenters of one kind or another, and most of them ardent enemies, as he was, of the Catholic religion. What he came precisely to do in England we do not know, for it is in the nature of secret societies to suppress evidence. He potted about with our educational system, and showed an interest in some of our elementary school text-books; but at any rate, whatever his occupation was, on June 11, 1909, he suddenly sent a hurried and quite unexpected note to certain English friends, who were expecting a longer stay upon his part, saying that he was called back to Spain by the sickness of a niece. It should be remembered by those who desire to know the facts, and the facts only, that his niece had, as a fact, been taken ill before or about that time. But it should also be remembered that the decision of the Spanish Government in favour of the highly unpopular "Forward" policy in Spain had been taken just so many days before that date of the 11th of June as would permit the writing and despatching of a letter from the malcontents in Barcelona, summoning Ferrer to the scene of disturbance.

He hurried back south, and, four days after the Credits for the African Expedition (which was loathed throughout Spain, and especially in Catalonia) were voted, he reached Barcelona, the capital of that province.

For a month Spanish opinion rose stronger and stronger against the adventure in Africa. The initial reverses of the war gravely accentuated this feeling throughout the Peninsula. Catalonia and its capital,

Barcelona, whose attitude towards the rest of Spain is separatist and anti-national, protested with especial vigour, and on the 26th of July a rising in Barcelona began. It raged throughout the 27th, the 28th, and the 29th of that month, but as it developed a singular phenomenon appeared.

Official buildings were spared and the persons connected with the unpopular Government and its action were not attacked. Though the movement was nominally proletarian, neither the goods of the capitalist class nor their palaces, which are many and sumptuous in Barcelona, suffered. The whole movement was canalized against the Church, which had nothing to do with the African Expedition nor with any part of the quarrel! The poorest parish churches as well as the greatest and wealthiest of the monastic foundations were sacked and burnt, and the movement was organized with as much method as might be the movement of an army.

Picked men went from place to place conveying the instructions of hidden organizers; petroleum and firearms were always found ready for these attacks upon the clergy and upon the churches. The only efforts made against the military were made with the object of preventing them defending the churches, the nuns, and the priests. In a word, the rising, which had begun as a vague, spontaneous, and general protest against the military expedition, against unpopular officialdom, and against the capitalism which was supposed to inspire it, was directed, when once organization and method appeared, not against army, officials, or capitalists, but solely against the Church, upon the lines with which Ferrer's name was locally chiefly connected, and in the interests of that section of opinion of which he was locally the acknowledged head.

A connection of that sort has, a thousand times in history, and especially in recent history, proved sufficient for the arrest and execution of such a leader. Risings, and even individual acts, in Ireland, in Russia, and in India, the Bread Riots in Milan some years ago, the reaction in Constantinople last summer, all provide instances of a truth which cannot, indeed, be seriously questioned: to wit, that in moments which

imperil the existence of regular government (whether that government can boast a national and moral foundation or no) the notorious connection of particular persons with sedition is sufficient for their arrest and punishment. Indeed, the necessity of accepting common knowledge as evidence in moments of anarchy, however deplorable, is self-evident. And it is just possible that if Ferrer had been caught in the heat of the rising he would, in spite of Spanish formalism and delay, have been summarily executed. But Ferrer, after the rising was suppressed, disappeared and fled into hiding. A successful hiding-place was organized for him, a hiding-place so successful that until recently (and for all the present writer knows even at the present moment) no public knowledge of it exists, and the nature of his safe-guarding is still known to the members of his secret society alone. He remained in hiding for a whole month. He was at last discovered, arrested, and put upon his trial. A court-martial (which is in Spain the statutory court for trying rebellion) was duly instituted. Witnesses to the number of over half a hundred were called and cross-examined at the discretion of the prisoner himself. Their evidence was taken down on oath verbatim as it was given, its verbal accuracy was confirmed by the signatures of the witnesses and of the accused, the whole body of evidence and cross-examination thus formed was drawn up in a document of close upon a thousand folios, each numbered and paragraphed; finally, this document was given as a brief to the Prosecution and to the Defence before a court composed of a number of military officers, and the guilt or the innocence of the prisoner was pleaded before the court in public. Particular care was taken that there should be admitted to the trial a large number of representatives of the Press of every country. The Defence was given the last word in the proceedings, and from first to last every detail of the procedure usual in such cases and conformable to the law was observed. After hearing the evidence and the pleadings, the court pronounced a verdict of guilty just before dusk upon the evening of Saturday, October 9th.

Meanwhile Ferrer's Brethren in Paris, and especially the Venerable and the Brethren of the Lodge to which he

was attached in that city, were organizing expensive and determined demonstrations in his favour.

These demonstrations did not concern themselves with the justice, the legality, nor even the facts of his trial: they were rather of the nature of those advertisements to which modern commerce has accustomed us, by which a suggestion is made to the mind through a process no more logical than mere reiteration. Processions of motor-cabs would parade the streets of the city, the men who took a free ride within them were hired to warn the public of a great injustice about to be committed. Placards were posted at vast expense on all the walls. Paid notices appeared in the Press. And from Paris the action radiated outward to whatever centres the Judæo-Masonic power which was at work, and the other anti-Catholic forces allied with it, could be approached.

