

acquainted with the duties of citizenship. But this can scarcely be done, until the government of the country discontinues to recognize the validity of divorce, because divorce, in weakening or destroying the sacredness of family obligations, lessens the possibility of children growing up to be good citizens.

This recognition of the law that permits the separation of man and wife is one of the great drawbacks to public morality in the United States. Try as we may to convince ourselves otherwise, this truth must loom up before us that divorce but serves to fan the flame of immorality. Through it, a woman's chastity, her most precious jewel, is made a plaything, and her honor, which she prizes so highly, is treated as a market commodity. It snatches the wife from her husband's protection, to throw her upon the world, a prey to the innumerable temptations of which the world is full. It destroys the family and weakens the commonwealth, of which families are the sap and food. It leaves a stain upon the integrity of the nation. What more could it do?

Bare statement is not satisfactory argument. Let us study the question from statistics, prepared from the official records. From the year 1867 to 1887, 328,716 divorces were granted in the United States. These figures show that, while the population increased 50 per cent. during that period, the broken vows increased 156.9 per cent. In the granting of divorces America stands pre-eminent. To show this, we will take the record of one year—1886. In 1886 the courts of the United States released 25,535 couples from their matrimonial bonds, while the courts of Great Britain and the Continent released only 22,080. In France, there were granted 6,211, in the German Empire, 6,078. Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Kansas lack only 7 of equality with France; and Ohio, Texas, Pennsylvania, New York and Wisconsin, come within 1 of equality with Germany. Austria, with 765, was only 3 more than Kentucky; Great Britain with 475, only 24 more than Colorado; Italy with 418, only 2 more than Connecticut; and Belgium with 354 only 29 more than Georgia.

These figures are formidable; they reveal a deplorable condition of things. While divorce is thus easily obtained, public security will rest upon a foundation,

sunk into shifting sands. Let the time of courtship be fixed by law if you will, but marriage must be kept inviolable. "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder," is a command as binding to-day as it was when Christ trod his way from Gethsemani to Calvary. What criminal presumption, on the part of man, to dare veto the decrees of Heaven. In this, as in every crisis, the Catholic Church comes to our aid, and tells us what should be done. Clear and authoritative is its voice when it declares that divorce cannot, must not be sanctioned.

The Catholic Church alone is justified in thus speaking: she alone can restore, in all its purity, the early love that lingered about home, because she alone has thrown around the family fireside the sanctity of religion. Her Divine Founder, in instituting matrimony as a great sacrament, has taught us the sanctity of family ties. In establishing His church He desired to attract those who love the simplicity of natural manners, to foster all the domestic affections with manhood, gentleness, liberality and all the virtues that conduce to the happiness of home, and to teach that the strength or weakness, the vitality or decadence of nations is to be measured by the purity of their home life, by their devoted regard for home, its authority and its sanctities. If these lessons be taught, there can be little doubt that an effectual check will be given to the spread of divorce. If we seek for the cause of this evil we will find it in a depraved moral sense that judges voluptuousness to be the acme of human enjoyment. The sin, the shame and the sorrow that attend such a creed should urge us to action in the crusade against it. We have hope in the integrity of American public men, though the present holds out scarcely an encouraging sign.

Closely connected with this question is the great problem of our youth. The rising generation is not one of great promise. Young boys, like their elders, are seized with the craze for pleasure. Rich and poor alike are seeking it; the ones in the richly furnished rooms of the up-town club; the others in the squalid apartments of the down-town grog shops. The aim of both is the same, though the circumstances be different; the consequences of both—moral