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TORONTO, APRIL 30TH, 1908.

## THE MARRIAGE QUESTION.

Confirmation of the wisdom of the regulations of the Catholic Church concerning marriage comes at times from unexpected quarters. The latest contribution of this kind has been made by the No. 1 branch of the Common Pleas Court of Pittsburgh, Pa. Of ten matrimonial cases which came up before this Court nine were elopement marriages. The parties whose happiness was, in their estimation, so bound up in one another that they crossed into a neighboring State to be secretly and hurriedly married, proved in Court by their revelation of domestic misery what a dangerous foundation for a home is a marriage prompted by fancy and passion.

And yet because she legislates against such marriages, in the highest degree pernicious both to society and religion, the Church is sometimes deemed to be unreasonably strict by a certain class of so-called Catholics. "If a man and woman like one another well enough to desire marriage, whose business ought this to be but their own?" such characters ask. The answer ought to be plain enough to the most limited intelligence. The item of news given above will show how intimately society is concerned in this matter. The hearing of ten lawsuits arising from ill-assorted marriages, nine of them of the romantic type, in one division of the Common Pleas Court of Pittsburgh, cost the citizens several thousands of dollars. These lawsuits showed families broken up, children demoralized, parental obligations as to support and education of offspring shifted on the community. It would be hard to estimate the amount of loss the public suffered through these nine elopements.

But what about religion? What about the sins committed, the scandals given, the souls ruined, the legacy of evil handed down because of the wretched conditions prevailing for years in these disinherited homes? Has the Church no interest in all this, no duties concerning its prevention? A little attention to questions of this kind would serve to dissipate grumbling in some quarters over the Church legislation concerning marriage that has gone into effect on last Easter Sunday, April 19th, legislation aimed especially against clandestine betrothals and marriages.

Concerning betrothals or marriage engagements all secrecy is cut off by an enactment that in order to be valid in the sight of the Church, these must be in writing, signed by the parties entering into such engagement, and attested by the signature of the parish priest, or the Ordinary, of the place, or at least by two witnesses. In case of the illiteracy of either or both of the parties wishing to contract a marriage engagement, this must be stated in writing and an additional witness employed. These regulations assure due consideration before nuptial engagements will be made, and will effect the double good of preventing haste and rendering difficult the repudiation of a contract so solemnly made and clearly established.

The same anxiety to have the cloak of secrecy, which is responsible for so many ill-assorted unions, torn away from Christian marriage, is shown in the recent decrees of the Church regarding the celebration of marriage. In order that marriages, whether both or one of the contracting parties be Catholics, be valid, such marriages must be entered into in presence of the parish priest or ordinary, or a priest delegated by either, of the territory in which they take place, and of two witnesses. Furthermore the presence of the officiating priest must be on invitation free and unconstrained, and he must ask and receive the consent of the contracting parties to their union.

By this legislation the Church insists that the marriages of her children shall be always carried out by her authorized ministers, who by virtue of their sacred office shall see that everything possible is done in the matter of preparing for the due reception of this Sacrament, and in the carrying out of the beautiful Ritual with which it is surrounded. Nothing can be more impressive than those mutual vows "till death do us part," made in presence of the Tabernacle, in presence of that Jesus before Whom one or other of the contracting parties shall stand to be

judged before the tie there knit, shall be severed. And there are few things in the whole service of the Church more eloquently beautiful than that nuptial blessing pronounced at one of the most solemn moments of the Mass. That there should be Catholics to whom all this seems a burden instead of the highest privilege, shows a lamentable lack of the spirit of faith. And as we are persuaded that this lack of faith proceeds largely from lack of knowledge, we will week after week set forth the mind of the Church on this question of Christian marriage.

## CIVIL SERVICE REFORM.

If our party newspapers could be kept from bedevilling the subject, we might soon expect a sweeping measure of Civil Service reform in full operation. Recent investigations have brought to a head a cause which independent papers have been championing for years, and which now receives the support of the better class of Government organs. It has been shown that mismanagement and antiquated methods, with tempting opportunities for dishonesty, prevail in several departments of our national administration. Appointment to public office by the road of party service has been demonstrated to be an expensive failure, a result which could easily have been foreseen.

