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MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE.

Recently published statistics show to what an alarming extent the practice of divorce prevails throughout the United States. There is an almost universal disregard of the inviolability and sacredness of the marriage tie among the non-Catholic population.

This has long been known to be the case, but the extent of the evil, which has been deplored by many who have at heart the general good, is not realized by the majority of the people, but the statistics now made known afford a clear idea of the matter in several States.

Mr. Melvin A. Root, of Bay City, Michigan, has published details for that State, founded upon reports furnished by the Secretary of State, and it appears that the percentage of applications for divorce on the number of marriages is 13.7. He estimates that at least 60 per cent. of these have been granted, so that 8.3 of the marriages celebrated are followed by divorces. There is, therefore, 1 divorce for each 12 marriages.

In Ohio the comparative figures fall a little short of Michigan. Between July 1, 1894, and June 30, 1895, there were 3,739 new cases brought before the courts, without counting the 2,807 which were pending. Two thousand four hundred and ninety seven divorces were granted and 970 petitions refused. Three thousand and seventy nine cases were still to be tried at the end of the period.

The number of marriages during the period was 33,186. It thus appears that there was 1 divorce for each 13 marriages in Ohio, and one application for every 9 marriages. Thus not only is there the scandalous object lesson in these States that every twelfth family has been broken up by the separation of husband and wife, but, owing to the laxity of the marriage laws, there exists a dissension between the members of many other families which have not been actually broken up.

It happens very rarely that any Catholics take advantage of the divorce laws, as Catholics will not thus set at defiance the unalterable laws of the Church, so that practically these scandals are limited to the non-Catholic portion of the population; and if the percentage were calculated for them only, it would be considerably larger than we have stated it to be as regards the whole population.

It is not astonishing that these evils should follow the repudiation of the authority of the Catholic Church, for Protestantism has given to every one the right to make his own religion as his fancy or his desires dictate. Polygamy and divorce became common as soon as the standard of revolt against Church authority was raised by Luther and he regretted this consequence of his teaching, but he could not control it, as he had given the example of self-will in religion. Hence as soon as his teachings had followers, divorce and polygamy were both taught from many pulpits of the new religion; and though Luther condemned these teachings in general, he himself was a party to the leave granted to Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, to have two wives at the same time. His name stands first among the signatures of the Protestant leaders who issued the formal document granting to the Landgrave this infamous permission, in the year 1539. This permission was granted on a promise of the Landgrave to grant Luther and his colleagues in the Reformation the revenues of several monasteries if they would accede to his request. These fathers of Protestantism, besides, wanted his active support in establishing Protestantism, and bought it in this way.

Several statesmen of the United States have had under consideration the best means to remedy the growing evil, which is increasing in magnitude from year to year at a rate much greater than the population. The only real remedy is to revert to the Catholic

tenet of the absolute indissolubility of marriage, but it is not likely that many States will take this decisive step, though South Carolina appears to be on the point of so doing, its Constitutional Convention having made this indissolubility one of the amendments proposed to be introduced into the State constitution. It remains to be seen whether it will be endorsed by the popular vote.

It is evident that the ease of gaining a divorce suit is one of the chief causes of the discord between man and wife which is made the plea for seeking for a divorce. Of the 6,546 cases which were before the Ohio Courts during the year, 3,205 were for abuse and neglect of duty; 1,422 for cruelty; 961 for unfaithfulness to the marriage vow; 740 for drunkenness, and 218 for other causes, some of them most trivial. There is not the least doubt that these causes are frequently set for the purpose of giving a plea for divorce, as it is very easy for the party wishing a divorce to bring a quarrel to a crisis in order that there may be sufficient cause. But the parties concerned altogether ignore the law laid down by Christ— "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

The teaching of the Church in regard to the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage is admirably summarized in a decree of one of the Councils of the Ecclesiastical Province of Quebec. The fathers of the Council express grief and horror in regard to a proposition of some legislators to establish a divorce court in Canada. This, they declare, would be a subversion of God's institution and a usurpation of the rights of the Church of Christ. They then enumerate the principal evils which ordinarily follow from such divorce:

"Under the hope of future divorce marriages are imprudently contracted; there are provocations to quarrels, and even to unfaithfulness to the obligations of marriage; the bond of affection between families is replaced by implaceable hatred; property is dissipated; evil example is given to the public, and many miseries are brought upon the children whose parents are divorced."

