

her head upon the table, and giving herself up to all the abandonment of her grief, was sobbing like a child. Kathleen's tears were of unmingled thankfulness.

"How good God is? How good God is!" she kept exclaiming. "This, too, is a retribution," she murmured to herself; "but one of what fatherly love!"

To be continued.

THE PROMISES BEFORE MIXED MARRIAGES.

By Father McEnniry in Our Sunday Visitor.

"Richard, here he comes!" Irene Mullins gave a little half-sob of shame and regret. It did not increase her self-esteem to meet the quiet gaze of Father Casey now since she had told him that she was determined to marry Richard Nicholson, this handsome young Protestant, and that nothing could change her resolution. The door of the rectory parlor opened and Father Casey walked in.

"Good morning Irene; good morning Mr. Nicholson." Irene rose to her feet. The young man made no move beyond a stiff inclination of the head, while his face became a trifle paler, and the look of antagonism deepened in his eyes.

"We called, sir," he said, "regarding that document which you said I must sign before you will apply to the Bishop for a dispensation to marry us."

"Here it is," and the priest handed him a slip of paper which read:

"I, Richard Nicholson, not a member of the Roman Catholic Church, wishing to contract marriage with Irene Mullins, who is a member of the Roman Catholic Church, purpose to do so with the understanding that the marriage bond is indissoluble, except by death; and I promise on my word of honor that Irene Mullins shall be permitted the free exercise of her religion, according to the Roman Catholic Faith, and that all children, of either sex, born of this marriage, shall be baptized and educated according to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, even if Irene Mullins should happen to be taken away by death, before me. I furthermore promise that no marriage ceremony other than that to be performed by the Catholic priest shall take place.

"Witness....." "Witness....." Signed.....

"Sir," said Nicholson, when he had read the paper, "you were frank with me last evening when you said you considered it a calamity for a Catholic to marry a Protestant; I shall be frank with you tonight: I consider it the height of arrogance and narrow-mindedness for the Catholic Church to ask a Protestant to sign such a document as this!"

"Do you mean," said Father Casey, and his voice was calm—too calm—it made the visitor uncomfortable, "that it is arrogance for the Catholic Church to command this young woman—under pain of expulsion from the fold—to do what the Church considers necessary for the salvation of her soul?"

"No, sir, I mean nothing of the kind!" "Do you then mean that it is arrogance for the Catholic Church to command this woman to effect, as far as she can, that the children whom God gives her, do what the Church considers necessary for the salvation of their souls?"

"Well, no; since she freely wishes to remain a Catholic, the Church has a right to give her these commands. But I am not Catholic, and it is insufferable arrogance for the Church to give me a command to bring up my children Catholics!"

"Not so fast," said the priest, and his voice became, if possible, more calm. "You have just ad-

mitted that the Catholic Church has a right to say to this woman: Either effect, as far as you can, that your children be brought up Catholics, or leave the Church yourself. This you have admitted. But tell me, is this young woman doing all she can to have her children brought up Catholics if she marries a non-Catholic without exacting a promise that he will allow her to follow her conscience in this matter?"

"I see—stating the question in that way makes it look different. Her Church does not command me to bring up the children Catholics, but forbids her to marry me unless I promise to allow her to do so."

"Precisely," said Father Casey. "But now, let me turn the tables: my church would be justified in commanding me to bring up my children Protestants."

"Does your church do so?" queried Father Casey.

"No, not that I know of—but my conscience does."

"Then if you allow the children to be brought up Catholics, you go against your conscience and commit a sin; while on the other hand if she allows them to be brought up Protestants, she goes against her conscience and commits a sin."

"That's correct; and it is not right to expect me to commit a sin any more than her."

"Quite true," said the priest, "it is never right to expect any one to commit a sin. Do you see what necessarily follows?"

"What?"

"That very thing I told you last night: that a Catholic can hardly marry a non-Catholic without one or both committing sin thereby."

Nicholson was silent for a moment, then continued, with considerably less self-sufficiency than before:

"Then why not make a compromise? The girls will be Catholics and the boys Protestants."

