

The Catholic Record

Price of Subscription—\$1.50 per annum. United States & Europe—\$2.00

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Advertisements for teachers, situations wanted, etc. 50 cents each insertion. Remittance to accompany the order.

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Ordinary and marriage notices cannot be inserted except in the usual condensed form.

Each insertion 50 cents.

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LONDON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1916

PROTESTANT MARRIAGES

A newspaper report of a sermon on mixed marriages contracted before Protestant ministers created a painful sensation in the city of London during the past week. While there is no reason to doubt that the reporter, and the paper he represented, were perfectly honest in the matter, neither is there any doubt that the sermon as reported led to gross misunderstanding of Catholic doctrine as to Protestant marriages.

A faring two-column headline proclaimed that "Marriage is illegal if solemnized by the Protestant Church."

And in the text we find the following:

"The Church has decided," continued the preacher, "that the Archbishop of Canterbury has not the power to administer this sacrament. Marriage by the Anglican Church or other denomination of the Protestant Church is no marriage at all in the sight of God."

From this and other unqualified statements Protestants naturally inferred that the Church regards the marriage of Protestants as no marriage at all. It would be hard to conceive of a more offensive pronouncement or one more diametrically opposed to Catholic teaching.

The preacher, Father Richards, doubtless having in mind the object of his sermon, and that he had said, as reported a half-column farther on, "I am making this statement for Catholics," failed to see how the report, whose substantial accuracy he acknowledged, would mislead the general reader.

That it did so mislead is beyond question, and that the Advertiser so understood its own report is evident from the way it introduced the comments of several Protestant ministers the next day. This is the introductory paragraph:

"An opportunity to comment upon the sermon of Rev. Father Richards, in which he claimed for the Roman Catholic Church the sole right to perform marriage, valid in the sight of God, was given to Protestant ministers in the city to-day."

The occasion, then, is one for stating the plain teaching of the Church which in no sense justifies, indeed unequivocally contradicts, the conclusion drawn from the sermon as reported.

Before doing so it is a pleasure to note one of the ministerial comments which stands out in rather striking contrast with some of the others:

Rev. Dr. Flanders: "I am very sure that sermon does not fairly represent the intelligence and piety of the Roman Catholic Church."

In common with others he was quite evidently misled into believing that the sermon branded Protestant marriages as invalid; yet, in spite of provocation and opportunity Dr. Flanders refrains from attacking the Catholic Church, and speaks with the charity, moderation and restraint of the Christian gentleman.

To understand the marriage legislation of the Church it is necessary to remember that marriage must be considered under two aspects, as a civil contract, and as a sacrament.

As a contract having consequences of which the civil power must take cognizance, it is always and everywhere subject to civil legislation. While people have a natural right to marry, the State restricts to comparatively very few individuals the authority to receive, witness and register the consent to marriage. This is necessary in order to have legal record and proof of marriage. If no such restriction were enforced there would be a chaotic condition of things with regard to legal marriage.

In this country, while all clergymen and some State officials may legally solemnize marriage, there is a further restriction as to place. It is sufficient to note the fact without going into the details of the well known restrictions which the State imposes on its subjects and officials with regard to marriage.

For precisely similar and equally good reasons the Church legislates for Catholics with regard to marriage as a sacrament. She, also, restricts to a few the authority to receive and witness consent to marriage. The Ne Temere decree of 1908 limits that authority to the pastor of one or both of the contracting parties, to the bishop (or Ordinary), or to a priest delegated by either of these. The wisdom of this law is beyond question; the analogy to civil legislation on the subject is evident. What is natural and necessary in the one case cannot be arbitrary and useless in the other. That is no legal marriage which disregards the prescriptions of the civil law; that is no sacramental marriage which defies the laws of the Church.

A papal decree is generally known and quoted by the first two or three words of the decree. Ne Temere may be translated by "Lest rashly." The frequent newspaper references to rash and even bigamous marriages, and the occasional amendment of the civil law in consequence, point to the wisdom of the Ne Temere decree.

To avoid a fruitful source of misunderstanding a very important consideration must here be taken into account. The ordinary minister of most of the sacraments is the priest; of Holy Order and Confirmation the bishop. Yet every Catholic child, instructed in the Catechism, knows that the minister of the sacrament of Baptism may be a layman or woman; Protestant or Catholic, Jew or pagan may validly administer this sacrament if only he have the intention of doing what Christ ordained.

Who, then, is the minister of the sacrament of Matrimony? Whatever controversy there may have been in the past belongs merely to the history of theological opinion. The priest is not the minister of the sacrament of Matrimony; the ministers of this sacrament are the man and woman themselves who contract marriage. And this is clearly indicated by the Ne Temere decree itself.