By making marriage a merely civil contract Protestantism has brought on the evils thus enumerated and disorganized society, the basis of which is the well-ordered family.

FREEMASONRY.

We have been requested to publish in our columns, for the satisfaction of some Protestant friends of a couple of our subscribers, a short account of the oaths and other features of Freemasonry on account of which an encouragement to that order has been so strictly prohibited by the Catholic Church.

It is not on account of the grotesque ceremonial of initiation, so far as it is only grotesque, that Freemasonry has been thus condemned, nor because of the merely ridiculous degrees and titles conferred upon members, such as the Sublime Knight-elect, the Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret, Chaos the First Discreet, the Supreme Commander of the Stars, the Sovereign Prince Zakdim, the Terrible Brother, etc. Yet there are many of these titles which border on the profane, and indicate, somewhat remotely perhaps, an ulterior object in Freemasonry which is unlawful, being to replace the religion of Christ with another as founded upon human fancy. Some of these titles indicating this religious, or rather anti-religious, object are, the Brother Sacrificer, the Knight Kadosh, the Great High Priest, and others of similar import.

Freemasonry undoubtedly has within it a species of religion based on the heathenism of ancient Egypt and on the continent of Europe. The nature of this religion has been to some extent proclaimed without disguise. Thus on the 10th of October, 1865, on the occasion of the inauguration of a statue erected at Brussels in honor of Mons. Verheagen, a Grand-Master of Belgian Freemasonry, the children attending the national schools, which were at this time under control of the anti-Christian party, were made to sing an anthem in which occur the following words:

First Group: This temple of knowledge marks a new era. What is its temple?

Second Group: Science.

First Group: What is its god?

Second Group: Liberty. No more dogmas—blind slavery! No more yokes, tyrants, or Messiahs! This is a direct renunciation of Christianity.

It was an opportune moment for French Freemasonry to declare itself the friend of the bloody Commune of Paris, when the Commune announced

itself as the foe of religion. Only a few days after the desecration of several churches, including Notre Dame de Lorette and St. Pierre, in a most repulsive manner, the Freemasons declared their adhesion to the Commune, and planted their banners with mock solemnity on the city walls as a defiance to the army of the Provisional Government of the newly established French Republic.

These are only a few evidences of what European Freemasonry has been, but they are samples of the systematic teachings of the Masonic order and its organs. Thus the French Masonic World taught regularly that "Freemasonry is in fact above all dogmas"; "Liberty of conscience is superior to all forms of religious belief." But still more clearly does the Ritual of the apprentice Mason, as published by Mr. J. M. Ragon, lay down this doctrine in the exhortations given by "the venerable" to the neophyte:

"Deism is belief in God without revelation or form of worship. It is the religion of the future, destined to replace all religions."

This Deism is the religion of Tom Paine, and even, perhaps, of Colonel Ingersoll, who is careful to inform us that his attacks are not directed against God, who may or who may not exist, but against the God of the Bible. It is practically Pantheism, which is a disguised Atheism.

It has been said that the Freemasons of Great Britain and the United States are not responsible for the acts and sentiments of the Freemasonry of the European Continent. In reply we have to say that it has been frequently proved that the societies in all these countries are united with one bond of brotherhood; and so well known is the fact that it is the common boast of members of the fraternity that their brotherhood extends throughout the world. We may, however, cite the fact that on the occasion of the installation of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales as British Grand Master of the Order, congratulations were received from the grand lodges of France, Sweden, Italy, etc., which concurred in declaring that the installation was approved by the brethren of all these countries as "one of the most auspicious and memorable events of universal Masonry."

The London Times of 19th July, 1875, also announced that his Royal Highness, the Grand Master of English Freemasons had given "official recognition" to the "Grand Orient of Italy" on the occasion of the consecration of a new lodge named after the Princess of Wales.