"If your conscience is logical, Mr. Nicholson, it cannot agree to any such compromise. The souls of boys and girls are of equal value. If the true Church is necessary for the salvation of the one, it is likewise necessary for the salvation of the other. I do not know whether your conscience is logical enough to urge this, but I know that the Catholic Church is; it will allow no compromise wherein immortal souls are bartered for human affections."

"Well, then, we will make them neither Catholics nor Protestants; we will wait until they grow old enough to choose for themselves."

"That would be an unnatural crime. It would be to neglect your most sacred obligation as parents! Instinct teaches the very beasts of the assistance they need to grow into well-developed beings. In like manner reason teaches reasonable beings to give their children all the assistance necessary to grow up into well-developed reasonable beings. But the first and most essential obligation of a reasonable being is to know, love, and serve God, its Creator and Final End. The human parents who would fail in this would be as unnatural as the motherbird that would neglect to bring food to her young and leave them to die and rot in the nest."

"But, sir, God wishes us to serve Him freely, and not through force. To teach any one a particular religion from childhood up is practically to force him to accept that religion—it is not freedom!"

"If religion," said Father Casey, "were a human invention like railroading or baseball, I might grant your contention. But religion is a divine institution—it was revealed by God. God did not and could not reveal several different religions that mutually contradict one another. He revealed but one religion. That is the true religion; all other religions are false. To so train your child that he can choose a false religion as easily as the true one, is not to give him freedom, but to reduce him to slavery. If you are certain which is the true religion, you must teach it to your

child from his earliest infancy, for only then will your child be safe from the fatal danger of being misled by a false one. To act in any other way would be criminal neglect of your duty as father. If you do not know for certain which is the true religion, then it is doubly criminal for you to enter the married state—to take upon yourself the obligation of molding and training human beings—before you have settled to your own satisfaction the most urgent and essential question of human existence."

"Would you, then," asked Nicholson, "condemn a man to life-long celibacy because he cannot discover which among the one thousand religions in the world is the true religion?"

"I would condemn no honest-minded man to life-long celibacy," said Father Casey, "for there is no man with an honest mind that cannot discover the true religion if he sincerely tries to do so. To say the contrary would be to accuse the all-just God of injustice and tyranny. When He revealed the one true religion, He thereby imposed the obligation of embracing that religion upon all, both the learned and the ignorant. But a just God could not impose this obligation upon all, without making it fairly easy for all to find the true religion. Therefore, since it is fairly easy to discover the true religion, the man who does not, in a reasonable time, succeed in discovering it, is not making honest and sincere efforts to do so—he has not a good will. And if he stubbornly persists in life-long bad-will, I surely would do all in my power to condemn him to life-long celibacy. I would do all in my power to hinder him from having any part in the training of immortal souls. His own corrupt heart would necessarily have a corrupting influence upon all over whom he had any authority."

The priest paused a moment but, seeing that Nicholson made no attempt to answer, he continued:

"You proposed allowing the children to grow up without any religious belief until they were old enough to choose for themselves. That course, besides being immoral, as I have just shown you, is furthermore impossible. Religion has a bearing upon all our conscientious acts in their relation to All-mighty God. As soon as a human being begins to perform conscientious acts he begins to acquire a religious belief, and that religious belief must be one of these three: first, 'I believe that no religion is necessary'; second, 'I believe that several different religions are equally good'; third, 'I believe that this particular religion is the only good one.' The parents, every one that comes in contact with the child, must, whether they will or not, foster one of these three beliefs. If you and your wife succeed, while in the presence of your child, in avoiding every word or action that has any reference to religion, you will foster, and foster strongly, the first belief. If your wife acts always as a zealous Catholic and you always act as a zealous Protestant, you will foster the second belief. To foster in your child the first belief is to make him an atheist. To foster in him the second belief is to make him an indifferentist—it is treason to your child and treason to the religion which you know to be the only true one. To foster the third belief and foster it with reference to the one true religion—this and this alone is to fulfill your sacred duty towards your child. Your intended wife cannot remain a member of the Catholic Church unless she is determined to do this for the children whom God may give her, and she may not marry you unless you sign a promise that you will permit her to do so."

"I will sign the document," said Nicholson. "And, Father," he added, (it was the first time in his life that he had addressed a priest by that title, which showed how the proud man had been humbled), "I

hope the day will soon come when I shall regard it not merely an obligation of honor, but still more as a duty of religion to fulfill what the document enjoins."

