

Mixed Marriages

The mixed marriage menace is (says the "Catholic Transcript"), according to unanimous verdict, alarmingly on the increase. Mixed marriages, or the union of persons of different faith, are now counted extremely unsafe ventures. The happiness of the contracting parties is seriously jeopardized. Men and women who are to spend their lives under the same roof, sharing each other's confidences, hopes, ambitions, destiny, should be in agreement at least on essential points. There is nothing, in the minds of the vast majority of mankind, as essential as

The Things that Bear Upon Eternity.

Religion is altogether concerned with these things. Cicero, in his immortal treatise on friendship, declares that there can be no friendship where there is not a perfect accord in all things human and all things divine.

It will be admitted by all that husband and wife should at least be good friends. But this old Roman sage declares, and his assertion cannot be gainsaid, that there can be no friendship worthy of the name where there is not absolute accord in all things divine.

In alliances where there is disagreement respecting things eternal, the heaviest burden falls upon the Catholic party. His point of view is altogether different. His creed forces him to the position that the Catholic religion is the only true religion. Non-Catholics admit that one faith is as good as another. They can be at once liberal and logical. When a Catholic becomes liberal he becomes illogical and lacking in allegiance.

The Catholic Religion

postulates a supernatural order. It believes in mysteries. It stands for the existence of a future life, of heaven and of hell. It inculcates faith in a personal God, in a personal devil, in the life of the soul when separated from the body. It requires its votaries to subscribe to the dogma of the divinity of Christ, His resurrection, His coming to judge the world at the end of time. It is full of dogmas—dogmas which must be accepted under pain of excommunication.

Now, to the mind which rejects nearly every one of these truths such belief is superstition, pure and pernicious. And it will require consummate acting and superb tact on the part of a dissenting husband or wife to run through a lifetime without betraying some sort of contempt for the sacred tenets of the Catholic party. Distrust, disquietude, pity, and impatience at the weak-mindedness of all who seriously subscribe to such absurdities are but natural to those who look on and doubt. There is nothing that inflicts such an irreparable shock upon the sensitive as the full realisation that what is dearest to them in life is held

In Suspicion and Slight Esteem

by those who are nearest. Then there are generations yet unborn to be looked to. The child accepts his father as his hero. A word from either parent has the force of an oracle from on high. When the husband and wife are not in agreement respecting the eternals, to whom can the offspring appeal for light? Whichever way he goes, he turns his back upon father or mother. His filial piety is submitted to the severest test. His loyalty to the faith of his father is disloyalty to the faith of his mother. One need not investigate far before finding the natural results of such anomalous association.

Observation teaches the sad lesson that faith declines as mixed marriages increase. Catholic parents do not indeed favor them, but they frequently reserve their opposition till attachments are formed, till promises are exchanged and till the young people grow so far enamored of each other as to be practically convinced that the evils which naturally attend mixed marriages will not obtain in their altogether exceptional case. And so the die is cast.

It is true, to say of such alliances that the die is cast. They are pre-eminently a hazard. You make your throw and await your possible chance of winning. Meanwhile the chances are ten to one against you.

Nor will it avail to say that there are plenty of unions between men and women of the same faith which are far from being cast in pleasant places. Admitted. But why should depth be added to depth? Why should extraneous and grievous causes for heart-burning and discontent be deliberately invoked? If it is dangerous to toy with a revolver, the hazard is heightened when you play with two—especially if the second is loaded and cocked.

Pens that Signed Treaties

The great historic interest attaching to the pens used in signing the peace treaty between Russia and Japan at Portsmouth, U.S.A., was evidenced by the extraordinary keenness of makers in all parts of the world to gain the distinction of supplying them.

Pens poured in from dozens of different manufacturers; and, to avoid disappointing any of these enterprising firms, it was decided that the treaty should be signed with quill pens.

This was quite in accord with precedent as well as the eternal fitness of things; for, as a matter of fact, such momentous documents as peace and other treaties have more often than not been signed with the good old-fashioned quills.

If the newspaper reports can be believed, however, quill pens were, notwithstanding the announcement previously made, not used at the signing of the treaty. The two Russian representatives are said to have subscribed their signatures with pens brought from the Foreign Office at St. Petersburg. The holders are described as being of brown-colored wood, tipped with black horn.

The two Japanese envoys likewise came equipped with their own pens, though they are reported to have bought theirs in the United States. If this is actually the case, American manufacturers will leave no stone unturned to discover the identity of the make for advertisement purposes.

It is understood that on each side the signatories retained their pens after the signing of the treaty, though it would, perhaps, have been a graceful act to present them to the President who brought them together.

Though their intrinsic value is practically nil, these pens always command high prices when offered for sale by public auction. Not long ago there was offered for sale in Vienna the pen which was used at Paris almost ninety-one years ago by the high signatories to the treaty embodying what is known to history as the Holy Alliance.

They were the Czar Alexander I. of Russia, the Emperor Francis I. of Austria, and King Frederick William III. of Prussia, who on September, 26, 1815, with this pen subscribed their signatures to the treaty, which it is interesting to recall was actually drawn up by the first-named.

The first bid for the precious relic, which was the property of the late Count Falkenhayn, was 125fr., but it was ultimately knocked down to Consul General von Lindheim for 800fr., or something under £32 of the current coin of this realm.

It is fairly well known that the ex-Empress Eugenie of France is the proud possessor of the historic pen with which the Treaty of Paris was signed by all the fourteen plenipotentiaries who were parties thereto. Quite naturally each had a particular desire to retain for himself the pen with which he signed, but the Empress was so anxious that they should all sign with the same, and that she would be allowed to keep it, that none of them could deny her.

The fourteen signatures were accordingly appended with the one pen, which was afterwards handed over to the Empress. It, too, was a quill, but, quite appropriately, it had been plucked from the wing of a golden eagle, and was richly mounted with gold and diamonds. This pen the ex-Empress still uses occasionally.

Another pen with which a famous treaty was signed is a heirloom in the family of Viscount Bangor. This is the pen that was used on the occasion of the signing of the peace treaty between France and Austria in October, 1809, and which is known as the Treaty of Vienna. By it the last-named country was bereft of more than 42,000 miles of her finest territory and of some three and a half millions of her people, who became the subjects of other Powers.

The pen came into the possession of its present owner through an ancestor, who occupied the post of secretary to a former Viscount Castlereagh. It is still used for treaty signing, but of a happier kind than that which made it famous. When any member of the Bangor family marries it is with this pen that the marriage register is signed.

It is announced that the law providing for old age pensions in France is to come into force in January of next year. It is calculated that the cost will be some twenty-three million francs per annum.

The heaviest fall of snow in forty years recently laid low the telegraph and telephone lines at Ballarat, delayed the Adelaide express, and caused considerable damage to stores, stables, and the roofs of buildings along the southern slope of the dividing range.

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