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CURRENT COMMENT

The ever repeated protests of the Catholic Church against divorce are bearing fruit. Several distinguished Protestant divines in the United States are now raising their voices in protest, and lately there has been noticeable in England what the "Tablet" calls "a gradual stiffening up of opinion." At a diocesan conference held in London on the 17th of May the following resolution was brought forward: "That the English marriage law ought to be so amended as to preclude the remarriage in church of any party to a divorce during the lifetime of the other party (except only remarriage, with the consent of the Bishop of the diocese and the incumbent of the parish where the other party has been divorced on account of his or her adultery)." To this motion an amendment was proposed, omitting all the parenthesis, and this amendment was carried by the very significant majority of 169 to 71.

Elsewhere we reproduce a very practical article on this measure, from our London (Ont.) contemporary, the "Catholic Record," which, however, seems to have mistaken the tenor of that resolution of the London (Eng.) diocesan conference. The resolution was merely "that the English marriage law ought to be amended," not that the clergy ought to resist the law. And the Anglican Bishop of London, at the opening of his diocesan conference, replied to a protest of a number of Kensington clergy against lending a church for the remarriage of a man who was divorced, that, after careful study of the matter and taking the highest legal opinion, he could do nothing. He disliked such remarriages in church intensely, and did all he could to discourage them, but further than that he could not go. "While therefore," he added, "the law remains as it is, I repeat that it is impossible for a bishop to forbid his clergy to lend their churches for such services. But in my opinion, the law which offends the consciences of so many clergy and laity should be amended."

The Bishop of London went so far as to aver that "to give up the indissolubility of marriage is to empty of all force the words of our own service, 'those whom God hath joined let no man put asunder.'" What a wholesome change of opinion in the 48 years since the Anglican bishops themselves voted for the Divorce Bill of 1857! A correspondent of the Manchester "Guardian" deals with this contrast in a letter commenting on the Bishop of London's address to the Conference. "Does the Bishop wish to convey the impression that the State has compromised the Church, and that the Church, as represented by her rulers, is innocent of the great offence of 1857? I would that such were the case! Mr. Herbert Paul, in his 'History of Modern England,' vol. ii., p.p. 87, 88, gives us, I venture to think, a more accurate account of the passing of the Divorce Act of 1857 than his lordship of London. Mr. Paul says: 'In the House of Lords Lord Derby refused to oppose it, and the real leader of the opposition was Bishop Wilberforce, supported, in a somewhat hesitating manner, by Bishop Thirlwall. Bishop Tait, on the other hand, gave the measure throughout his weighty and powerful aid. Archbishop Sumner and the majority of the Bishops present voted for the second reading. . . . The majority for the second reading of the bill in the House of Lords was twenty-nine. However zealous we may be for the amendment of the law relating to divorce, we ought to remember with regret that in 'the conjunction of unrighteous influences' which contrived 'the calamitous legislation of 1857,' an Archbishop of Canterbury and a Bishop of London gave 'weighty and powerful aid' (and the majority of the Bishops present voted for the second reading, Ed. N.R.). Confession should precede amendment."

Our well informed contemporary, "The Casket," has the following inter-

esting reflections on a much talked of master in medicine.

What with Dr. Osler's sensational remarks about chloroforming men over sixty, and the dinners given him by the colleges and learned societies to bid him farewell, he goes to his Oxford professorship one of the best advertised men in the world. The most interesting bit of news we have seen concerning him is given by the "Independent," when it says that the modern writers from whom he quotes most frequently are Walter Pater and Cardinal Newman. To these "he goes for quotations aptly illustrative and always carrying with them a great truth supremely expressed. Not a single address of his on educational matters but is illumined by light from the great English Cardinal who knew so well the shades of educational questions and who realized how trying was to be their solution to the generation after his own."

His recently published lecture on immortality shows the distinguished physician as hazy as Cicero was in his views on this question of supreme importance. This is sad, very sad. Yet in an age of greedy commercialism we are glad to find that a man who never gave up his Canadian citizenship is resigning a position in an American university to accept one with smaller emoluments in an English university because he believes he can do more good there.

