

The CATHOLIC CHRONICLE...

DEVOTED TO... FOREIGN NEWS

ROME

ITALY AND DIVORCE.

Rome, Dec. 10.—All Italy is in a state of excitement regarding the introduction into Parliament of the Bill legalizing divorce. This is the outcome of the Radical Government, of which the President of the Council, or Premier, is Signor Giuseppe Zanardelli. The new Bill has a mild title, evidently intended to conceal its real scope, and it masquerades as a project apparently harmless: "Dispositions for the ordering of the family." The Bill includes divorce, and that which is known in France, as "the search for a father."

Since 1833, nearly twenty years ago, Zanardelli has been seeking to have a law of divorce established in Italy, and has not yet succeeded. He introduced the subject into the late address from the Throne, which the young King delivered at the opening of the Parliamentary session. Indeed, gossip has attributed to the King a desire for a law of divorce in order that Italy should attain a height of advanced civilization equal to that of other countries, such as France, England and America, where divorce prevails. Italy might be contented with the primacy she already enjoys, namely, that of blood-shedding.

The Catholics of the country, feeling the greatest abhorrence to this "law of divorce," as it has been called, in a monster petition against the project. No less than a half million of signatures are attached to this protest, the most imposing exhibition of the popular will that Italy has known for many years. The register of the names occupied no less than 177 volumes. This nation, under its new Government, pretends to accept the "will of the people" as the base of its power; it is to be seen how the Government will treat this expression of the popular will.

This is how the promoters of liberty of speech and freedom of thought received the expression of the will of three millions and a half of the thirty millions of the population of Italy. "The reading of the petition," says the bitterly anti-clerical journal, L'Italia, "created a frightful uproar. The whole Chamber rose, shouted, commented, making a terrible noise! That is a sweet comment on the freedom of opinion! "All the deputies," continues L'Italia, "are in the greatest agitation. At the Extreme Left, especially, no one stays in his place. When Signor Stelluti-Scala says that the petition is signed by three millions of Italians, incredulous laughter bursts from the members of the Left. Someone in the midst of the laughter and the row asks: 'Are these signatures authentic?' On the opposite side of the chamber voices respond: 'Evidently.' 'There is no doubt of it.' 'You would be happy if it were not the case.'"

In the midst of the deafening shouts Signor Socci, standing up on the Extreme Left, shouted: "That means to say, gentlemen, that there are at least three millions of imbeciles in Italy."

"Pure idiots! And cowards," were the additions and explanations of other members of the Republican Party surrounding Signor Socci.

The whole scene reminds me of what the late John Ruskin describes as the modern "rhetoric" you may nowadays hear in the streets of Florence, where "you never hear a word uttered but in a rage, either just ready to burst, or for the most part, explosive in intently; everybody—man, woman, or child—roaring out their contentions, foolishly and contemptibly opinions and wills on every smallest occasion, with flashing eyes, hoarsely shrieking and wasted voices—insane hope to drag by vociferation whatever they would have, out of man and God."

ENGLAND

THE EDUCATION BILL.

A signal and decisive Parliamentary coup was achieved by the Irish Party on the "Repairs" Amendment. It is admitted on all sides that the brilliant success with which the Party was brought into action at the one crucial moment that had arisen over the Bill exemplifies not only the remarkable ability with which it is led, but the point of perfection it has attained as a Parliamentary organization. No other Party in the House could give such a display of unity, and even the Opposition, who profess to be so deeply concerned at the operation of this Bill, were unable on Tuesday night to whip up little more than one-half of its number. The Liberals are, of course, exceedingly sure that this amendment would have been defeated but for the Irish vote. Almost as sure are the Tories that the Irish vote should have proved so undeniably to be the deciding factor at this critical juncture. But, needless to say, the Irish Party are entirely

unaffected by the disgruntlement of either Liberal or Tory. An occasion presented itself to the Party to strike a blow for the Catholic schools, and, true to their original intention of availing themselves of such an opportunity, they struck it, and struck home.