Article VIII, reads: "If it should happen in any district that neither the pastor nor a priest delegated by either, can be had, and this condition of affairs has already lasted for a month, marriage can be entered into validly and licitly by the formal declaration of consent by two witnesses."

The priest, then, is not the minister of the sacrament but the official witness of the consent to marriage. The Catholic Church certainly does not recognize the Archbishop of Canterbury as an official witness to Catholic marriage. Nor does she so recognize every Catholic priest.

The marriage of two Catholics before a Catholic priest not duly authorized to marry them is no marriage in the eyes of the Church. And in the default of a duly authorized priest, the marriage of Catholics, as provided in the article quoted above, is validly contracted before other competent witnesses. It is lawful in such cases for the couple to go to an official of the civil Government authorized to witness marriage contracts; in fact it may be the only way to legitimize their marriage in the eyes of the civil law.

If there is no other person in the place or nearby who is entitled to witness marriage contracts except a clergyman of some non-Catholic religion, the parties in question may go to such a minister in order that their marriage may be lawful before the civil law. But persons thus forced to go to a minister must not allow him to use the religious ceremonies of his church, but only the formula of justice of the peace or other Government official would use. The civil official or the non-Catholic clergyman do not "administer" the sacrament of matrimony. They are merely the legal official witnesses of the parties' consent to marriage.

While Article XI, includes all Catholics within the scope of the decree, Section 3 of the same Article expressly excludes all others: "Non-Catholics, whether baptized or unbaptized if they contract marriage among themselves, are nowhere bound to observe the Catholic form of engagement and marriage."

Therefore non-Catholic marriages are in no way affected by the marriage legislation of the Catholic

Church. They are always and everywhere valid marriages unless invalidated by something other than Catholic marriage laws.

Father Richards is a graduate of an English university and a convert from Anglicanism. When he speaks of the Protestant attitude, and especially the Anglican attitude, toward marriage presumably he knows whereof he speaks. Nevertheless without claiming any exceptional facilities for knowing the Protestant mind on the subject, we do not hesitate to express our belief that Protestants in this country when they marry desire to contract Christian marriage; and therefore that the marriages of baptized Protestants are not only valid but sacramental marriages even though they may not think of marriage as a sacrament. Moreover, the Church on receiving married converts from Protestantism never remarries them; her constant and invariable practice is to accept their Protestant marriage as valid and indissoluble.

There is just one case in which the marriage legislation of the Church affects Protestants. And that is the case of a mixed marriage. Since the promulgation of the Ne Temere decree when even one of the parties is a Catholic the marriage to be valid must conform to the law of the Church. Before that time such marriages even if contracted before a Protestant minister, though illicit, were valid.

With regard to the question of mixed marriages it is well known that the Catholic Church regards them with every mark of disfavor. Sincere Protestants, also, recognize that the most intimate human association on earth is necessarily marred by division on a matter so vitally important as religion. And this remains true as a general rule in spite of happy exceptions.

Often the coming of children which should draw closer the sacred bond of union, becomes a source of further division and unhappiness. What should be a signal blessing is sometimes turned into something like a curse.

When for sufficient reason a mixed marriage is allowed the Catholic party knows that for him or her the laws of the Church are binding under pain of invalidity of the marriage. The Protestant about to marry a Catholic knows this also, or should know it. He knows, further, that Catholic marriage fulfils every requirement of the civil law and is, therefore, a legal and valid marriage.

It seems, then, no great hardship from any point of view for the Protestant to agree to this. The Catholic, in any case, knows the binding force of the law of the Church, and the imperative necessity of obeying it under pain of nullity of the marriage. Nothing can be gained by attempting to soften this hard truth. Dura lex, sed lex.

SELECTING AMERICAN BISHOPS

The Consistorial decree, published elsewhere in this issue, is a somewhat radical departure in the method of submitting the names of those amongst whom Rome usually chose the one to fill a vacant bishopric.

Hitherto the bishops of an ecclesiastical province met to consider the filling of a particular vacancy when it actually occurred. In the United States, for some time past, the permanent rectors and diocesan consultants, also, had by canonical right a voice in the matter.

The principal result of the new method seems to us to be that Rome will have at all times a list, revised or confirmed every two years, of those priests throughout the whole country whom the bishops after the most mature consideration and exhaustive inquiry and consultation, consider qualified for and worthy of the episcopal office. This gives the Holy See a much wider range of choice while not depriving it of the knowledge, experience and advice of the bishops when making the actual selection for a particular vacant see.

