

### Marriage in the Catholic Church.

The following article from The London Tablet states the attitude of the Catholic Church on an important subject, and explains some things that have not been clearly understood by many Catholics:

"The recent divorce case of Laubonquo vs. Laubonquo, in which both parties are Catholics, has attracted some measure of notice and has occasioned not a little mischievous comment on the part of certain organs of the non-Catholic press. Yet the proceedings will have been found uninteresting only by all who are not acquainted with Catholic teaching concerning the indissolubility of Christian marriage and the constant practice of the Roman Chancery. The Church in dealing with the bond of matrimony has consistently considered that bond in two stages; first, the bond as inaugurated by the ceremony or celebration in which the parties lawfully express their mutual consent, and secondly, the same bond as completed by the consummation of the marriage and the parties living together as man and wife. In the language of the Church, the first is marriage ratum, and the second is marriage consummatum. The point which non-Catholic writers appear so often to miss or ignore is that in Catholic teaching and practice founded on Divine law, from which the Church herself has no power to dispense—attaches not to marriage merely ratified but to marriage consummated, in which the parties have lived together as man and wife. If a marriage has been lawfully celebrated before the altar, it is, indeed, indissoluble by any private or secular authority. But so far, and while the parties have never yet lived together, and while the bond remains uncompleted by consummation, it is not so indissoluble that the Church may not, in good and sufficient reasons affecting the happiness or spiritual welfare of the parties, exercise her authority and dissolve the uncompleted bond, and leave the parties free to contract another marriage. Cases of dissolution of such a kind are called, marriage ratified but not consummated—have been readily recognized by the Church and dispensations to that effect are not infrequently occurrence in the well-known practice of the Holy See.

#### THE INDISSOLUBILITY OF THE BOND OF MARRIAGE AN UNALTERABLE CANONIC DECREE

"On the other hand, the absolute indissolubility of the bond of marriage between parties who have once lived together as man and wife—and this, after all, is the practical case for society—is unalterably and unshakingly maintained by the Catholic Church with the whole weight of her immutable authority. The Church, moreover, teaches that the indissolubility of the marriage bond thus completed is matter of divine law, and that neither she nor any power upon earth has any power to dispense from it. The Church dispenses from her laws, but not from the laws of her Master. And in the historic case of Henry VIII. she has given proof of her sincerity and inflexible integrity in being ready even to sacrifice the allegiance of a whole kingdom rather than betray this sacred and saving principle. The case of Laubonquo vs. Laubonquo is the simple and ordinary one—there are dozens such on the lists of the Sacred Congregation of the Council—of a dissolution of matrimonium ratum and non consummatum—marriage ratified but not consummated, or, in other words, marriage celebrated but in which the parties have never lived together as man and wife. The facts are quite romantic enough to make excellent copy for a Catholic school girl of sixteen, and of good position, makes the acquaintance of a distinguished foreigner who has a coronet on the corner of his pocket handkerchief and can produce grapes grown at his ancestral chateau in France. After the usual difficulties, the consent of the young lady's father is secured, and the parties are married in the Catholic Cathedral at Edinburgh. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the father very properly insists that the bridegroom before claiming his bride shall go to Paris and obtain the authorization of his marriage. The bridegroom goes, but never returns. Moreover, he turns out to be an adventurer in the sense of having grossly deceived the lady and her parents as to his position and prospects. And further, according to the evidence, he enters into a liaison with another person, and declines to return to the bride left at the altar.

#### A MARRIAGE NOT CONSUMMATED MAY BE DISSOLVED.

"Under those circumstances the proceedings which the Catholic family have taken are precisely what we should have expected. There is nothing before the court of the Archbishop of Edinburgh, and passed there, in the ordinary course, to the Holy See. The evidence furnished proved that she and the respondent had never lived together, and that the marriage had never been consummated. Those who are best acquainted with the ordinary procedure of such cases know well the scrupulous care, the searching inquiry, and the elaborate provisions of Benedict XIV. the Holy See brings to their investigation and solution. Finally, on the strength of the proofs that the marriage remained unconsummated, the Pope, on the advice of the Congregation, granted the usual dispensation, dissolving the marriage as ratum and non consummatum. As the authority of the Church herself had thus set the lady free from the marriage ceremony which she had contracted only to remain for her to have the effect of this decision as far as the civil law is concerned, and this was done by taking proceedings in the ordinary divorce court. Such a recourse for mere legalization of a decision already

pronounced by the highest Church authority does not, of course, mean any recognition of the secular divorce court, or of the principle of divorce. It is nothing more than a conscientious method of removing the obstacle which the civil law might place in the way of giving full effect to the Papal decision.

#### THE CASE OF HENRY VIII. AND CATHARINE OF ARAGON.

"A writer in The Daily Chronicle, in commenting on the case, portrays himself as the Pope's dispenser, the marvelous observation that 'Henry VIII. would have given half a kingdom for that.' That is a fair illustration of what we have described as the look in certain quarters of knowledge of the ordinary Catholic teaching, and what is less excusable, a readiness to draw conclusions quite as lightly as if that knowledge were not wanting. Every canonist and theologian knows that Henry VIII. was not able to prove that his marriage with Catharine of Aragon had never been consummated (he had lived with her twenty years and had several children) and would really have been no difficulty in granting his petition, presuming, of course, that he had had just and sufficient reasons to support it, and there would have been no need to give either a half or any portion of his kingdom for the purpose. It is not until we reach the other side of the matter, that the Daily Chronicle's method once cursorily the divorce decree, and the arguments pleaded at the time, he would not have failed to find for himself the utter irrelevance of his comparison. On the other hand, a clear knowledge of the canon law of the Chancery would have shown him that the dissolution of marriages ratified but not consummated—matrimonium ratum non consummatum—was an ordinary procedure of the Roman court, and that a dispensation to Henry VIII. and dating as far back as the days of Martin V. or earlier Popes. It is needless to say that such a dispensation is granted by the Vicar of Christ only after the most careful consideration of the facts of the case, and that the sacred character of marriage which the Church and the Holy See have so deeply at heart to defend and maintain, and that they only so do, if anything, to set in clearer relief the sacred seal of sacramental indissolubility, founded on divine and immutable law, which the Church declares and defines to attach to the bond of ratified and consummated matrimony.