Greatness in any sphere is sure to produce a fruitful harvest of jealousy. The Society of Jesus has not escaped this painful revelation of littleness on the part of those who envy her successful labors. Unable to deny her proficiency in all fields of human endeavor, they have striven to wrest from her at least the merit of originality. We readily grant, they say, the learning, tact and discretion of the Jesuits; but their order has never produced any men of genius, any great thinkers. If this were true it would not hurt the feelings of any genuine follower of St. Ignatius. What the sincere Jesuit seeks is not the empty fame of originality but the glory of God by the salvation of souls. It would, however, be surprising if an order founded by the most original of men did not occasionally, at least, harbor men of undoubted originality. That Ignatius of Loyola was the most original of all founders is proved by the fact that no subsequent founder of any religious congregation has dared to imitate him in relying so utterly on the interior life as to prescribe no distinctive habit and no vocal prayers in common. Cardinal Newman detected a resemblance between his own Father St. Philip Neri and St. Ignatius in that they were both averse to "formal ceremony," but even the sons of St. Philip have exterior observances which the Jesuits have not. And, although the great English Cardinal frequently praises what he once called "that wonderful Society," it is easy to see that he, too, shares to a certain extent, the common persuasion that the Jesuits originated little or nothing. Had he studied their history more thoroughly he might have altered his opinion. Their very Constitutions and Spiritual Exercises bear the stamp of the best kind of originality, the originality that goes to the very root of human nature, that will stop short of none but the highest and deepest views of life, and that eschews all showy superficiality. Of course, all skilled Catholic theologians are aware that the Society of Jesus originated a school of theology that has in our day more adherents than any other. In the realm of Catholic philosophy, also, the Jesuits hold an enviable place. But what is not generally known, and what Cretineau-Joly, in his History of the Society of Jesus, proves by an imposing array of names and facts, is that in the natural sciences and in mathematics the Jesuits of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries broke new ground and were the first to foreshadow the most important discoveries and inventions of the nineteenth century. And not a few of them are still pioneers in the domain of research and exact thought. Less than thirty years ago John Tyndall, the famous mathematician and scientist, said that the mathematical discoveries

of the Jesuit Father Bayma, then living, were thirty years in advance of the highest mathematical achievements of his day. And the latest issue of "The Casket" thus summarizes recent Jesuit services to the science of meteorology.

The most valuable weather observations ever made are those of Fathers Faura and Algue, who for thirty years have directed the Observatory of Manila; of Father Froc, director of the Observatory of Zi-Ka-wei near Shanghai; and of Father Vines, director of the Observatory of Havana. Their observations have greatly reduced the loss of life in the China and Caribbean Seas. Father Froc has just received the "Gold Medal for Art and Science" from the German Emperor.

With regard to the Father Vines just mentioned the Rev. Walter M. Drum, S.J., gives some extremely interesting facts in the "Messenger" for this month. It appears that when the United States Weather Bureau, shortly after the war with Spain, established a branch office in Havana, it informed the public that "at first it was difficult to interest the Cubans in the warning service, since they are by nature very conservative and slow to adopt any change in their accustomed methods and mode of living. The issue of warnings of hurricanes was a most radical change, the inhabitants being accustomed to hear of these phenomena only upon their near approach." This statement contained two assertions diametrically opposed to the well-known truth: the first, that the Cubans were not interested in weather forecasts, and the second, that the weather bureau's warnings constituted a radical change. The exact contrary of both these assertions was the fact. During 25 years before the U.S. Weather Bureau was set up in Havana the Cubans took the liveliest interest in Father Vines's forecasts, and there was no change at all, still less any "radical change" in the U.S. warnings, except, as we shall show presently, that the latter were often wrong, while the former were always right. So palpably evident was the falsity of these assertions that Father Drum can account for them only by the combined self-sufficiency and ignorance of some minor official newly arrived in Havana. That the Cubans and their neighbors, the Porto Ricans took a great interest in warnings sent out, not merely "upon the near approach" of storms, but several days ahead, Father Drum proves by many well authenticated instances. Here is one. "The people of Cuba were so interested in Father Vines's warning service, that as early as 1877 he was able to organize a system of sub-stations at various points in Cuba and other islands of the Antilles. These stations made simultaneous observations and wired the results to Havana. During this year he announced the path of a cyclone before it was felt in the Barbadoes. The cyclone reached the Barbadoes in the evening and Granada during the night of September 21st; St. Vincent, the night of the 22nd; Santiago de Cuba, the 24th; it then spent itself south of Cuba. Father Vines announced the storm at 4 p.m. of the 21st. On the 22nd he sent word to Porto Rico that the hurricane had passed the night before at fifteen miles per hour on its way from Granada to St. Vincent, and would not touch Porto Rico. At the same time he wired full information about the storm to Santiago de Cuba, and added: 'It will reach you on the 24th; be on your guard.' Everything happened according to his forecast. The 'Boletin Mercantil' (October 5, 1877), of Porto Rico, said: 'Father Vines whose voice has for us the authority of an oracle, calmed our souls by his timely warning. He well deserves the European reputation that he enjoys. Spain should be proud of him.'"