There was one point about the final division which should not be lost sight of, as showing in the clearest and most conclusive way the wisdom of the tactics adopted by the Irish Party in regard to this Bill. Of the fifty odd members who voted against the "Repairs" Amendment, more than half were Orangemen, who so voted simply because they hoped to nullify the effect of the large muster of the Irish Party. Their vote was not anti-clerical, because all, or nearly all of them, are strong supporters of the Anglican Church, but it was anti-Irish. Now there can be no doubt whatever that if the Irish Party had been of late in continuance attendance at Westminster supporting the Bill this anti-Irish spirit would have manifested itself earlier, the Government would have been weakened, and they would never have had the courage even to leave such an amendment as that of the Bishop of Manchester to the House.

IRELAND

DEATH OF MOST REV. DR. WOODLOCK.

The Most Rev. Dr. Woodlock, who retired from the See of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise in 1895, died at All Hallows' College, Dublin, last week.

The news of his death was received with feelings of profound grief, not only in his former diocese, but throughout Catholic Ireland. The Most Rev. Dr. Woodlock was an eminent member of the Irish Hierarchy in the two closing decades of the last century, and throughout his whole ecclesiastical career displayed those brilliant gifts which gave him so great a power in his holy labors. He was born in the City of Dublin, on March 30th, 1819, and at an early age gave indications of the vocation to which he was destined to be called. Up to the age of sixteen he was educated at Clongowes, and in the succeeding year left for Rome to commence his ecclesiastical studies. His career as a student in the College, which was then known as the Apollinari, was exceptionally good, and after a five years' course he was raised to the dignity of the priesthood, and at the same time received the degree of Doctor of Divinity. Although his studies were completed in Rome, he was to return to his native diocese, where for some time he was engaged in the mission. His residence in Rome marked the beginning of a movement which was destined to remain for ever associated with his name. In 1842 Father Hand, the saintly founder of All Hallows', sought help and encouragement in his great project in the Eternal City. He was fortunate enough to enlist the sympathy and the active co-operation of the Rev. Father Woodlock, who at that early period, gave abundant proofs of those gifts with which he was so richly endowed. Dr. Woodlock, after some months on the Mission in Dublin, joined Father Hand in the opening of the College, and in 1842 then entered into possession of the mansion house, which formed the beginning of the vast pile of buildings which are now erected on the College site. The history of the early struggles, the energy with which difficulties were encountered and disappointments received would in itself constitute a glorious record. With that great strength of will, and withal gentleness of character and affability and kindness to all, Dr. Woodlock threw himself into the work of building up the great college. In the midst of his giant labors he sustained a great personal loss in the death of Father Hand.

At a time when Dr. Woodlock was engaged in the arduous duties of the position of Vice-President of All Hallows he introduced into Ireland a society, which during the years which have intervened, has done incalculable good throughout the country. In 1884 he started the first conference of the charitable Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and was the first President. To-day the Society numbers thousands of members, and wherever suffering and distress is to be found, so too, are those who have enrolled themselves in this grand organization. The death of their founder is a source of great regret to the many branches, and on this occasion through representatives they will pay a tribute of respect to the deceased.

FRANCE

With reference to the campaign against the Oblate Missionaries, the Sollet states that if the Fathers are compelled to leave the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, four thousand Catholics of Montmartre, aided by six thousand destitute persons who are fed daily at the great church, will turn out and resist the Janissaries of M. Combes, just as the people of Brittany did. Combes has meanwhile

prepared for the Senate his Bills for the authorization, or partial authorization, of the "White Fathers" of Algeria, the priests of the African missions, and the Brothers of St. John of God. He will subsequently draw up the Bills for the partial authorization of the Trappist Cistercians and the Cistercians of the Immaculate Conception. The Bill relative to the "Bene Fratelli" is an entertaining composition. It shows, one hand, the ex-ecclesiastical politician's abject fear of the bad Semites and Freethinkers, who want to sweep away all religion; and, on the other hand, we have his unwilling admission that the Brothers of St. John of God are absolutely indispensable to France. At the same time, just to propitiate the wirepullers of whom he is the puppet—namely, the aforesaid bad Jews and Freethinkers—he proposes to close the night refuge organized by the Brothers at Marseilles. The Journal des Debats appropriately points out the imbecile absurdity of this part of the Bill, which is characteristic of the framer of the whole document.