For Canadians the interest in this important decree is very much enhanced by the fact that Canada is in many respects in very similar conditions with regard to Rome as the "far-distant and widespread republic of the United States of America." The question as to whether a similar provision may be made for Canada naturally suggests itself. For the reason of the similarity of conditions Canadian Bishops may be voluntarily influenced, more or less, by the prescriptions of the decree though it has no force in this country. The concluding sentence

which states that the new method will be valid "during the will of the Apostolic See" would seem to indicate that its extension to Canada, and even its continuance in the United States, may depend largely on the results of actual experience.

In an age when democracy is largely a matter of forms and formulas, rather than of realities, it is interesting to note how the Catholic Church which has been, in the best sense of the word, the greatest democratizing force in the history of civilization, while conserving intact its divine authority seeks new means of securing more effective expression of enlightened and competent democratic opinion on matters of great importance in church government.

THE WAR

One hundred days ago Rumania declared war against Austria. This we were confidently told, and with the appearance of sound reason, was the beginning of the end. Bulgaria attacked by Russo-Rumanian armies from the North and General Serrail's great composite army from the South would be speedily crushed; Turkey isolated from her Germanic allies forced to a separate peace; the central empires deprived of the resources in men and supplies of the Balkans, and pressed on all sides could only sustain a last desperate and dying defensive with the inevitable end in sight.

"In that hundred days," says the military expert of the N. Y. Times, "the Teutons in the most brilliant and rapid campaign of the War, have occupied nearly one-half of Rumania, captured its capital and are driving deeper into the territory that remains." And to-day (Dec 9th) the Russian military organ, the Russky Invalid, points out that if the enemy is allowed to support himself on the rich supplies of Rumania, would he not only gain the initiative, threaten Saloniki, but endanger the whole Russian front in the inevitable spring drive.

This is the situation when the apparently impregnable Coalition Government in England without organized Parliamentary opposition topples like a house of cards. The French Chamber of Deputies concludes its ninth secret session. Russia has just issued what is apparently an ultimatum to her Allies—sovereign possession of Constantinople and the Dardanelles as the price of staying until ultimate victory is achieved.

We have been often and dogmatically told that the decision of the War would be reached on the Western front. The long-sustained, desperate assault on Verdun, utterly reckless of the cost in men and munitions, showed that the military genius of Germany, then in the ascendant, agreed that the decision must be sought in the West. There seemed to be no doubt as to that; but Germany changed her mind. Hindenburg, who always held that in the East the War would be lost or won, was called to take supreme command of German strategy as Chief of the General Staff, supplanting Falkenhayn, a Western man. England and France still adhering to the belief that the West was to be the decisive theatre of operations carried on the brilliant and inspiring offensive on the Somme. Here they learned the lesson that Verdun taught Germany.

It has been said that Lloyd George was always an Eastern man; that he strenuously advocated for purely military reasons a supreme effort when Serbia was invaded; that Serbia was sacrificed for political reasons. It has been said also that Sir Edward Carson agreed with him, and left the Cabinet in disgust when they were overborne. If so, the inclusion of Sir Edward in the Cabinet is a fore-gone conclusion.

The change of Government in England now seems to indicate very clearly a decided change of opinion as to the relative strategic value of the Eastern and Western fronts.

The War news in another column indicates the tremendously increased difficulties of successful Entente Balkan operations since the opportunity of Serbian resistance was let slip, and Rumania has gone the way of Serbia and Montenegro. Now Greece is apparently lost, or worse than lost. It is significant that Viscount Grey, the erstwhile idolized Foreign Secretary is thrown overboard. War, in the final analysis, depends on the resources of the belligerents. The capacity of the Entente in this

respect outmeasures that of the Teutonic Allies. Recent developments mean a greatly prolonged War, and imperatively demand the mobilization of all our available resources if our efforts are to be crowned with ultimate victory, perhaps even to avert ultimate defeat. Stalemate seems less probable than it did six months ago.

SOME SIDELIGHTS ON RECRUITING

Recruiting meetings are still being held throughout the country, in order to raise the quota of men promised by the Government. It is customary in many places to hold these meetings on Sunday evenings, in some public hall, after the close of church services. The pastors of the various congregations are invited by the military authorities to urge upon their people to attend. As a rule the parish priest accedes to this request, and not unfrequently lends his presence to the occasion. This is right and proper; for it is desirable that our people should be well informed as to the military situation, so as to be ready to do their part as intelligent and conscientious citizens. It is fitting that they should be enlightened as to the gravity of the national peril and exhorted to enlist in defence of the flag or to give of their time and money to the cause.