Blame for this system must rest on the electors who were willing to see it continued. It seems to be the fate of nations as of individuals to put in a period of "sowing wild oats" before they settle down to their real life-work. Other lands have shown the indefensibility of the system of appointment to public office on party grounds, and have long ago discarded it. But we would not profit by their experience. We, like they, were bound to buy our wisdom at the price of repeating their mistakes.

To try, then, to make the Ottawa Government responsible for the defects of a system which was a legacy from their predecessors, and which received at least the tacit endorsement of the electorate, is about as dishonest a proceeding, and as obstructive of the cause of genuine reform, as could well be adopted. The Government that has instituted a thorough-going investigation into the present methods of departmental administration deserves credit for its courage. Its attitude shows a praiseworthy desire for a better system, and has been the best help ever given to the cause of Civil Service reform.

If the recent thorough-going overhauling has brought to light cases of personal dishonesty or incompetence, the Ottawa Government is bound to deal with these. But let definite charges against specified individuals be made and proved. Let it at the same time be borne in mind that the recent investigators are not infallible. It has been shown that in their zeal for reform they at times came to conclusions on insufficient grounds, and condemned through misunderstanding. On the whole they have done their work fearlessly and well. If the rabid partizan sheets, and the partizan spouters, who sought to enrich themselves by receiving tips from railway magnates for the promotion of whose schemes they could render useful service, and who from this paragon of honorable dealing deem themselves privileged to hurl insult and innuendo without limit, would give up, for the good of their country, their practice of denouncing individuals for the shortcomings which belong to a system they did not inaugurate, Civil Service Reform would be hastened, and rendered more thorough by such a course on their part. The man, or paper, who seeks to make this great question a cover for party warfare is its worst enemy.

## POLITICAL METHODS IN ENGLAND.

We at times find comparisons made between political conditions in England and Canada, greatly to the disparagement of the latter. That the existence of a large wealthy and leisured class, who have ample time for the cultivation of literary and artistic pursuits, and whose ancestors for several generations have been equally fortunate in finding their paths winding amongst the high and sunny uplands of life does help very much towards the development of higher ideals in a nation is unquestionably true. Such an advantage England has long enjoyed; and on that account it is hardly fair to expect the same lofty and philosophic type of statesmanship, slowly evolved there by a long continuance of favorable conditions, in a young and lusty country that is busily engaged in making a living. Canada's wealthiest citizens have in almost every instance climbed to their present position from humble beginnings by unremitting toil. There is no leisured class amongst us; the heirs of inherited wealth are very few comparatively, and that few have not usually been sufficiently habituated to fortune to use it wisely.

Allowances must be made for differences in conditions, and these allowances being made we need not be afraid of a comparison between our political conditions and those of the Old Land. The revelations made from time to time by British M.P.s. concerning the prevalence of what is known as "nursing constituencies" in other words, the buying of his way into Parliament by a wealthy candi-

date through lavish gifts to religious, social and athletic activities, and the constant demands made on the purse of a member of Parliament in order to maintain his popularity, show that England's vaunted superiority in political life is largely a case of distant fields looking green. Remove our permissive system of partizan appointment to office and we soon need not fear comparison between our Government and that of any country.

## ITALIANS PROTEST AGAINST INSULT TO THEIR NATIONALITY.

Mr. D. Glionna is to be congratulated on his manly protest against the disparaging remarks made recently regarding his fellow-countrymen by a member of the Toronto City Council; and the "Toronto Globe" deserves credit for the prominence it gave to the protest. We have no better or more loyal citizens than many of those who first saw the light in sunny Italy. It is true that some recent arrivals from that classic land, when their hot blood is raised to a higher temperature by fire water, show a fondness for slashing with knives which cannot be too severely dealt with. Thuggery of the "Black Hand" variety has also served to do much mischief to the Italian name. But outside of these blots, for which the vast bulk of Italians have neither sympathy nor responsibility it would be hard to find an element in our civic life more home-loving, purer or more affectionate in their domestic relations, more industrious, less dependent on charity, than those for whom Mr. Glionna speaks. An Italian is very rarely found amongst the hoodlums or loafers of our streets. Wherever hard work has to be done he is in evidence, and he is rarely laid up with swelled head on the morning after a holiday. Neither does that race figure in those murders of the worst kind, hidden under the name of criminal operations. The experience of the medical practitioners who go much amongst the Italians has impressed them with a high regard for their honesty, politeness and domestic affection. Evidently the city alderman whom Mr. Glionna takes to task has very much to learn concerning the nationality of which he spoke disparagingly.

