

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE.

In its issue of the 17th April, 1892, the Mail makes another of its bigotted and unchristian attacks upon the Catholic Church. This time the frantic organ assails one of the seven sacraments—the sacred institution of marriage; and in so doing it brings itself to the level of Lemmi and the Italian Masonic infidels, who seek to reduce that divinely established source of grace to the category of civil contracts. It flies in the face of all Christian principle and seeks to subject the spiritual to the temporal, the divine to the human, the law of God to the law of man—in fact, God Himself to His own creature. Such an editorial would not be out of place in a purely infidel organ; but in a newspaper that pretends to some Christianity it betrays the lack of all religious principle in the writer and in the journal that gives such fanatical and illogical conceptions to the world.

The Mail takes occasion of Judge Loranger's decision in the Pichette-Desjardins case, to make a vicious and unprincipled attack upon the Catholic Church in general, and the sacrament of marriage in particular. Our readers are familiar with the details of the case. We will recapitulate in the words of the Mail itself, in order that the ground work of the flimsy structure of its false argument may be the better known and understood.

"Pichette was married five years ago, and is the father of six children. At confession recently his wife declared to Father Desjardins that she was a fourth cousin to her husband. The zealous priest, recognizing that the marriage came within the prohibited degrees as fixed by the Church, at once set about to enquire whether a dispensation had been secured prior to the performance of the marriage ceremony. His examination proved to him that there had been no dispensation, whereupon he went to Pichette's house and announced that the heads of the family were living in sin, that the wife was an infamous woman, and that the children were illegitimate. There was but one way to set matters right, and that was for the offenders to acknowledge their wickedness, to solicit special permission to marry, and to submit to another wedding."

After stating that the priest ordered the parties to separate until such time as the error would be rectified, the Mail continues:

"The plea of the priest was that he was simply acting in the performance of his duty as a clergyman of the Roman Catholic Church. Judge Loranger has decided that Father Desjardins certainly used strong language, but that otherwise he was well within his rights, and that Pichette was at fault in not admitting his alleged sin and asking for a dispensation and a new marriage."

It seems to us that the worst side of the case has thus been presented. If any fault were attached to the priest's conduct, it was only that of having used some unnecessarily harsh language, which is very natural in a man who strives to impress upon the unwilling an idea of the enormity of the danger and sin. And even if such were the case, the Church is in no way responsible for the hurried utterances of any particular individual. The judgment, while referring to this fact, emphatically maintains the right of the priest in so far as his action was concerned. On this point the judgment and the whole case present nothing new for the well-informed Catholic. The married couple had been united in wedlock while being inside the prohibited degrees of kindred. While in ignorance of the absolute necessity of a dispensation, they were thereby protected from all the consequences of concubinage; but the moment they became aware that their marriage was not sacramental, were they to continue together

they would be living in mortal sin. It is, therefore, reasonable that they should remain apart until the error was rectified: just as necessary as that a young couple who are engaged should live apart until the marriage is solemnized. This is not the special point upon which we desire to speak. We wish to show the false reasoning and wicked spirit of the Mail as evidenced in its criticism of this judgment.

Thus speaks our Toronto anti-Catholic organ:

"In this case the ecclesiastical powers have asserted the superiority of the canon law to the civil law. They maintain the right to separate people who, according to the law of the land, are blameless, and to pronounce illegitimate children, the marriage of whose parents, so far as the State is concerned, has been duly licensed and is perfectly lawful."

We will immediately quote the other important passages in that illogical article, and then proceed to show how the Mail distorts facts and plays ignorance (or really is ignorant) of the true state of the case.

"The priest may not use strong and exaggerated expressions, but he is quite at liberty to pronounce invalid in certain cases the ceremony performed by himself, to destroy the reputation of both husband and wife, and to direct the wife to leave her family and her home. No other association has such powers as those claimed and conceded to the Church in Quebec."

The threats and predictions in the concluding sentences of the article go for nothing; they are unworthy of notice—mere "bluster, brag and bullying," as was said of the Mail's friends in Ulster. We take the foregoing quotations; they furnish text enough for more than we have space to say upon the subject.

In the first place, the canon law does assert, and rightly so, its superiority over the civil law in matters of a purely ecclesiastical nature. Point us out the denomination of Christianity that will openly assert that man has a right to dictate laws to God. Not one would dare to so openly blaspheme—not even the sect to which the editor of the Mail belongs. Yet, in practice do they not all do so? The ecclesiastical powers do maintain the right to separate those whom the law of the land has, in contravention of the divine law, joined together. The State grants a license to people to live in mortal sin: and the Church of Christ has no right to say "Thou shalt not commit adultery" or any evil akin thereto. What kind of logic is that for a Christian to use? "The priest," says the Mail, "is quite at liberty to pronounce invalid in certain cases the ceremonies performed by himself." That is false. The priest does no such a thing; the canon law pronounces the invalidity, and the Ordinary of the diocese, ever under the direction of Rome, decides upon the case. As well say that a lawyer who gives an advice to a client, pronounces invalid a contract that has been submitted to him for opinion. It is the law that makes it invalid—if it be so—and the judge that pronounces it to be null and void. The lawyer, like the priest, only states what the law is on the question.

But the grand point sought to be made is against the Sacrament of Marriage. "What God has joined let no man put asunder." In this case God did not join them—it was the civil law of man,—God could not have approved of the union, since it became a source of sin, and of a sin that most outrages the purity of the soul made to the image of God. What man had separated—as far as the law of God is concerned—the Almighty, through His minister, sought

to unite in the sacred bond of true sacramental marriage.