We admit that the Lodges of England and America have not manifested the open hostility to all religion which has characterized those of Europe generally; and as a consequence we find in the lodges in this country men of undoubted honor and integrity who would not remain on the rolls of the society if they knew it to have such aims as it undoubtedly has elsewhere. The explanation for this fact is twofold. First: the form of prevalent Christianity is different. It is a fact which cannot be ignored that Protestantism offers but little obstacle to Free-thought, and hence the Freemasons have little occasion to wage the warfare against Protestantism which they have so unrelentingly carried on against Catholicism. In truth so much encouragement is given by Protestantism to Free-thought that the latter may be considered as one of the forms of Protestantism, and there is no doubt this is one of the reasons why Freemasonry here does not insist so strongly on its anti-religious principles.

A second reason is given by those who know thoroughly the methods of the society: it is that there is a love of law and order prevalent in America and Great Britain of which the real leaders of Freemasonry are fully aware, and they therefore do not admit to the secret workings of the order even those honorary officers to whom they give such high-sounding titles as they have conferred upon the Prince of Wales, and others distinguished by their rank, ability, or integrity, or by the high position they have attained in public esteem.

These titles are bestowed thereby for the purpose of advertising the order, and their recipients are kept in ignorance of its unlawful designs. But the very fact that the order is a cloak to such designs is sufficient reason for the Church's condemnation of it. The Catholic, however, can have no excuse for being deceived in regard to this matter, for several Popes have declared the same thing which is said by Leo XII. in an Apostolic letter of March 13, 1833, that it is an "open enemy to the Catholic Church," and of "the Divinity of Christ;" and the

same letter further says that the Holy Father makes this pronouncement "of our certain knowledge and mature reflection."

The oaths administered to members are also unlawful. Thus those admitted to the degree of "Apprentice" are obliged to swear not to divulge the secrets of the order, "under penalty of having my head cut off, and my tongue torn out. If I violate this oath, may my body be thrown into the sea, and be tossed forever by the flow and ebb of the ocean."

The following oath is taken by all who are admitted to the degree of "Companion":

"I swear never to reveal the secrets, signs, touches, words, doctrines, or usages of the Freemasons. In case I should break my word, let them burn my lips with a red hot iron; let them cut off my hand; let them tear out my tongue; let them cut my throat; may my corpse be hung up in the lodge during the admission of a new brother to brand my infidelity, and be a terrible warning to others: then let my body be burned and my ashes scattered to the winds."

This formula is quoted by Mgr. Dupanloup from the Berlin Ritual of St. John's Degree, published at Leipzig in 1825. Oaths to substantially the same effect, and others equally unlawful and horrible, are taken in other degrees.

A CRUSADE OF LYING.

Lying is a favorite weapon of controversy with those who have a bad cause.

The man of pure and simple heart Through life disdains a double part. He never needs the screen of lies His inward bosom, to disguise.

—Gay.

Voltaire gave the advice to one of his co-laborers to lie constantly against the upholders of religion, and "some of it would surely stick." This is the course which the A. P. A. are following, both in the United States and Canada, and not even the fact that their lies are sure to be followed by an exposure terrifies them from following up the series by new lies as soon as the old ones have been exploded.

One of the most contemptible forms which a lie can take is when it misrepresents the sayings and doings of the honored dead. Such a lie as this was recently published regarding the late American General, W. T. Sherman. An A. P. A. paper asserted that the general declared:

"If ever there should be an issue affecting the safety of American institutions in conflict with the supremacy of the Roman Church, they will put the Pope above the President."—W. T. Sherman.

The falsehood is so like a very similar statement concerning General Lafayette, which has also been frequently repeated during the last few years, it was easy to see that the latter lie was merely the reproduction of the earlier one, with too slight a change to conceal its origin. General Lafayette had said that if any danger ever threatened the permanency of American liberty, it would not come from the Roman Catholic clergy; but by leaving out the little word *not*, this was turned into an aphorism to show that there would be perpetual hostility between the Catholic Church and the free American Republic. The similar aphorism attributed to General Sherman was intended to convey the same idea, but it was not destined to live long. Mr. James Connolly, editor of the *Catholic Tidings*, of Los Angeles, Cal., wrote to Senator Sherman, a Protestant, and brother of the deceased general, asking whether the general ever gave expression to the sentiments attributed to him. The senator answered promptly with the following letter:

"Mansfield, O., Sept. 14, 1895.

