



## CELIBACY OF PRIESTHOOD.

### IMMEMORIAL CUSTOM OF THE CHURCH SINCE THE TIME OF THE APOSTLES.—NOT A PART OF THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE.

[Most Rev. Monseigneur Sebastian Martelli, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, in Harper's Bazaar.]

Some weeks ago the Christian world was startled by the announcement that the reigning pontiff, Pope Leo XIII., had dispensed the Catholic priests throughout South America from the law of celibacy, and that he would follow this decree at the proper time by permitting all priests throughout the world to marry. A long cherished project of our Holy Father—the reunion of the Christian Churches—was used to give this statement a semblance of truth. In the entire Christian world only the Catholic Church requires the celibate life of the clergy, so fervently advocated by Christ and those to whom he delegated the power of teaching His Word. There were those who feigned belief that, so anxious is Pope Leo to regraft all the sects upon the parent stem, he would be willing to surrender one of the cherished traditions of Church discipline.

### AN IMMEMORIAL CUSTOM DATING BACK TO THE TIME OF THE APOSTLES.

Celibacy has been an immemorial custom of the priests and bishops of the Catholic Church, dating back to the time of the Apostles. Taking the words of our Divine Lord, "There are eunuchs that have made themselves eunuchs for kingdom of heaven's sake. He that can receive it let him receive it," the Church has enforced celibacy on her ministers. There has never been a time when she did not command in unmistakable terms that those who desired to become shepherds of the flock should deny the flesh and give themselves up to the higher life of self-abnegation and sacrifice. There have been times when, owing to the hardness of heart and the perversity of human nature, she has been obliged to tolerate the marriage of portions of her priesthood in certain countries and under certain conditions; but she has always done this unwillingly, and for the sole reason that it would prevent greater evils. The life of chastity led by the great Teacher of Mankind was the life which the Church ordained from the beginning as a suitable one for her pastors. The earliest successors of St. Peter recommended the example of John the Beloved Disciple, who so closely resembled his Master. Of the twelve whom Christ called, only Peter was a married man. Tradition tells us that, notwithstanding, St. Peter followed the higher life. There have been but few pontiffs who have not legislated upon this subject. The most recent and important utterance was made by Pius IX. at the time of the Vatican Council, when he stated in unmistakable terms that the celibate rule had always been commanded by the Holy Roman Church from the beginning. The early Church fathers record many instances of su-

preme law on the subject, and testify that it was universally commanded and taught, if not always universally obeyed.

### THE CUSTOM FORMALLY EMBODIED IN THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH BY THE GREAT HILDEBRAND.

The great monk Hildebrand, who reigned from A. D. 1073 to 1085, under the title of Gregory VII., has the honor of determining this important issue, and formally embodying it in the discipline of the Church. In decreeing the celibacy of the clergy he established no innovation. He merely applied the logic of Christian philosophy to remedy the evils, both spiritual and temporal, which were creeping into the Church. Catholic theologians hold that the spiritual life of the clergy is the strong rock which buttresses the edifice St. Peter, as the vicar of Christ, imperishably founded on God's own covenant. When the priests become corrupt and forget their high calling, radical methods must be employed, for if the shepherds go astray, what dangers must threaten the flock!

### THE CHARACTER OF THE GREAT HILDEBRAND'S WORK.

It was this condition which faced that giant of piety and strength, Hildebrand, when he ascended the papal throne. Tradition says that, like the great Redeemer of Mankind, his father was a carpenter and that he spent his early years following that lowly vocation. Yet this was the man who brought the haughty Emperor of Germany, Henry IV., to Canossa to do penance publicly for his sins. To remedy the lax lives of the priests he made the major Holy Orders an impediment to the sacrament of matrimony. In this way he prevented concubinage among the priesthood, because, whether lawfully or unlawfully living in the marriage state, they were deprived of the rights and privileges of clerics.

After this decree of Gregory VII. the celibacy of the Western priesthood became universally recognized and respected, and the evils countenanced and encouraged by temporal princes were arrested and destroyed.