#### C. M. B. A.

On December 6th Bro. W. P. Killakey, Grand Organizer of the C. M. B. A. held a very successful re-organization meeting of Branch 85 when a number of members were initiated. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year of 1899: Spiritual Director, Rev. Father West; Chancellor, Jos. Kidd; President, D. P. McCarthy; 1st Vice-Prec. A. Becker; 2nd Vice Pres. E. J. Shannon Recording Secy. O. Shanahan; Assnt. Secy. J. D. O'Connell; Treasurer, J. J. Doyle; Marshall, James Dean; Guard, M. O'Connell; Trustees, Judge Doyle, E. Campion, Q. O. M. J. Farr, Capt. Traubert and Charles Moss, C. V. Shannon, Rec. Secy.

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Oak Hall, 115 King St. E. Opposite St. James' Cathedral, Toronto.

### TWO IRISH POEMS.

To the Editor of The Catholic Register. SIR—In the issue of your ably conducted journal of the 16th inst. under the caption, "The Truest of Irish Novellists" occur the following lines attributed to Charles J. Kiekham, "She lived beside Anner" are not Kiekham's, on the contrary that beautiful song or lullaby was written by "Shamrock" (Richard Dalton Williams) and was, with many other poems contributed by him to the Dublin Nation, all of which were published in book form by Mr. T. D. Sullivan in 1882. If you can find room for the song in extension to your very ably conducted journal, The Catholic Register, I will feel obliged by your inserting it to full in your issue of the 22nd proximo. It is as follows, and is as good.

THE DREAMER. From a Munster vale they brought her, From the pure and balmy air, An Armond peasant's daughter, And she sang a soft and golden hair. They sought in vain for the city, And she faded slowly there, Consumption has no pity For blue eyes and golden hair.

When I saw her first reclining It was with her head on prayer, And the setting sun was shining On her forehead golden hair, When our lady's glances met her, And she turned with her eyes, And she said to me with a smile, While we know that she must die.

She speaks of Munster valleys, The pattern, dance and fair, And her thin head feebly declines With her scattered golden hair, When sweetly we listened To her breath with quiet care, Her eyes with wondrous glistening, And she asked us what was there.

The poor thing smiled to ask it, And her pretty mouth laid bare, Like gems within a casket, A string of pearls rare! We said that we were trying, By the gushing of her blood, And the time she took in sighing, To know if she were good.

Well, she smiled and chatted gaily; Though we saw in mine despair The hooded bright dawn on her hair, And of her wasted fingers Boasting time upon the bed, Or some old tune she fingers, And she bows her golden head.

At length the harp is broken, And the spirit in its strings, As the last decree is spoken, To its source exulting springs, Doomed to die of her melodies, Her angel guardian came, He struck God's lightning from her eyes And bore him back the flame.

Before the sun had risen Through the lark-voiced morning air, Her young soul left its prison, Undelivered by sin or care, I stood beside the couch in tears, Where pale and calm she slept, And though 'twere good for years, I blush not that I wept.

I checked with effort pity's sighs, And left the matron there, To close the curtains of her eyes And bind her golden hair.

for going, status. We append the words of Kiekham's poem to further display their entire and distinct separation, in all but rhythm. E. O. R.

THE IRISH DREAMER. (By Chas. J. Kiekham.) She lived beside the Anner, At the foot of Slieve-na-moon, A gentle peasant girl, With mild eyes like the dawn, Her lips were rosebuds, Her teeth were pearls rare; A snow drift' north a beechen bough Her neck and nut-brow hair.

How pleasant 'twas to see her On a Sunday, when the bell Was filling with its mellow tones Lone wood and grassy dell; And when, at eve, young maid, strayed The river's banks along, The widows' tale and the olden tale, Was loveliest of the throng.

Oh brave, brave Irish girls! We will call you all brave, Sure the best of all your perils Is the stormy sea you brave; When you leave your quiet valleys And cross the Atlantic fens, To board your hard won earnings For the blisses east of home.

Write word to my dear mother, Say we'll meet in Heaven above, And tell my little brothers, That I'm not dead, all my love. "May the angels ever guard them, In their happy rest, a pray'r, And folded in the latter, Was a brand of nut-brow hair."

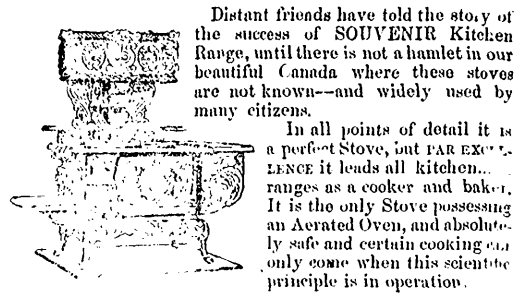
Oh, old, and well nigh callous, This weary heart has grown, For thy hapless fate dear Erin, And for sorrows of mine own, Yet a tear mine eye will cost you, When by Anner side I stray, For the Lear of the mountain's foot That withered far away.

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