"Mr. James Connolly:

"Dear Sir: Yours of the 7th inst., enclosing a printed slip purporting to be a remark made by General Sherman, is received. I do not believe he ever made such a remark. It is in direct opposition to opinions I have often heard him express. His wife was an earnest Catholic, and he, I am quite sure, would never say a word of disparagement of her faith, or of the Church to which she belonged.

"Yours truly,

"John Sherman."

This settles the question in regard to General Sherman; but this is only one sample of the forgeries to which the dark-lantern association has recourse in its warfare of proscription against Catholics.

It might be expected that in the long list of prominent men who have figured in the United States history some should have had prejudices and opinions averse to the Catholic Church, but it would by no means follow that they were well-informed. It is, however, a satisfaction to know that by those who are known as the greatest statesmen and patriots of America, no such sentiments have been entertained,

Another instance of this is found in the next fact we have to tell.

A California A. P. A. magazine recently attributed to Abraham Lincoln the expression:

"The Pope and the Jesuits are the only organized power in the world which have recourse to the dagger of the assassin to murder those whom they cannot convince by argument or conquer with the sword."

This was also evidently a forgery; nevertheless enquiry was made, and a letter was written to the Hon. Robert T. Lincoln asking whether his father had ever expressed such a sentiment. He replied that he had never heard the like before, and that he does not believe his father had ever said anything of the kind, for it is contrary to his father's known convictions. Therefore he called upon the editor of the magazine to prove the correctness of his quotation, whereupon the latter admitted that the only authority he had for his statement was that the notorious ex-priest Chiniquy makes the statement in a book which he has issued, and from which the editor had taken it. It is well known that Chiniquy is a fraud and that his word is worth nothing, so this lie has also been exploded. Nevertheless we have no doubt the pretended assertions of Lincoln and Sherman will continue to be quoted by Apapists and other bigots to excite hatred against the Catholic Church. Falsehood is the only weapon these fanatics can employ for their nefarious purposes, as the truth would lead to quite a different conclusion from that they wish to be drawn.

RATIONALISM AND ANGLICANISM.

Those who have imagined that the Church of England is a great bulwark against infidelity will be greatly shocked on learning that the following sentiments were openly uttered by one of the ablest scholars among its clergy, at the annual Church Congress held a few days ago at Norwich, England. The speaker was the Rev. Professor Canon Boney, of Manchester. He said:

"We cannot deny that the increase of scientific knowledge has deprived parts of the earlier books of the Bible of the historical value which was generally attributed to them by our forefathers. The story of the Creation in Genesis, unless we play fast and loose either with words or with science, cannot be brought into harmony with what we have learned from geology. Its ethnological statements are imperfect, if not sometimes inaccurate. The stories of the flood and of the Tower of Babel are incredible in their present form. Some historical elements may underlie many of the traditions in the first eleven chapters of that book, but this we cannot hope to recover."

This utterance is no less direct as an attack upon the credibility of the Bible, than the most virulent of Professor Huxley's and Bob Ingersoll's writings and lectures, and indeed we remember reading in one of Professor Huxley's lectures almost the identical words used by the Canon. Professor Huxley's lecture was delivered, if we remember right, in Chickering Hall, New York, the usual rallying-place of the infidel propagandism of that city, and this very part of it elicited the most enthusiastic manifestations of approbation from the Agnostic audience. Yet the Canon's sentiment appears to have been received with scarcely a protest from the assemblage of divines who participated in the Church Congress.