APOSTLESHIP OF THE LAITY

General Intention for January Named and Blessed by His Holiness Pope Leo XIII.

Every Christian should be an apostle, because every Christian should love our Lord Jesus Christ, and should wish to see Him loved by all men. This wish constitutes an apostle in desire; and with an effort to realize the wish we have an apostle in deed and reality.

It would be a serious mistake to suppose that this apostleship is confined, by right, to the ranks of the clergy. It would be about as true to think that patriotism is to be found only amongst those whose profession it is to be soldiers. On the contrary, true patriots, those who have done a great deal for the happiness and welfare of their fellow-citizens, were not unfrequently plain every-day civilians. So in the history of the Church, do we find the names of illustrious laymen who have founded great institutions and done great deeds for the glory of God and His Church.

An apostle then is to be judged much more by what he does than by what he is. If he does the work of an apostle, no matter what his rank or calling may be in the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, he is a true Messenger sent by God to carry on His work. On the other hand, no matter what his dignity or sacred character, if he does not do the work of an apostle, he is not entitled to that name, nor will it avail him aught when he appears before the great Judgment Seat.

We may consider two kinds or species of apostleship and to each of them we shall devote a short consideration. THE APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER.—This is or ought to be a familiar apostleship to all our associates. Unfortunately, it may at first sight appear that but little can be done in this kind.

This is an error we should not allow to take possession of our minds; for in the work of saving souls and extending the reign of Christ, prayer is the first and great apostleship; and without it, any other would be but the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal. Man is to be saved by grace, and grace is to be had, as a rule, by prayer and by prayer only. With this principle, which is fundamental in the spiritual life, we may safely assert that the apostleship of prayer is of all apostleships the most important, and consequently the one in whose ranks we should be most eager to be enrolled. Let then our associates rest assured that they are carrying on, in the most effectual manner, the work that Christ left His Apostles to perform, when they pray daily, and daily offer up all their works and sufferings, for the Intentions of the League. These Intentions are always most actual and bear the special seal of God's blessing in the solemn approbation of the Sovereign Pontiff.

Apostles of Prayer are those we need most to-day, as they were always most needed in the history of the Church. It is the holy recluses and the cloistered virgins, as well as those untold legions of pious but unassuming souls whose voices were never raised except in prayer and whose deeds were known only to God, and yet who by their prayerful appeals to the Throne of Mercy, have done more for the conversion of the world, than the most eloquent preachers and most active missionaries. God's grace, after all, is the only indispensable lever to raise men's hearts to those higher planes of the supernatural life. It alone can accomplish that great work; and without it, all else is vain.

This doctrine of the paramount importance of prayer, lies at the bottom of the whole apostolic life. It was taught us by Christ Himself, who spent the greater part of His life in this holy exercise, and who even when He had begun His more active work, had His hours by day and by night to draw down the grace of God on what He did. So the Apostles, the saints, the missionaries who ever did anything lasting and supernatural. They were all men of prayer; and had ever on their side holy men and women, who prayed while they themselves preached, and who thus drew down from Heaven that celestial dew which was to refresh and invigorate

the seed they had planted. No one can deny that the holy men who instituted the League and the Apostleship of Prayer were noted not merely for their learning and prudence, but for their deep insight into spiritual things. For the greater number of the first Associates, prayer, in word and deed, was the only weapon they could wield in the spiritual combat. But they soon learned to value this weapon even more than they had done; and if such great and consoling success has crowned their efforts, the success is due to the excellence of the choice they made. Almightly God has wished to confirm what He Himself had told us, that without Him, we could do nothing, in the higher life of grace and salvation and with Him everything. If then we would be apostles, let us be so by prayer. It is the easiest as well as the most powerful apostleship.