That Father Vines's work was highly appreciated in the United States eight years before the war with Spain Father Drum proves by the following extract from the New Orleans "Times Democrat" in one of its September numbers of 1890: "A Havana meteorologist, who has made observations and forecasts gratuitously for a quarter of a century, Padre Vines, a celebrated Jesuit priest in Havana, is regarded by navigators

and meteorologists all over the world as one of the most correct and reliable weather scientists of the age. During the hurricane season his opinion is anxiously sought after. It has been A GENERAL CUSTOM FOR YEARS FOR THE PADRE TO INFORM THE AGENTS of the various lines of the condition of the weather just prior to the departure of the vessels. During the many years that this excellent work has been performed it has on many occasions resulted in saving lives and a great deal of valuable property." In another number the same paper says: "A man who has done so much for the interest of American shipping and ship owners, as has been done, for sheer love, by Padre Vines, deserves at least recognition by our government."

Father Benito Vines died on July 23, 1903, and was succeeded by Father Lorenzo Gangotiti, who keeps up the high reputation of his predecessor in the observatory of the Jesuit college of Belen, Havana. Father Gangotiti is as accurate in his forecasts as was Father Vines. "We shall cite but one example," writes Father Drum, "an example that comes home to us Americans. We refer to the sad destruction of Galveston. On September 1, 1900, a cyclone of little force appeared in the eastern part of the Caribbean Sea, crossed the centre of the Island of Cuba, moved on W.N.W., passed south of Florida, acquired full force and terrific intensity in the Gulf and on September 8th swept down on the helpless city of Galveston. The United States Weather Bureau observer, on September 5th, announced that the hurricane was E.N.E. of Havana, with a course N.N.E., and would spend itself in the Atlantic." (A glance at a map shows that if the course had really been N.N.E. of Havana, the hurricane would indeed have passed to the east of Florida into the Atlantic. Ed. N.R.) "That very day Father Gangotiti published the announcement that the cyclone was south (not east) of Florida. On September 6th, at noon, he stated, through the press, that the storm was in the Gulf of Mexico and W.S.W. of Tampa. On September 8th, at 4 p.m., while Galveston was being torn to pieces, he published his report that the currents on the right of the storm had been felt in Georgia and Alabama during the morning of September 7th, and in Louisiana during the evening of the same day; and that the very centre of the hurricane had reached Texas the morning of September 8th. By September 10th no word of the Galveston catastrophe had yet reached either the United States Weather Bureau or Belen (Havana). At 8 a.m. that morning appeared Father Gangotiti's press notices of clear signs that the tempest had grown very much fiercer and had probably struck Texas. The Father ends these notices by saying that the Washington 'Weather Maps' will settle whether his forecast or the Weather Bureau's was right. In grim array with Father Gangotiti's report stands this fatal forecast of the United States Weather Bureau observer: 'This morning at the Weather Bureau we have noted slight indications that in the W.N.W. is forming an atmospheric disturbance scarcely worth mentioning.' The Galveston storm went on and our Weather Bureau observer thought it an 'atmospheric disturbance scarcely worth mentioning!' A few hours after these characteristic reports appeared, the sad news of Galveston's fate began to arrive by cable. Later on both the 'Pilot Chart' (October, 1900) and the Weather Maps traced the trajectory of the Galveston storm exactly as it had been followed by Father Gangotiti in the press of Havana. The Cuban papers turned such a stream of ridicule on our Weather Bureau observer as to force him to send them no more forecasts. For a whole month the Havana press kept up its affectionate praise of Father Gangotiti."