It was a wonderful if a sombre thing to witness the activity and the strict organization of the conspiracy. The Press was everywhere instructed. All the evidence against Ferrer was suppressed, and that same machinery of mere reiterated suggestion which had been seen on the streets of the French capital was soon repeated in the newspapers of London, of Rome (where the Jewish *Tribuna* was especially active), in the Jewish *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna, in the principal organs of the United States, and in general throughout the world.

Some few hours before the verdict was delivered, the opinion of the "man in the street," hitherto profoundly ignorant of the very existence of this person, who had never written a line worth reading nor spoken a sentence worth remembering, was violently agitated, and Ferrer's fate had become the question of the hour.

That he had been fairly and justly tried, that he had been given all the advantages of procedure which any man was ever given in like circumstances, was at first hardly known beyond the boundaries of Barcelona. The further removed the audience from a knowledge of Spanish things, the more bold and unblushing was the insistence of the cosmopolitan lie, and the more intense the action of the organized, virulent, secret and consistent cosmopolitan liars.

If any reader believe the present writer to be expressing himself in a manner too violent for the circum-

stances, let him contrast those facts which I have set down, and those further facts which I am about to set down, with the files of the English Press between the dates October 10th and October 20th, and he will be amply satisfied that I do not exaggerate. If such a consultation lead but a score of men to suspect the manner in which the anti-Catholic conspiracy is worked in the Press of Europe, and especially of London, I shall have done good work in writing these lines. I who am writing them know it well, for I have come into close connection with it; but it is still unknown to the greater part of my fellow-Catholics in this island.

We have seen that the verdict of guilty was given in the evening of October 9th. Forty-eight hours later, or a little more, upon Monday night, the 11th, the condemned man was transferred to a prison adjoining the place of execution, where he was separately lodged and guarded. I may here mention that the poor, who had been arrested in large numbers during the revolt and who were incarcerated in the same neighbourhood, had not provided the same interest to the international forces which were working for Ferrer as had that individual himself. The actual number of executions was utterly insignificant compared with that following any other modern rising. It would have been perfectly possible to have made heroes of the half-dozen or so of humble individuals who suffered at the same time as Ferrer. Their very names are ignored! But, then, though the equals in birth of Ferrer, they were neither his equals in fortune, nor, perhaps, were they highly-placed officials in the anti-Catholic organization of Freemasonry.

Ferrer wrote his will in the night between Monday and Tuesday. He left to his legitimate family the minimum sum which the law compelled him to leave, and without which the whole will would have been invalid. To his illegitimate child, born of one of his irregular unions, whether the last one or no the present writer has not the evidence to determine, he left a capital sum. He further provided for his last mistress, the woman Soledad, but, consistently with the whole action of his life, he left the greater part of the very considerable proceeds of his windfall and of his gamb-

ling upon the Stock Exchange to the anti-Christian propaganda which was the business of his life. The document concludes—or nearly concludes—with the characteristic sentiment that there should be no manifestation after he had suffered, “since services devoted to the dead are useless.”

At about nine in the morning of Tuesday, the 12th of October, he was shot. Following the custom of England and of many other countries in the case of a public execution, he was buried in the prison cemetery. Spanish opinion, though hostile to the man, would perhaps have preferred the return of the body to his relatives.

There is the summary of the story as it might have been told by any newspaper correspondent who desired to do justice to both sides, to tell the exact truth, and to let his fellow-beings have nothing more than information. There is the story as it would have been told by the agents of our cosmopolitan Press if those agents were free. A man of such and such opinions, notoriously the leader of such and such a section of opinion in a particular town, was arrested after a rising in that town, a rising directed against the national Government and having for its object its overthrow. That rising after its first inception was captured and organized in a particular direction. Life was lost, property destroyed, and the lives lost and the property destroyed were those of the man's opponents. He was tried under the full procedure of the laws of his country, witnesses were heard and cross-examined, pleadings for the Crown and for the Defence were delivered, a verdict of guilty was brought in against him and he was duly executed. An especial fuss was made about him because he was a high official in a powerful secret society and was connected with a very important international movement. There is the plain truth.

But before I conclude the reader may demand something more.

Among the many falsehoods which were spread with the object of inflaming opinion in this matter, one was specifically reiterated in many forms, and nowhere was it more insisted upon than in this country. The Inter-

national Association of which I speak always suits its arguments to the temper of each particular locality in which it works, and as the English have preserved a more complicated and continuous legal system than any other people of Europe, and are especially attached to it, it is the legal side of the case which was made particularly prominent for their benefit, and the falsehood was especially propagated here that Ferrer had not a fair trial.

