

APRIL 13 1912

disposes of the absurdity of the statement that "citizens of Germany rose in arms against it." They had no reason to rise in arms, nor did they do so.

To clear the ground, let us note immediately that by "clandestine marriages" in the languages of the Church are meant those marriages contracted without the due observance of the ceremonies which the law of the Church has prescribed.

A more important remark concerns those for whom by this decree the Church legislates. Her law binds all persons baptised in the Catholic Church and those who have been converted to it from heresy or schism (even when any of these have afterwards fallen away from the Church).

It is therefore a little difficult to understand why non-Catholic Ministers of any sect should rise in arms against a decree which has nothing to do with their own adherents. Even in them or their marriages the Catholic party alone is affected, the other party is not.

The decree challenges British law. It is, therefore, the question as to her rights which we have partly answered already, and to which we shall return.

The decree is insulting to Protestant clergy and ministers of every denomination. No mixed marriage is valid if performed in accordance with the rites of a Protestant Church.

Our Church contracted otherwise than a sacrament to allow the State to regulate everything, and as a matter of fact it takes place in the presence of a Protestant or Presbyterian clergyman, but because one of the parties who is bound by the law which the Catholic Church breaks the law which she has laid down as a necessary condition of his or her marriage.

Mr. Gooch, secretary to the Evangelical Alliance, writing to the papers to rouse Protestant citizens of London and England against the "Ne Temere" Decree. The secretary to state five "facts" in order to reveal the full meaning of the Decree. His "facts" are pure "statements" unsupported by any arguments, and nothing more.

These are "brave" words, but to what do they amount? As we said above, the decree was made by the Church, not simply by our priests in the matter of marriage. It has been a great relief in the case of every Catholic marriage. The number of mixed marriages affected by the decree is so small that it is nothing in comparison to the multitude of Catholic marriages simplified here all over the world.

Another remark is that it is incorrect to call it a decree of a foreign authority. With regard to her own flock the Church is nowhere, not even in the British Empire.

Now, how does the decree strike at the British Empire? The Church says to British homes: "If you want to marry by your own law, you have to accept the conditions under which I recognise your marriage." If the Catholic party brings the non-Catholic party to agree to these conditions, he is not disturbed by the decree.

As for the 5th and last "fact" which the secretary of the Evangelical Alliance puts forward, little need be said about it after all that precedes. There is enough in what we have said so far to prove that, formidable as the indictment may have looked to those who judge from appearances, there is absolutely no reasonable ground for the Ne-Temere attack which has seized on all cheap Protestantism.

"The decree," says the secretary to the Evangelical Alliance, "inflicts hardships and cruelty on the children of mixed marriages; they are promised illegitimacy, and, if they are not legitimated, declare the marriage invalid, and consequently the children born from it illegitimate, when it has been performed in defiance of her laws."

The whole question is, therefore, whether the decree is a violation of the law of God, and if so, whether it is a violation of the law of the State. The law of God is the law of the Church, and the law of the State is the law of the State.

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The decree permits the Roman Catholic Church to absolve a man from his solemn marriage vow. In other words, an unscrupulous Roman Catholic priest can go through a form of absolution with a Protestant girl and subsequently declare her, with the approval and sanction of his Church.

As for the concrete example brought in by the secretary, what can we say except that it is a cheap and poor attempt at bandying words. An unscrupulous Roman Catholic—and, for the matter of that, a non-Catholic just as well—can be a rake, but certainly not "with the approval and sanction of his Church."

Church would indignantly decline to have anything to do with the "unscrupulous" scoundrel, and if the Evangelical Alliance countenances the language from its secretary to our address, so much the worse for it. No self-respecting man will approve of such a gratulation and bestowal.

The truth is that in the case of a mixed marriage performed against her rules, should the Catholic party repent and wish to receive once more her spiritual assistance, the Church would try the following attitude. She would try to induce the non-Catholic partner to consent in his presence, and thus be married before the Catholic Church. This can be done without attracting public attention.

Should a case occur in which it is impossible to prevail on the non-Catholic party, and yet both parties wish to remain united, the Church knows how to temper all her laws with mercy. Lord Edmund Talbot, in his speech in the House, when the "Ne Temere" Decree came before Parliament in the December of the present year, met a case of the present kind.

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more and more to be understood even outside the Church by all true Christians who deplore the evils which are going on in increasing and make them rightly fear lest society and state be miserably driven into that general confusion and overthrow of order which is even now the wish of socialists and communists.

His Lordship considered the question of divorce from two standpoints: the teaching of the New Testament, and the law of the Church regarding it.

For his part, his Lordship said, he would meet that suggestion with the most refusal it was possible for him to give. He believed it was simply a case of going up to Cesar the things that were Cesar's and to God the things that were God's.

Consciously or not, the Anglican Bishop is here inspired by the teaching of the "Roman" Catholic Church.

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ed. If they are Christians, if they are desirous of following the dictates of reason and wisdom, and anxious for the good of their people, they ought "to make use," as Leo XIII. wrote, "of the professed aid of the Church for securing the safety of morals and the happiness of families, rather than suspect her of hostile intention, and falsely and wickedly accuse her of violating the civil law."

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