### CELIBACY NOT A PART OF CATHOLIC DOCTRINE.

Non-Catholics, as a rule, believe that celibacy is part of the doctrine of the Catholic Church. This error will be readily perceived by a knowledge of Gregory's action and the papal legislation which has followed it. It is entirely disciplinary in its character, and in no sense is an article of faith. It is often believed, too, that all Catholic priests make a vow of celibacy, which is also incorrect. The Catholic Church holds, as decreed by Gregory VII. and the pontiffs who have followed him, that the major Holy Orders are a ban to matrimony. This papal mandate renders the marriage of a priest, deacon or subdeacon, duly ordained, not only unlawful, but null and void, according to the Church, and in Catholic countries null and void according to the law of the land. The marriage of a priest, deacon or subdeacon is regarded precisely in the same light as the marriage of a divorced person whose husband or wife is living. In the sight of the Church it is concubinage, and not matrimony. Those who receive the major Holy Orders place it

beyond their power to contract matrimony, but, as explained before, no vow of celibacy is taken. This class of priesthood is known as secular—those who are directly under the control of bishops, and not in the monastic orders or minor religious communities.

### STATUS OF CELIBACY IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

The monastic orders take solemn vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Many of the religious take the vow of chastity and obedience to their superiors, but do not include the vow of voluntary poverty. These are deliberate promises to God, and as such there is no power in the Church to dispense them. They are as binding on the minor degrees of the sacerdotal life as on the ordained priests or the consecrated bishop. In many religious communities there is a class known as the lay brothers, who are not destined for the priesthood, but who live under the same rules and make the same vows. The breaking of these vows is as grievous a sin for the lay brother, who is not a priest and will never be a priest, as it is for the man who has received the sacerdotal orders. No better explanation can be given of the status of celibacy in the Roman Catholic Church. This holds true, also, as regards the vows of chastity taken by women in religious orders.

### THE GREEK CHURCH AND CELIBACY.

A small branch of the Church which acknowledges the primacy of St. Peter and his successors differs in regard to the law of celibacy. This divergence has existed from the first ages of the Church. At the Council of Nicea, 314 to 325 A. D., some of the bishops resisted the attempt to impose a life of celibacy on the clergy. History says they yielded a point, however, to their western brethren and consented to the regulation that no man could marry after ordination. It was permissible for a deacon to marry. About the fifth century this concession was withdrawn and only a subdeacon was allowed to contract matrimony. The eastern rite permits the marriage of subdeacons. It is a custom in the seminaries under this control to permit candidates for Holy Orders to leave the seminary before they have taken deacon's orders and to contract marriage. This permission is not always availed of; indeed, the proportion is becoming less and less every year. The marriage must be contracted with a virgin. To marry a widow would be a bar to ordination. Nor can a second marriage be contracted. This practice, while permitted, is not encouraged, and the bishops are never selected from among the married clergy. These priests are restricted in their marital intercourse, are permitted to say Mass only under certain conditions, and are expected to practice some trade or lucrative occupation aside from their pastoral duties, in order to support their families.

### THE POWER OF THE POPE IN THIS IMPORTANT MATTER.

Since the rumor concerning the permission extended to the South American priests to break the law of celibacy, it has frequently been said that the Pope has no power to rescind this established order—that it would require a council of the Church. This is another error, growing

out of the misconception of the discipline which prevails. Leo XIII. has the same power to withdraw this order that Gregory VII. had to issue it. Nothing, however, is more unlikely. The South American priests do not desire and never petitioned for such a dispensation. Through the prelates which direct them they sent their wishes to Rome last spring. A council was held in the Vatican, and there it was decided to take measures to reinforce all the disciplinary regulations which have made the Roman Catholic priesthood such a power for good. It is safe to predict that should Leo XIII. issue a radical order, not one in ten thousand of the Catholic priesthood would take advantage of this permission.

### THE PRINCIPLES WHICH INDUCED THE CHURCH TO EXHORT HER PRIESTHOOD TO PRACTICE CELIBACY.

In the early Christian times the principles which induced the Church to exhort her priesthood to practice celibacy were: First, that they might serve God with undivided hearts and liberty of action; second, that being called to the altar, they should lead a higher life—that of sacrifice, which is holier than that of marriage. Taking Holy Orders has never in any age of the Church been compulsory. Those who were permitted to undertake the ministry of God knew through a long novitiate that they must deny the flesh in order to be worthy teachers. In the apostolic times, as in our own times, those who entered the ranks as a shepherd did so with open eyes and comprehending all necessary sacrifices. The priesthood of to-day is as willing as the men who heard the words of the Apostle of the Gentiles when he praised in the highest terms the greatness of the virtue of continence. The modern priest, just as the ancient, follows in the footsteps of John the Beloved Disciple. He devotes himself to a nobler cause than the amassing of worldly goods that his family may live in comfort. His bride is the Church, the kindly mother of the poor, who are his family. A man who takes such obligations knowingly and with comprehension of their beauty and grandeur will not lightly renounce them.