If it is meant by this that the procedure of the court was not identical with the procedure of an English court, I shall not waste a line to discuss so obvious a point. The procedure of English courts is governed by ancient and very strict ritual whose advantages and disadvantages have been the subject of innumerable commentaries in all countries. There is little doubt that in the mass it is conformable to the national character. Very few Irishmen would testify in its favour. Some features of it—notably the presence of a single judge; the power which that judge possesses of summing up; the fact that the judge is but an advocate promoted to the bench, &c.—would be utterly abhorrent to most foreigners, and conversely, certain points in their procedure, where it contrasts most strikingly with our own, is abhorrent to the opinion of this country. But institutions are never general, they are always particular; and contrasts of this kind between the institutions of one country and of another affect the judgement of no reasonable man.

What the International Organization did in the matter of Ferrer when it was put before Englishmen, was carefully to confuse the special procedure of a Spanish court-martial with the denial of certain elementary principles common and necessary to all courts of justice. It was said, for instance, that the prisoner could not call witnesses in his defence (this, by the way, an Irishman cannot do if the magistracy choose to debar him from it); that witnesses were not cross-examined; that the trial and the pleadings were not public—and so forth.

True, such suggestions are no longer very widely made. The moment the truth about Ferrer became known, the order of the day was to stop talking about him, lest the whole conspiracy in his favour should

break down. But the reply to those suggestions is perfectly simple: they are false, and demonstrably false.

The number of witnesses was, as I have said, over half a hundred. They were examined in the presence of the prisoner. The prisoner was permitted to cross-examine those whom he chose, and it may be noted that it was the complete breakdown of his cross-examination of the four principal witnesses which chiefly damned him. The whole of the evidence was sworn evidence. That sworn evidence was reported verbatim, and the verbatim reports were admitted to be accurate under the signatures of the accused and of his accusers. The body of the evidence so formed was publicly put forward, publicly and freely used by the Crown and by the Defence, and upon it a public court delivered a public verdict.

If in the face of such facts the reader still desires to know the nature of the evidence against which Ferrer found it impossible to stand up, it is easy to put it before him. For among these half-hundred witnesses the chief witnesses alone are amply sufficient to show that unless they were all perjurers, all perjurers in a conspiracy together, and all perjurers so adept as to maintain their case under cross-examination, Ferrer was, so far as it is possible to judge human testimony, guilty of participating in rebellion and of attempting to upset the established Government.

These main witnesses are: Bermejo, a detective who proved the presence of Ferrer, and his proceeding towards the scene of the popular ferment in Barcelona on the night of July 26th; Ardid, who gave evidence as to Ferrer's movements at that moment; a witness Sanchez, who independently confirmed Bermejo's testimony, especially as to the details of Ferrer's dress; another independent witness, Calvo, who further confirmed the description; and Caldeforns, who swore to Ferrer as the leader whom he had recognized at the head of one of the bands of rioters. The Mayor of Premia, a maritime village commanding the great road into Barcelona, proved that Ferrer came to him, and after describing the success of the insurgents at Barcelona, urged him to declare for the provisional government against the Crown. This witness's testi-

mony was supported, in spite of Ferrer's denials (denials which grew more and more confused and at last degenerated into "explanations"), by no less than nineteen other independent witnesses who confirmed it thoroughly. Finally, the chief witness, Domenech, who turned king's evidence, was the companion of Ferrer throughout the disturbances, and gave a detailed account of his movements, all of which fitted in with the testimony of that cloud of witnesses whose evidence was already sufficient to condemn the unfortunate man.

Ferrer closely cross-examined four of the witnesses who in details confirmed the story of Domenech; the last of these was the Mayor of Premia. He failed in each of these attempts: strikingly and conspicuously in the last, proceeding, as I have said, from denials to explanations, and contradicting himself hopelessly, while the last witness himself emphatically concludes: "A man who would deny in this fashion would deny the light of the sun!"

That the evidence was full and free is historically certain. When one has read it, it is humanly impossible to doubt that Ferrer was guilty of the counts against him. Whether such legal guilt be morally guilt or no is quite another matter. He may have thought it his duty to see that churches and convents were burnt down, graves violated, the bodies of dead desecrated, that religion in Spain should be broken, the Spanish monarchy destroyed, and most of the institutions of society overthrown. But that he did act in the way in which his indictment accuses him of acting, there is no doubt whatsoever. And the only way in which his defenders could (or rather did at one time) throw doubt upon his legal guilt, was by impudently suppressing all that was material to a knowledge of it.

The Ferrer lie is not the first, and it will not be the last, of the lies which hatred of the Faith spreads throughout Europe. But if the reader of these lines will take it as a model of what has been said in the past and will be again brought forward in defence of the Church's enemies, and of attacks upon Catholic societies in any form, he will not be badly armed.

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EDITED BY

BERTRAM WINDLE, M.D., Sc.D., F.R.S.

PREFACE.

The object of these biographies is to demonstrate the fact, unknown to many critics of the Church, that there are numerous stars of (and many more than this series includes) who were also devout Catholics, and found no difficulty in maintaining both positions simultaneously. It ought to be superfluous to maintain such a thesis, and it would be the duty of persons who propagate such accusations as are made against the Church would, first of all, investigate the facts of the case. But, as a statement has been made, it may be well to give some definite evidence of the co-existence in the same individual of scientific enthusiasm and piety, united with a steadfast attachment to the doctrines of the Catholic Church.

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