The theory that genius is the art of taking infinite pains about things that others look upon as trifles is well exemplified in the discovery which has made the warnings of the Belen Observatory so deservedly famous. Father Vines noticed the singular form, structure, stability and direction of

those highest feathery clouds which he called 'cirro-stratus plumiformes.' Others before him had noticed the connection of these clouds with the hurricane, but no one before him had even suspected "that these clouds were fleet messengers sent high in air and from the very heart of the cyclone to give timely notice of its oncoming violence. He made observations and discovered that his conjectures were right, — the direction of these light upper clouds corresponded almost exactly with the radius of the cyclone, and the vanishing point toward which these directions converged coincided with that point of the horizon at which the storm was. The discovery was simple, yet wonderful, and spurred on Father Vines to further investigation. He observed that the different clouds at different altitudes revealed the direction of the different currents of air, and found in the relative altitudes of these clouds a means of establishing his 'law of cyclonic currents at different altitudes,' a law unheard of before it was formulated by Father Vines. Father Faura, S.J., of the Manila Observatory, considers the discovery of the connection of the upper clouds with the hurricane 'one of the greatest triumphs achieved in the past few years.' Verily, Father Drum was right when he entitled his article "The Pioneer Forecasters of Hurricanes."

About a month ago the cable announced that the Pope and Professor Charles Briggs, once a Presbyterian, but now an Episcopalian, had discussed matters affecting the higher criticism and the decisions of the Roman Congregations, and that "His Holiness displayed great breadth of view." Anent this fishy story, the Tablet's Rome correspondent writes under date of May 21:

"Father Gennochi of the Biblical Commission, who recently presented Dr. Briggs to the Holy Father, declares that neither he nor the learned American scholar conversed with any journalist on the subject of the Papal audience accorded them, and that the account of it given by the 'Daily Chronicle' (copied by the cableman) does not preserve 'the primitive features' of the Holy Father's remarks. Your correspondent hopes to be able to obtain a more definite statement on the matter; meanwhile it is well to repeat the warning already given in this column that the authenticity of such accounts is to be gauged by the reliability of the person who makes them." Very wise advice indeed; which obliges us to suspend judgment whenever the Catholic cableman sends startling Catholic news.

The most timely article in the June "Catholic World," a fine number, by the way, is Mr. Darley Dale's "Japan and Catholicity." It is mainly an abstract of "Japan by the Japanese," a book written by natives and edited by Mr. Alfred Stead, but it is a live abstract instinct with Catholic hope. "No Catholic could read this remarkable book unmoved," writes Mr. Dale, "or without crying to heaven for another St. Francis Xavier to plant the true faith in this Island Kingdom, which lies like a ploughed field, waiting for the sower to sow wheat, barley, oats or turnips, as seemeth to him good; waiting for a religion, uncertain which to embrace, and equally drawn to Confucianism, Buddhism, or Christianity." At present "Bushido," a sort of chivalry or code of honor, does duty for religion in practice; but it is a poor substitute for the grace of God. Had not heresy and schism invaded Japan, the country would have become Catholic long ago "and would do so now if its evangelization were left to the Catholic Church."

Soon the school clauses in the autonomy Bill will assume their definite shape. What that shape will be it is not easy to forecast. Meanwhile many thoroughly single minded Catholics stand perplexed. Are those right who say that the clauses, as now amended, are merely a delusion and a snare for Catholics? Are those wrong who say that the amended clauses are, albeit little enough, yet all we can hope for now? It would require a Daniel to judge between the two. But there is (Continued on page 4)