Were the views of the Mail to be realized the result would be disastrous to society. The law that Christ gave to His Church would be made subservient to the law made by man; the infallible power of the Church would be governed by the fallible authority of God's erring creatures. Worse still: the mission given by the Divine Founder of religion would be usurped by the officers of a civil power. The bond that the Church ties no man is allowed to sever; but the knot that the civic tribunal forms is subject to be cut by that same institution at any moment. The marriage vow would become a mere human promise and the union of man and wife would lose all the sacredness that religion has attached to it. In the Catholic Church there is no security so solemn and perfect as the marriage contract: "it is the gift of heaven, the charm of earth, the joy of the present, the promise of the future, the innocence of enjoyment, the sanctity of passion and the sacrament of love." The curtain that falls over the holy state of wedlock has for its purity the whiteness of the mountain snow and for its protection the texture of the mountain adamant. The Mail, with its lax Christianity and false morality, would fain invade that abode, tear the divinity from its shrine, and strew misery and desecration on all sides. Wipe out the authority of the Church in the matter of sacramental wedlock, by subjecting the canon to the civil law, and you at once shatter the greatest bulwark of national morality, the sole defence of womanhood, and the only safeguard of true manhood. But Christian morality will live when the Mail is in oblivion.

IRISH NEWS.

Not only by its editorials, but also by its selections, its despatches and its correspondence, are the principles and views of a newspaper known. Very often we find an organ disclaiming all participation in certain prejudices, either religious, political, or national, and giving as an evidence of this the impartial spirit in which its editorials are written. Yet if we examine carefully we find that its other columns are filled with reports and communications that flatly contradict such virtuous pretensions. Especially is it so in the case of newspapers that have considerable circulation. They know that "the constant drop will wear away a stone," and they feel that it would not be to their interest to boldly strike out against the ideas or principles, the feelings or aspirations of any one section of their readers. Consequently, with more or less hypocrisy they veil their true sentiments under the guise of editorial impartiality, while they hammer away constantly by means of their other columns. It is especially so in the case of the Irish question that is now occupying the attention, not only of the whole British Empire, but also of the entire world. Organs that do not deem it in accordance with their pecuniary interests to openly advocate anti-Home Rule principles, have, nevertheless, sufficient animus to cut out from their reports any communications that might be favorable to the cause of Ireland, and to give their readers strong doses of Unionist appeals.

We have particularly noticed this mode of procedure in the different issues of that widely circulated daily the Montreal Star. Editorially speaking, there is no organ in Canada that can surpass the Star in the facility and agility with which it jumps or straddles a political or national fence. On the Irish question

it deigns, now and again, to give editorial expression, in some very short paragraph, to some very quaint truism, or some peculiar platitude; but it does not take up the cudgels either for one party or the other. But let the reader turn to those interesting selections of English, Irish and Scotch news that fill up a couple of columns of that organ, once or twice in the week. Skip the English paragraphs, they have little or nothing to do with the present issue; come to the Irish news that is retailed and re-hashed for the benefit of the several thousand readers of that enterprising paper. What spirit runs through that column? Or rather, in what spirit are the selections made? We would ask our readers, who take the Star, to kindly pay attention to that particular portion of the paper. In it they will find every little item of news, gleaned with difficulty from out a mass of opposite spirited paragraphs, that could in any way serve to belittle the Irish character, to ridicule the nationality, to undermine all confidence in the nationalist party, and to injure the cause that Mr. Gladstone is so valiantly defending. Anything that could be said in favor of Ulster, of Saunderson, of Johnson, of Balfour and of Salisbury, is picked out with care and inserted in its place; everything that might tend to show the quiet state of the country, the success of the peaceful agitation for constitutional rights, the sincerity of the Irish Parliamentary party, and the advantages that must necessarily flow from Home Rule, is conspicuously absent.

We do not intend any further comment. We merely draw the attention of our Irish Catholic readers to these facts and invite them to read attentively those columns in our twinkling contemporary. Let them take, as an example, last Wednesday's Star. When they have sought in vain for a single item that might suggest a favorable impression of the Home Rule cause, let them turn to the extracts from Yate's sneering and bitter communications and the selections from the Ulster organs, and then judge of how impartial and generous the little luminary is—towards Irish Catholics.

DURING his last illness, in 1849, Henri Heine, the famous sceptic, spoke strange and serious words to a friend who had called to see him. Coming from such a man they should not be allowed to drop into oblivion.

"My friend," he said, in calm tones, "believe me, it is Henri Heine who tells you so, that after having reflected on it for years, after having reconsidered and maturely weighed what has been written on this subject by men of all sorts, I have reached the conclusion that there is a God who judges our conduct, that the soul is immortal, and that after this life there is another, when the good will be rewarded and the wicked punished. This is what Henri Heine says, who has so often denied the Holy Ghost. If ever you have denied these grand truths fling from you these doubts and learn from my example that nothing but simple faith in God's mercy can sustain at such a time as this."

The Late Abbe Borduas.

Rev. Abbe Cleophas D. Borduas died from consumption at Notre Dame Hospital last week. He had been administered the last rites of the Church in the morning by His Grace Archbishop Fabre. The deceased was 43 years of age and a native of Varennes. He was ordained in 1883 and had since been attached in turn to the Cathedral, St. Joseph and Notre Dame churches as leader of the choir. The remains have to be removed to the Cathedral on Friday evening and the funeral service will be held on Saturday morning at 8.30.

Cincinnati and Pittsburgh capitalists who command \$75,000,000 to \$100,000,000, have formed a company to compete with the Carnegies in making armour plate.