It sometimes happens, however, that at these meetings our people are obliged to listen to statements that are a denial not alone of Catholic doctrine but of the fundamental truths of Christianity. To give an example of this, we heard a prominent speaker from the city of Toronto, commenting on the text "He that loathes his life shall find it," urge upon the young man to enlist, to offer that he should find it again—and we are quoting his very words—in some far off, dim, uncertain, etherial heaven, but in this world by enriching the life of the nation. Now this sounds very much like sentiments we have heard expressed by a lady who claimed to be a Theosophist. It is a denial of the immortality of the soul, it is a denial of the supernatural, of the existence of that very heaven we are all striving to obtain. We must not forget that materialism and agnosticism is not confined to Germany alone, but that many of our universities in this country are hotbeds of it, and that the public life of the country is inoculated with its poison.

The one thing at these meetings that must strike the man of faith is the materialistic atmosphere of the occasion. This is, in our opinion, the reason why the results are often so meagre. Motives of revenge, of hate, of the uncertain glory of having one's name inscribed in the list of our country's heroes will not induce young men to sacrifice if they offered them at this price. Christian patriotism must be founded upon religion, upon not merely natural but supernatural motives, and must look for an eternal reward. This is a truth that finds its echo not in the hearts of Catholics alone, but in the hearts of all believing people. The Protestant mother who demands that she must be permitted to pray for the repose of the soul of her soldier boy, also demands that the sacrifice of his life shall receive its reward beyond the fitful applause of this ungrateful and forgetful world.

It is time that we put aside cant and hypocrisy and faced the issue fairly. We are told of the righteousness of our cause, that we are fighting God's battle, that we are fighting for the maintenance of Christianity, that it is our duty to slay this hydra-headed monster of State Absolutism, of pride, of tyranny, of hate and infidelity. This is true; but in the name of all that is good let us not hope to succeed unless we are armed with the weapons of the Lord God of battles. Let us send our young Davids forth to meet this Goliath, not with mere material weapons but with the spiritual armor that befits a soldier in such a cause. Put into his sling first of all the rock of faith in God, which is the foundation of Christianity. Add to this the stone of prayerful humility. This is the warning message that was sent only a few days ago to the British people by the Admiral of our fleet: "You cannot hope to win this war unless you have recourse to God in humble prayer." We cannot defeat pride by pride; and the spirit of braggadocio that characterizes some recruiting speeches and many of our patriotic songs is not in keeping with the seriousness of the present situation.

Lastly, let there be put into that sling the precious stone of charity. Quite recently the Chairman of the Toronto Board of Education was severely criticized by a section of the press because he dared to say that there were some Germans that he did not hate. We condemn the Germans for their "hymn of hate" and then we hate more bitterly ourselves. We heard a mother, who had three sons in the trenches, remark when she learned that several thousand Germans had been taken prisoners "I hope they will be kind to the poor boys." That is the Christian spirit. It is not from heroic mothers or from brave soldiers who have spent months in the trenches that we hear such unChristian sentiments. How true it is "The bravest are the tenderest; the loving are the daring." The ideal soldier hates the German crimes and is keen to win the victory, but he bears no malice to his fellow-being who faces him from across "no man's land" and who perhaps believes that he too is fighting for a just cause.

THE GLEANER.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE MANNER in which Presbyterian Scotsmen continue to delude themselves as to the real character of John Knox, their "great Reformer" and the nature and effect of his influence upon the religious and national life of their country remains one of the insoluble problems of the age. We are willing to concede them some excuse for this for the three hundred years following upon Knox's death, but that in face of the revelations of the past half-century they should continue to adhere to the manifest fables with which a vicious tradition has so long associated his name is simply inexplicable. For we venture to assert without qualification of any sort whatsoever, that no single attribute with which the fawning sycophants of the sixteenth century or his Presbyterian eulogists of a later time have clothed him, has any basis in fact or will stand the test of honest investigation. And yet St. Andrew's Day orators of the Rev. Dr. Bruce Taylor type continue to laud him as "all on fire for God," "the creator of the common people," and the "founder of a new vital power."