## THE "ENDLESS CHAIN" AGAIN.

The "Endless Chain" is with us again. We have just received a copy of a prayer, which the sender states was sent to Bishop Dawerence (?) recommending it to be written and sent to nine others besides the recipient. The prayer is short and good in itself but the danger arises from the fact that it bears no authorization and the promises connected with it are therefore without weight, while at the same time capable of doing much harm to the credulous who may pin their faith to their authenticity.

The promises are as follows:

1. We who will write this for nine days commencing on the day received, and distribute to nine different persons, sending one each day, will on the ninth day experience some great joy.

2. At Jerusalem during the great feast it was said that he who would write this prayer would be delivered from every calamity.

The request is also made not to break the chain, and the information is added that the letter must not be signed.

The letter throughout shows it to be of the same class as those that flooded the country some time ago, and which drew forth warnings from almost every Catholic paper in the land. The reasons for those warnings easily present themselves to anyone who gives the matter a moment's thought. Those who comply with the request of the letter are as a rule not of those who think. They are doubtless well-intentioned in the majority of cases, but are of those who act because someone asks them to, or because they imagine that anything presenting itself in such form as the "Endless Chain" must be received as authoritative and treated with reverence.

Complying with the demands of the "letter" the class referred to conscientiously and oftentimes laboriously wade through the work prescribed and this done, prepare themselves for the reception of the "great joy" and for immunity from "every calamity." If the conditions fail—if the joy is not experienced and calamity visits them, then does faith, or rather credulity, which is mistakenly regarded as faith, receive a shock, and the results in either case are very similar. In this way distributors of the "Endless Chain" may unconsciously be the means of sowing the seeds of endless mischief.

No book on Theology or doctrine is of value without an imprimatur, in the same way no unsigned document of the kind under discussion should be heeded unless it bears with it the seal of a well-known authority. Better far to break a "chain" than to send it forth on a mission which it has in itself no power to fulfil.

## THE MISSIONARY SLANDERS OF THE CONGO.

Again and again we have been treated to blood-curdling descriptions of the atrocities perpetrated by the satellites of King Leopold of Belgium in the Congo territory. The fact that Leopold is a Catholic and that this territory is controlled by him and administered by his Catholic subjects,

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whilst the terrible pictures of the alleged atrocities perpetrated there came from missionaries of the sects, sufficed to create suspicion in all minds not warped by inveterate prejudice. Non-Catholic missionaries are notorious for the vividness and inventive power of their imaginations. They are also very subject to a mental color blindness in dealing with Catholicity, which makes white to their vision look marvellously like black or grey or some other mottled hue. This peculiarity is so well known that persons of any experience regard the missionary reports of the foreign missionary societies of the sects, as romance spiced with bigotry, seasoned with cant, and dished out on a slender basis of fact. Hence cries from these sources regarding the atrocities of Belgium are regarded by level-headed men, in the same light as the tales of woe of those missionaries who ring door-bells and ask for a little help for a sick wife and a hungry family.