Celibacy is the brightest jewel in the crown of virtue which should adorn the priestly brow.

### 20 Miles to Procure Medicine.

W. H. COMSTOCK, Brookville, Winfield, Ont.  
DEAR SIR.—Am selling your "Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills" in this locality. I have customers who come 20 miles for the sake of getting Morse's Pills. This speaks for itself as to their value. I use them in our family with "the most satisfactory results." My wife has been cured of "sick headache" by their use. We could not do without them.  
Yours, etc.,  
A. KRAMPFER.

Mr. Nicholas Bawlf's many friends will be delighted to hear that the operation, which he underwent last Thursday morning and which his long previous weakness rendered a very anxious one, has been so successful as to set him well on the way to a speedy recovery.

Caution.—Beware of substitutes for Pain-Killer. There is nothing "just as good." Unequalled for cuts, sprains and bruises. Internally for all bowel disorders. Avoid substitutes, there is but one Pain-Killer, Perry Davis'. 25c. and 50c.

## RECEPTION AT ST. MARY'S ACADEMY.

Last Tuesday evening at 7.30 there was hardly room for an extra chair in the prettily decorated hall of St. Mary's Academy when the entertainment began in honor of His Grace's anniversary. His Lordship Bishop Pascal sat on the Bishop's left, the remaining front seats being occupied by the clergy. A large number of parents and relatives of the pupils filled the hall. The piano overture was L'Echo de Naples, played by 15 young ladies. Miss B. McDougall sang the solo for the chorus, "Les Vendangeurs," accompanied by four pupils. The chief interest of the evening centred in a five-act drama, "The Shepherdess of Lourdes," the story of the cure of a blind girl and the consequent conversion of her sour-tempered and unbelieving mother and of the scoffing wife of the Prefect of the Department. The drama itself is well arranged full of life, pathos and humor, founded upon the very real story of Bernadette. The events take place in the north of Spain within a hundred miles of Lourdes, and at the grotto in the spring of 1858, while the marvellous apparitions were still occurring. The performers were: Miss Winnie Green, who was admirably done up in the simple peasant girl costume of Bernadette and had all the simplicity and modesty of the real heroine, Miss Gladys Georgeson, who, as Gertrude, the wife of the Castle keeper, made a charming elderly mother; Miss Beatrice Champion, the selfish Princess of Valencia, ill-treating her blind daughter and at the end thoroughly converted by her daughter's cure; Miss Olive O'Brien, who as Rosabella, the blind daughter of the Princess, excited the sympathy and interest of the audience by the way in which she kept her fine large eyes closed till they were opened by miracle; Lucilla, her younger sister (Miss M. Bernhardt), who accompanied her in their furtive journey to Lourdes in disguise; the Gipsy Girl, Miss M. Wilcox, whose gay pirouetting threw a dash of color and frolic over the scene; Madame Massy, the Prefect's wife (Miss A. Kavanagh), whose lofty sneers and ultimate repentance were thoroughly French; Madame Dozans, the Physician's wife (Miss I. Barrett), and Melle. Vergez, Mme. Massy's niece (Miss A. Connell), who both stood up bravely for Bernadette and ably parried each of Mme. Massy's thrusts; the Misses McCanna and F. Marrin, who, as Gertrude's daughters, lovingly teased their fond mamma; Miss M. Head, "Laurinda," the self-respecting governess, who is not going to be hrow-beaten by the haughty princess; Misses L. Arnold and L. O'Brien, ladies in attendance on the princess; Miss K. McKee, as "Isabella"; Miss A. Fawcett, as Bernadette's mother, who treats her daughter as a visionary; Miss C. Guertin who personated the Guardian Angel; Miss M. Hastings, who appeared in the grotto as Notre Dame de Lourdes; and the Misses M. Crown, L. Head, A. Courtney, M. O'Brien, H. Perkins, J. McIntyre, M. Lewis and A. Law, who looked very quaint in the