

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost.

MIXED MARRIAGES.

From the simplest lessons of experience, my dear brethren, I think it ought to be plain enough how miserable a thing mixed marriage is likely to be. Even if the faith and practice of the Catholic party and of the children is what it should be—which is certainly hardly to be expected—there will be great and continual suffering to them on account of the separation of the Protestant father or mother—who is all the more loved the better and kinder he or she may be—from the unity of the Church and from the ordinary means of salvation.

In fact, it can hardly be imagined how any one having a lively faith in the Catholic religion can marry a Protestant or infidel, unless under the influence of a hope that some time or other the conversion of the other party will be effected. This hope does occasionally prove not to be a vain one. There are cases, no doubt, in which a Protestant, who would not probably otherwise have turned his thoughts to the question at all, does become a Catholic by means of marriage. But the best chance to obtain such a conversion is before the marriage is entered on; that is the time to try to secure it; and it is the duty of every Catholic who thinks of marrying one outside the Church to do the best in his or her power to bring the other party over, not only in name but in fact, to the true faith. I say in fact, for, unfortunately, many a non-Catholic, who has no strong conviction about religion in any way, will be willing to call himself a Catholic, and even to be baptized, in order to remove objections which may be made. Take care, then, that the conversion which is professed is a sincere and genuine one, and not merely got up for the occasion. I have heard of a case in which the Protestant party, when his religion was urged by the priest as an objection to the marriage, which would make trouble, most cheerfully replied: "Well, Father, if it would be any convenience to you, I am quite ready to be a Catholic." Such converts are not so very uncommon, though it is not often that they let their state of mind be seen so plainly. They will sit through several instructions given to them by the priest, making no question or remark about anything which he says, that they may get through as soon as possible; and when they do get through, that is about the last of their Catholic profession, or at least of their attendance at any Catholic duties.

If, then, a conversion, and a real and true conversion, cannot be obtained before marriage, there is certainly much fear that it never will be accomplished afterward. Be warned, then, in time; do not indulge false hopes in this regard; do not marry in haste and repent at leisure.

And about this matter of conversion I will say a few words, with reference not to Protestants, but to careless and negligent Catholics. A Catholic who is negligent of his duties has, it is true, if he keeps his faith, a resource which the Protestant has not; he knows what to do to be reconciled with God at the last; he will probably try to do it, and he may succeed. There is then more hope for his final salvation in this way than for the Protestant; but that does not make him a better companion during life; and many of the miseries of a mixed marriage are met with, and some, perhaps, even in a greater degree, with nominal Catholics than with Protestants. If, then, you contemplate marriage even with a Catholic, be sure to see that he or she attends to the duties required of Catholics, and has not contracted vicious and dangerous habits. Do not delude yourself with the idea that a confession and Communion must be made at the time of the marriage, and that the priest will attend to all that is necessary. For this confession and Communion may be in some cases not so very good and fervent; they may be something like what some Protestants, as I have said, go through with for convenience or necessity. No, do your own part. If the behavior of the other party before marriage is not such as becomes a Christian, both with regard to the frequentation of the sacraments and also in the matter of temperance and in others of which you are the best and indeed the only judge, it is not likely that it will be so afterward. Take care, then, before taking a step which you cannot retrace. You, not the priest, are the one to secure now the amendment of life which is so necessary. A word to the wise should be sufficient.

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MISS F. STEPHENSON, Oakland, Ont.

LADY JANE.

CHAPTER XII.—CONTINUED.

"There're too fine for my daughter," I answered, as I turned them over and examined them carefully. They were the handsomest things!—and on every piece was a pretty little embroidered monogram, C. J.; mind you, the same as the letters on the child's clothes. Then I asked her right out, for it's no use mincing matters with such a woman, where in the world she got such lovely linen.

"They belonged to my niece," she said, with a hypocritical sigh, "and I'd like to sell them; they're no good to the child; before she's grown up they'll be spoiled with damp and mildew; I'd rather have the money to educate her."

"But the monogram; it's a pity they're marked J. C." I repeated the letters over to see what she would say, and as I live she was ready for me.

"No, madame; it's C. J.—Claire Jozain; her name was Claire, you're looking at it wrong, and really it don't matter much how the letters are placed, for they're always misleading, you never know which comes first; and, dear Madame Paichoux,—she deared me, and that made me still more suspicious,—don't you see that the C. might easily be mistaken for G?—and no one will notice the J, it looks so much like a part of the vine around it. I'll make them a bargain if you'll take them."

"I told her my girl; par exemple! as if I'd let Marie wear stolen clothes, perhaps."

"Hush, hush, Modeste!" exclaimed Paichoux; "you might get in the courts for that."