That the average citizen is not far wrong in putting the veracity of the Exeter Hall and similar missionary organizations of the anti-Catholic type on the same level as that of the Weary Willie who appears at the door with a pitiful tale, is shown by an extended criticism, which appeared in the Toronto Globe of April 4th, of a work recently published by a distinguished English explorer. He, in company with several English officers, and a member of the Royal Geographical Society, was sent out by the British Government to explore the region stretching from the mouth of the Niger to the sources of the Nile. In the course of his explorations he spent a considerable time in the Congo Free State—the scene of the alleged atrocities over which the veracious Exeter Hall missionaries and their American confreres shed floods of tears. And the following is the testimony of this accomplished and observant servant of Protestant England, himself thoroughly Protestant and English; concerning the doings of Catholic Belgium in Central Africa: "To sum up the result of my observations on the administration of the Congo Free State, having regard to their knowledge of the country, their control of the natives and the condition of the tribes that come under it, the discipline of their soldiers, the finely-built stations and excellent transport arrangements, it is my opinion that the opening up of the Congo places the Belgians in the front rank of colonizers."

Regarding the "atrocities" question, this writer says: "We had exceptional opportunities for studying the effects of the Belgian rule on the natives. We spent a year in the rubber region, and for the greater part of the time were in out-of-the-way districts, living side by side with the natives; but though we spoke with the chief of every village we came to, we could not hear of a single case of 'atrocities.' I must in all fairness admit that there are some tribes who feel the oppression of being made to work, and the military restraint that keeps them from eating up other tribes. But in the eyes of the interested humanitarian this misfortune should be outweighed by the advantages conferred on the more gentle natives who have peace and prosperity. When it is known that many of the tribes amongst themselves inflict barbarous punishments of mutilation of which I have personally seen several instances, it is easy to see how wrong impressions can be formed. And the fact that many photographs of these things find their way to Europe, labelled, and rightly so, 'Congo atrocities,' shows how dangerous it is to accept this kind of evidence."

Here we have the testimony of an author who has written two of the most fascinating volumes of travel published in years, an explorer who has by his keenness of observation added very considerably to the sum of human knowledge, an agent of the British Government, a non-Catholic, paying the highest tribute to the work of Catholic Belgium in the Congo Territory, pointing out that the only oppression and discontent prevailing amongst some of the natives there arises from the fact that they must work for a living and are not

allowed to eat weaker tribes, as formerly, and declaring that the only "atrocities" in that country are committed by the natives on one another. And he confesses that the observations of his companions, British officers like himself, coincided with his in every particular.

Together with the services men such as Mr. Boyd Alexander, the author from whom we have quoted, render to humanity by increasing the sum of human knowledge, they render a no less valuable service to the cause of truth by exposing the monumental mendacity of the so-called "missionaries" whose stock-in-trade is abuse of everything Catholic, and who, whether from mental obtuseness or downright dishonesty, seem incapable of telling the truth where the Catholic Church is concerned.

## Fanatics in the Northwest

(Rev. George R. Northgraves.)

Our Northwestern Provinces seem to have become the dumping ground for immigrants of a most undesirable character, for though many of the settlers there give promise of being of a desirable class, there are others whose presence constitute a menace to the future welfare of the Dominion; and strange to say, the extraordinary freaks which have disturbed the peace of mind of the whole Canadian people have been perpetrated under the cloak of religion, and have risen out of the uncouth and intolerable beliefs of the fanatical sects which have made their abode in that region.

When the Doukhobors of Russia, in 1899, persecuted in their own country, made application to be admitted into Canada as settlers, they were received with open arms and a heartfelt welcome.

Come in the evening, or come in the morning,  
Come when you're looked for, or come without warning;  
Kisses and welcome you'll find here before you,  
And the oftener you come here, the more I'll adore you.

In fact Canadians looked with pity upon the disconsolate exiles who with sturdy hearts and hands fled from a supposedly undesired terrorism inflicted by a haughty bureaucracy upon an innocent and harmless people. No more cordial welcome was ever extended to an inrush of strangers on their arrival in a new land than was given to the incoming Doukhobors.

But these newcomers were not settled long on Canadian soil before they developed unlooked for and unexpected traits of character or convictions.