If there is any one quality upon the possession of which Scotsmen particularly pride themselves it is their patriotism. It is the theme of every Scottish gathering on St. Andrew's Day, or any festival commemorating the past glories of their country. Their orators have acclaimed it; their poets have sung of it, and their soldiers have maintained it on many a hard-fought field both in the old days and in the new. In the battles of the present War that honorable distinction has suffered no diminution as the blood-soaked soil of France and Flanders so eloquently testifies. But it never seems to occur to our Presbyterian friends that the greatest and most glorious manifestations of the spirit of patriotism of which the nation can boast, and those which they most vigorously proclaim in the fervid Scottish way, relate to the old days when Scotland was Catholic—the days of Wallace and Bruce and the heroic men of Moray, who from generation to generation, against almost overwhelming odds, maintained the integrity and independence of their country against every aggressor. It was not until the sinister figure of Knox stalked across the land that that dauntless spirit suffered any diminution.

THERE ARE three paramount virtues claimed for Knox by his indiscriminating admirers, viz: patriotism, bravery and godliness. It may not be amiss to examine briefly in the light of modern research his title to any or all of them. For three centuries it has been dinned into our ears that Knox was the very incarnation of patriotism; that in him love of country followed close upon love of God, and that had he done nothing else, the fact that, as they claim, he was the chief instrument in freeing Scotland from the domination of a foreign power, viz. the Papacy, is in itself sufficient title to the gratitude of his countrymen. Tomes of panegyric, however, count for nothing in presence of concrete facts, and the facts of history are against the claim.

beth of England and her minister, Cecil, may be traced working for the subjugation of the northern Kingdom to the English Crown. Knox knew this and connived at it. Earlier in his career he had had the misfortune to offend Elizabeth by his ill-advised denunciation of female rule, directed primarily against his own lawful sovereign, Queen Mary. This proceeding on Knox's part was a greater crime in the English Queen's eyes than even the Reformer's Calvinism, detestable as that was to her. And she never forgave Knox for it. But as events progressed and the Lords of the Congregation came to realize more and more that the success of their foul plot depended upon English support, Knox is found in the forefront cringing to Elizabeth and eating his words in the vain attempt to recover lost ground. He wrote to Cecil begging his intercession with Elizabeth, and declaring that her displeasure was so grievous and intolerable to his wretched heart that only the testimony of his clean conscience prevented him from sinking in despair. The upshot was that he was dispatched to Berwick as the envoy of the Lords, and there we find him undertaking that the Congregation would seize and garrison Sterling, provided that the English would supply them with the much-needed funds for their "comfortable support." Can he be called a true patriot who thus accepted pay from his country's traditional foe for treason to his own Government and the basest sort of betrayal of his lawful Sovereign?

KNOX'S VAUNTED bravery has been a theme to conjure audiences with so long that it seems almost a pity to disillusionize them. "Reformed" history has it that the Regent Morton, standing at Knox's open grave, said of him: "Here lies he who never feared the face of man!" A brave saying, were it true, and a wonderful tribute to the spirit of the departed! But, is it true? Was Knox really the dauntless spirit that Morton proclaimed him to be, and were there gathered together in him all those heroic qualities which especially distinguish the Scotland of the pre-Reformation age? It should not be difficult to determine whether it is so. There is one simple test to which the whole question can be submitted and the truth arrived at: Did Knox stand his ground when the ebb and flow of events left his precious carcass temporarily in danger, and did he, like the brave man we are asked to believe him to have been, share the peril as well as the "glory" of his fellow-conspirators?

THERE WERE at least two occasions in Knox's life when he had the opportunity of showing whether or no he possessed the courage of the true patriot, or the steadfastness of the martyr. Following upon the death of Mary of England and the accession of Elizabeth a vigorous effort was made by the people of Scotland to throw off the yoke of the "Reformed," and to evade the outstretched clutches of the new Queen. Knox, we are told, was surprised to find the friends of the Protestant opinions unresolved upon the great question as to whether it was their duty openly to separate from the Catholic Church. Tumult broke out in Edinburgh and Glasgow and it became apparent to the Reformation leaders that prompt and stern measures were necessary to head this off. Consequently Knox was employed to make use of them, and he applied himself with that capacity for foul and abusive language with which his name is inseparably associated.

VIOLENT LANGUAGE had not the desired effect, however, and this "brave man" found it necessary to appeal to the Queen Regent whom he had previously endeavored to browbeat and intimidate, to protect the reformed preachers from the violence of the mob. He found himself denounced to the magistrates as a traitor and seducer of the people. Now, if ever, would have been the time to stand his ground in face of the turmoil which he himself had been mainly instrumental in creating. But not so. Opportunely for him an invitation suddenly arrived to become pastor of a congregation in Geneva, and without further ado he accepted it and departed. And he did not return to Scotland until all danger was over. This is the apostle who is emphatically declared "to have never feared the face of man." Tytler, the historian of Scotland, who tries at all times to defend him,