Fifteen Years Ago

From No. 10 of St. Peters Bote

From June 30, 1902, up to June 30, 1903, there were 31,383 frige homesteads taken up in the Canadian West. Besides this, the government sold 125,235 acres, and the railroad companies another 4,229,011 acres.

In the issue of the paper for May 3, 1904, there is a correspondence from Jacob Y. Schantz of Berlin (Kitchener), Ont. He was the first of the Mennonites to visit the Canadian Northwest and to advise his German-Russian co-religionists to settle here. He is 83 years of age and still enjoying all his mental faculties. He made his first trip in Nov. 1872 with B. Warkentin, going via Chicago and St. Paul. From St. Paul to the boundary, a distance of 500 miles, there was a settler to be met with at only great intervals. From the boundary to Fort Garry, now Winnipeg, it was another 62 miles. This place then had 13 dwellings and a Catholic church for the French and Metis. In 1873 a deputation of Mennonites came over from Russia, who were so pleased with the land that in 1874 nearly 500 families came over; in the next year 700, and in 1876 about just as many. Making in three years a total of 1443 families that settled in Manitoba. Later on from time to time a few more came over. He has no doubt that land now being opened up for settlement along the C. N. R. will in a few years be worth 25 to 40 dollars an acre.

The Canadian Northern (Dauphin-Prince Albert branch) is within 70 miles of Prince Albert, and an accommodation train is running on it. The main line of the C.N.R. has reached the Kamsack district, being about 160 miles east of Saskatchewan.

The settlers at Crooked Lake, on the east side of the Saskatchewan have handed in a petition for a ferry at Gabriels Crossing. They claim that the ferry at Fish Creek is not able to handle all the business; many people have to wait quite a while before getting an opportunity to be taken across. The half-breed who had the ferry last year is said to have taken in the handsome sum of \$4,000 during the season. It would be very desirable if the steep banks at the Fish Creek ferry were cut down considerably.

At St. Benedict they hope to build a church the coming summer. A number of new homesteads have been taken up; among others by John Huhnstock, Jos. Weber, John Bauer, John Benntung-Mueller and many more.

The correspondent from St. Peter writes that C. L. Mayer's new house north of the Monastery, which Mich. Washkosky was building, is now completed. It is like the parish house in Leofeld. Mr. Mayer is reported to arrive soon.—On Easter Sunday Father Peter celebrated solemn High Mass. Although the log church is 20x40 it could scarcely hold all the settlers who had come to attend. Kintz, Koenig, Vossen and Bettin were up from the Quill Lake district to attend the services. Mr. Vossen (T. 37, R. 19) has been appointed postmaster there, with Mr. Bettin as mail carrier. Last week he made his first trip from St. Peter. Hereafter he will come to Albert Nenzel for the mail every Saturday. The beautiful spring weather causes all the hardships of the past winter to be forgotten.

ADDENDA: By Quill Lake district is meant that part of the Colony now designated as Watson and Engelfeld, S. and N. of these places for about 8 or 10 miles.—The weather in the Colony for April 1904 was as follows: Easter Sunday was a bright, sunny day like summer causing a good deal of snow to melt. On the next day, the 4th, however, it remained frosty till noon; clouding up towards evening, with the wind from the north. On the 10th the trail showed very many bare spots. There was frost every night till the night of the 22nd, when the thermometer remained above freezing point all night. On the last day of April the trails were in very poor condition. The water stood

quite high on the road in many places.—The studdings for the church at Schaeffer's were up April 23. Blocks or short pieces of dry poplar logs are to be put in between these and plastered. It is being built on the south side of the C.N.R. road-bed, across from Gottfried Schaeffer's store.

NOTICE. The Purebred Belgian Draft Stallion "Joubert de Schoonenberg" 648 imp. will stand for service during season 1919 east of Humboldt and north towards Dead Moose Lake. The Pure bred Percheron Stallion "Frisco" 128695 (grey) and two more black Pure bred Percheron Stallions will stand for service at the Blue Livery and Feed Stable, Humboldt, Sask. W. Keuser, Owner.

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