We heard from them at first as very successful farmers living healthily, even though economically, upon the produce of the soil. Already, in 1901, and 1902 we heard from them that without any special provision made for them by the Canadian Government the trials and privations of early settlement had passed away, and they had all the comforts of life they desired. There was even then this oddity about many of them that they would not eat meat, but confined themselves to vegetable food, but this they had in abundance, and mills were erected in their midst in which their wheat was turned into flour. One of their number, writing in the name of his fellow settlers from Vossnesse village to the Quaker Canadian Society, said at this time: "Our request is this, that you would not send us anything else because we are not now in need of anything. . . . We are now possessed of the necessities of life, and are capable of earning for our selves our daily bread."

About this time, however, the news of a strange madness which had appeared among these settlers reached us in the east. They began to turn their horses and cattle loose upon the prairies, because they held it to be sinful to eat the flesh of animals, or to have these beasts do any work. They also cast away their rubber boots, stockings, frieze coats, shirts, knives, caps, watches, etc., and commenced a pilgrimage or march toward the south-east "looking for Christ," the burden being thrown upon the Government immigrant agent to gather up the discarded property and sell it for whatever it might bring, for the benefit of the pilgrims when they should return. As all this occurred in November, just as the cold weather was setting in, the fanatics endured great suffering, and even the bodies of their infant children who died from exposure or natural causes, were thrown, half or entirely naked, into the bush by the wayside. It is stated that 20,000 sheep which had been given these people by Quakers in the East for their support, were among the animals sent adrift on the prairies on this occasion.

Over eleven hundred pilgrims started on this wild tramp, many of them being naked or nearly so, and every year since the quantity of the people of the West has been disturbed by similar escapades, though this first mad tramp was carried out by a large number of fanatics that started on any subsequent occasion. Nevertheless, so lately as two or three weeks ago, we have had a similar demonstration to that we have briefly described above, but on a smaller scale. This time the pilgrims, men and women, set forth quite denuded of clothing, singing dolorous hymns while on their route. On their arrival at Fort William nineteen were sent to prison, and condemned to penal terms, while fifty-nine others are yet to be tried, but room cannot be found for them even in the prisons of Ontario, so that, as a compromise, it is expected that they will be forcibly brought back to their homes, after a pardon shall have been given those who have been condemned on a charge of indecent conduct.

But incongruous and indecent as the conduct of the Doukhobors has been, we have a new manifestation of fanaticism from another quarter, namely, the neighborhood of Medicine Hat, Alberta, which for atrocity far outstrips the vagaries of the Doukhobors.

Nine persons of a new sect called "the Dreamers," living in this locality, are at the present moment undergoing an investigation on a charge of conspiring to burn the premises of John Lehr, which was so successful that the house was destroyed and the family narrowly escaped with their lives.

In the course of the investigation, the facts were attested on evidence which appears to be indubitable that Jacob Merkel under the specific name of "the Sun," claims to be God, while

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David Huffman, the assistant leader of the Society, is called "the Moon." These and other members of the sect are also called by other names taken from the Scripture, among which are God, the Virgin, Mary Magdalene, the angels Michael and Gabriel, Peter, Paul and other Apostles or disciples of our Lord.

It has been testified that the lives of John Lehr, Michael Gill, Jacob Dois and others were threatened, even by letters which were written by Jacob Merkel, whom the Dreamers call their God. According to the witnesses the dreams of members of the Society were interpreted at the Saturday meetings, and it was there also decided on the authority of these dreams, to kill persons who refused to accept the "Dreamers' creed."

Mormonism has also taken a strong hold of the soil in our Northwest, and notwithstanding denials of the fact which have been given out in some quarters, it appears to be indubitable that its followers surreptitiously practice their peculiar line of polygamous cohabitation, an evil which ought not to be tolerated in Canada.

The present age is peculiarly open to attacks from fanaticisms of various kinds; for we have such hallucinations as Eddyism, Dowiesm, Theosophy and similar fads springing up all over this continent. The only effectual bulwark against these issues is a Church which has authority from God to condemn these superstitions decisively, and this authority is found only in the Catholic Church against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. Legislation cannot be invoked to this end except in such instances as spring from a disregard of the rights and comforts of the community in general, as in the case of Doukhobors, Dreamers, Mormons and the like.

The Galicians, Mennonites, Poles and settlers of other nationalities are not to be put into the same category with the fanatics we have named above.