"Or get her there, which would be more to the purpose. I'd like to know when and where that niece died, and who was with her; besides, the child says such strange things, now and then, that they set one to thinking. To-day when I was taking her home, she began to talk about the ranch, and her papa and mama. Sometimes I think they've stolen her."

"Oh, Modeste! The woman is n't as bad as that; I've never heard anything against her," interrupted the peaceable Paichoux; "she's got a bad son, it's true. That boy, Raste, is his father over again. Why, I hear he's already been in the courts; but she's all right as far as I know."

she would accuse the child of ingratitude. "She is a little ingrate, a little viper, that stings me after I have warned her. And to think of what I've done for her, and the worry and anxiety I've suffered! After all, I'm poorly paid, and get but little for all my studying and planning. She's a little upstart, a little aristocrat, who will trample on me some day. Well, it's what one gets in this world for doing a good deed. If I'd turned her and her mother out to die on the street, I'd been thought more of than I am now, and perhaps I'd been as well off."

**CHAPTER XIII.**  
**ONE OF THE NOBILITY.**  
On the next block, above little Gex's fruit stall, was a small cottage set close to the sidewalk, with two narrow windows covered with batten shutters that no one remembered to have ever seen open. On one side was a high green fence, in which was a small door, and above this fence some flowering trees were visible. A pink crape-myrtle and a Cape jasmine made the air fragrant, while a "Gold of Ophir" rose, entwined with a beautiful "Reine Henriette," crept along the top of the fence, and hung in riotous profusion above the heads of the passers.

Every day, in rain or shine, when Lady Jane visited little Gex, she continued her walk to the green fence, and stood looking wistfully at the clustering roses that bloomed securely beyond the reach of pilfering fingers; vainly wishing that some of them would fall at her feet, or that the gate might accidentally open, so that she could get a peep within.

And Lady Jane was not more curious than most of the older residents of Good Children street. For many years it had been the desire of the neighborhood to see what was going on behind that impenetrable green fence. Those who were lucky enough to get a glimpse, when the gate was opened for a moment to take the nickel of milk, or loaf of bread, saw a beautiful little garden, carefully tended and filled with exquisite flowers; but Lady Jane was never fortunate enough to be present on one of those rare occasions, as they always happened very early, and when her little yellow head was resting on its pillow; but sometimes, while she lingered on the sidewalk, near the gate, or under the tightly closed shutters, she would hear the melodious song of a bird, or the tinkling, liquid sound of an ancient piano, thin and clear as a trickling rivulet, and with it she would hear sometimes a high, sweet, tremulous voice singing an aria from some old-fashioned opera. Lady Jane did not know that it was an old-fashioned opera, but she thought it very odd and beautiful, all the same; and she loved to linger and listen to the correct but feeble rendering of certain passages that touched her deeply; for the child had an inborn love of music and one of the most exquisite little voices ever heard.

Pepie used to close her eyes in silent ecstasy when Lady Jane sang the few simple airs and lullabies she had learned from her mother, and when her tender little voice warbled

"Sleep, baby, sleep,  
The white moon is the shepherdess,  
The little stars the sheep."

Pepie would cover her face, and cry silently. No one ever heard her sing but Pepie. She was very shy about it, and if even Tite Souris came into the room she would stop instantly.

Therefore, little Gex was very much surprised one day, when he went out in her arms, his long legs almost touching the sidewalk, so carefully she held, while his enraptured little mistress was standing with her serious eyes fixed steadily on the window, her face pale and illumined with a sort of spiritual light, her lips parted, and a ripple of the purest, sweetest, most liquid melody issuing from between them that Gex had ever heard, even in those old days when he used to haunt the French Opera.

He softly drew near to listen; she was keeping perfect time with the tinkling piano and the faded voice of the singer within, who with many a quaver and break was singing a beautiful old French song; and the bird-like voice of the child went up and down, in and out through the difficult passages with wonderful passion and precision.

"What does she carry in it, Mr. Gex?" asked Lady Jane, her eyes large and her voice awe-stricken over the mysterious contents of the basket.

"Ah, I know not, my little lady. It is one mystery," returned Gex solemnly. "Mam'selle Diane is so proud and so shut up that no one can find out anything. Poor lady, and when does she do her market, and what do they eat, for all I ever see her buy is one nickel of bread, and one nickel of milk."

"But she's got flowers and birds, and she plays on the piano and sings," said Lady Jane reflectively. "Perhaps she is n't hungry and does n't want anything to eat."

"That may be so, my little lady," replied Gex with smiling approval, "I naively thought of it, but it may be so. Perhaps the noblesse don't have the big appetite, and don't want so much to eat as the common people."

"Oh, I nearly forgot, Mr. Gex. Pepie wants a nickel of cabbage," and Lady Jane suddenly returned to earth and earthly things, did her errand, took her *lagnappe* and went away.

**TO BE CONTINUED.**

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