It is supposed by some that the Church of England has within itself the power of restraining the expression of such opinions as those of Canon Boney, and those who are in authority in the Church endeavor to keep up the delusion that this is the case, because they are aware that it is an indefensible position for a Church which claims to be the Primitive Christianity, to be entirely dominated by the civil authority, which may be infidel, and which is always at least Erastian. Yet it is a fact which is beyond dispute that the supreme authority in the Church of England is the civil authority, and it maintains in the Church those who openly teach Rationalism of a very pronounced type.

Among Bishop Milner's "Letters to a Prebendary," one on "Hoadleyism" reveals that even so far back as the beginning of this century, Rationalism had made great inroads on the Church of England, and that it was freely taught by a large body of the clergy. Later still the works of Bishop Colenso and the well known volume entitled "Essays and Reviews," by a number of leading ministers, proved that these inroads were growing still more extensive; and there is no power in the Church to prevent their growth, because whatever steps the ecclesiastical authorities might take to prevent

Rationalism from spreading, if left to themselves, the really supreme authority in the Church will not allow the freedom of individuals to be restricted, and thus the curious spectacle has often been exhibited that in one Church the doctrine inculcated from the pulpit includes almost everything, if not everything, which the Catholic Church teaches, except the doctrine of the authority of the Pope, while in the neighboring parish almost everything which is distinctive of Christianity has been eliminated from the creed, and sometimes the anomaly is found in the same Church, one set of doctrines being maintained in the morning, and another in the evening sermon, according to the peculiar party in the Church of which the preacher for the time being is an adherent.

It is a mistake to suppose that the Church can possibly be a bulwark against infidelity without unity of doctrine. Infidelity is at least self-consistent in rejecting all mysteries of religion, and it is logical enough to point out that a system which has no consistency cannot refute its position. In fact the Church of England cannot repress the infidelity which is within itself, and it has still less power in regard to that which is outside of it.

We may add that Canon Boney's statements should not be allowed to weaken the faith of any one, for there is not a point on which he speaks whereon a satisfactory answer has not been given to all the difficulties to which he alludes so confidently as if they destroyed the historic credibility of the Bible.

A RESUSCITATION OF THE CHARIVARI.

There was last week a curious charivari case at Wayne, Michigan, arising partly out of family disagreements between the Presbyterian-Congregational minister and his wife, and partly from the peculiar religious beliefs of the contestants.

The husband has been the Congregational pastor of the village, and at the same time Presbyterian pastor of Nankin, a village not far from Wayne. His troubles with his wife were the cause of a demand on the part of his Wayne congregation for his resignation, as both the clergyman and the wife entered suit against each other for a divorce. She wanted the court to compel him to pay her alimony, and he claimed incompatibility of temper as cause why his suit should be granted.

The clergyman in question acceded to the request of his Wayne parishioners and resigned charge of them, but he retains his Presbyterian pastorate, and a reconciliation has taken place between the husband and wife. They determined, therefore, to remove to Nankin and to become members of the Presbyterian Church, which is supposed by them to be somewhat more lax on the subject of marriage and divorce than are the Congregationalists, of Wayne at least.

The clergyman and family were not allowed to depart in peace, but while they were packing up their goods to leave Wayne they were treated with a serenade by the youths of the village, who brought into requisition fish-bones, kazooks, wash-boilers, and every other instrument available with which they could make a noise whereby to celebrate the reunion of the happy couple who had until then been recriminating against each other in the courts for the purpose of securing a divorce. Charivaris of this kind have become uncommon during late years, and it is only under extraordinary circumstances that they now take place at all; but the youths of Wayne thought the circumstances in the present case sufficient to justify the resuscitation of an almost obsolete usage.

It will reveal a rather unexpected condition of affairs, if it prove to be the case that a minister whose views on the dissolubility of the marriage tie are so loose that he was distasteful to a Congregationalist flock, should be received with open arms by the Presbyterians, who are generally supposed to be the more rigidly orthodox of the two denominations, not only in regard to marriage, but on other doctrinal matters. The occurrence also shows how readily a person, even a minister, may be transferred or may transfer himself from one denomination to another, when his views on doctrine and morals become distasteful to the denomination to which he has hitherto adhered. We hear much concerning the unity of the various sects on the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; but surely the question of the marriage obligation is a matter of morals of fundamental importance, and if this