APOSTLESHIP IN ACTION.—If the time ever did exist when the Church could dispense with the active assistance and co-operation of the laity, that time has gone by never, apparently, to return. Laymen all over the world recognize this need of our times, and the Federation of the Catholic Societies scattered over the United States, is a proof not only of the intelligent Catholicity of its organizers, but of the strength that Catholics can wield, if only they take up a position and show that they are neither ashamed of their faith, nor afraid of its enemies.

Two principles must be at the bottom of this apostleship of action. Lay-Catholics must be convinced that their faith and its holy practices are dearer than anything that this world can give, dearer and more precious far than success in business, than the ties of social life or than the highest places and loftiest ambitions of the political world. If a Catholic has no this esteem for his religion, it is almost useless to talk to him of defending his faith.

In countries where these principles have grown hazy and uncertain and where Catholics also have failed to recognize the importance of united action, we have witnessed of late years too many proofs of what harm can be done to religion in so-called Christian countries, by a mere handful of irreligious but determined men. They were only a few, but they made up for number by energetic action. They hated our faith more than our co-religionists loved it, and the result is that a comparatively small number of infidels have gone far to shake the very foundations of Christianity in countries over which the bright light of faith had shone during long centuries.

In France to-day the majority of the population is Catholic, and at the same time the government elective. If then the people of France had realized their obligations, and had felt that religious interest should make them forget self and old-standing prejudices, and cause them to unite in protecting what was of supreme importance, their faith, it is not possible to understand how a Catholic people could be represented by a government so decidedly anti-Christian. It is well to explain the problem by alleging corruption on the part of the victorious candidates, or by the influence of a government in power, or by fear of losing positions or caste. The solution, it would seem, only serves to darken the picture. At that rate, we might despair of the once Most-Catholic France; since in presence of the greatest danger to which her religion was ever exposed and in spite of the prayers of the Apostleship over the whole world and the solemn warnings of the Vicar of Christ, many of her sons have allowed themselves to be influenced, by secondary motives, to abet the Church's sworn enemies or, at least, to contribute, by inaction, to their triumph.

We need no more striking proof of how important is the action of laity in securing for the Church the liberty and support she needs to carry on her work. Could there be a stronger argument for apostolic action on the part of her lay-children? The laity they can be apostles, and, as we have just seen are, in many instances, bound to be so.

We cannot go over the whole field of this lay apostleship in action, nor need we do so. It includes every work, every activity that may in any way further the interest of religion or protect them when attacked. A patriot need not have pointed out to him how he can show his love for his country, nor does the soldier need any other incentive than the presence of the enemy to take up arms in her defence. Neither should a Catholic layman require to be told how and when and where he can prove his love and loyalty to the Church. Let his principles be sound and his love ardent. Every such Catholic layman will be an Apostle in action.

DAILY PRAYER DURING THIS MONTH.

Divine Heart of Jesus, I offer Thee, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the prayers, good works and sufferings of this day, in reparation for our sins, for all requests presented through the Apostleship of Prayer, and according to all the intentions for which Thou sacrificest Thyself continually at our altar; I offer them in particular that the spirit of true apostleship may be aroused in the hearts of Christian laymen.

DAILY RESOLUTION.—Each day I shall note down in a book what I have done to propagate the faith.—Canadian Messenger.

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This work is of great value and interest at the present time when a correct knowledge of the Islands is absolutely necessary, and it will contain much of interest to students of Geography, Ethnology, Linguistics, Comparative Religion, Ecclesiastical History, Administration, etc. The economic and commercial aspects will be given due attention and it is the intention of the editors to make the work such that it will be highly welcome to librarians who are already seriously embarrassed in trying to meet the demand in both reference and public libraries for information relative to our Malaysian possessions—a demand which is increasing rapidly and must continue to increase.

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