

per are the commonest. But there are others galore. In one State, for example (as a Council Bluffs lawyer puts it), 'a wife may sue for divorce if her husband happens to come in cross and talks harshly to her, injuring her feelings and causing her to cry; or if he fails to provide her with the hired girl she may deem essential to her comfort; or if he is at all lax in the thousand-and-one attentions which his wife might demand as a right.' Aggressive toe-nails and cold feet have (if newspaper accounts speak truly) been accepted as grounds of divorce. And 'Mr. Dooley's' statement of the position is, in fact, hardly an exaggeration: 'In Nebraska th' shackles are busted because father forgot to wipe his boots; in New York because mother knows a judge in South Dakota.' According to the Census Bureau document, desertion was deemed by the courts sufficient ground for granting the application in 38 per cent. of the cases. According to the same report, out of the whole multitude of divorce cases only some 15 per cent. were contested, and it is stated that 'probably in many of these cases the contest was hardly more than a formality.' From these facts it would appear that when a couple have come to the conclusion that a change is desirable, all the husband has to do is to 'spill over' into some other State; then the wife pleads desertion, the husband fails to appear, and the thing is done. We have not got quite that length in New Zealand yet, but we are moving. The *New Zealand Official Year Book* for 1907 shows that, with the increased facilities for divorce provided by our Act of 1898, the number of divorces rose from 32 in 1898 to 126 in 1905. We are, in point of fact, proving on a small scale what every country in the world has proved that has once tampered with the sacredness of the marriage tie—we are proving that when once you have allowed an opening, however small, in the direction of divorce, it is only a matter of time when you have to open the whole door. Let the nose of the camel get into the tent, and it will not be long till his whole body has entered. If there is one point more than another on which history—mere secular history—has vindicated the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church, it is in respect to her attitude on this great question of divorce.

The revelations of the Census Bureau have an even graver import than a mere surface consideration of the figures would disclose. In order to ascertain the true significance of any movement it is necessary to look at the principles which underlie it. And the principles that are at the bottom of the present divorce movement are simply the spread of materialism and the practical denial of Christianity. In his *Conversion of the Northern Nations*, Merivale says: 'If a man denies Christianity, he will straightway deny the spiritual claims of woman. So threaten all modern unbelief and scepticism. To the woman the denial of the Gospel would be at once a fall from the consideration she now holds among us. She would descend again to be the mere plaything of man, the transient companion of his leisure hour, to be held loosely as the chance gift of a capricious fortune.' That is precisely the trend which events are taking in America to-day. Cardinal Gibbons, when asked by an interviewer for his opinion regarding the Government figures, described them as 'appalling,' and declared: 'Divorce is becoming so prevalent that marriage is getting to be little better than a system of free love.' That is the true significance of the Census Bureau statistics in a nutshell. The breaking loose from Christian faith and practice is carrying people back to the pagan or 'chattel' view of woman and wife that was revived by the apostles of infidelity who headed the French Revolution. What that view was the following passage from Rousseau makes sufficiently clear: 'Women are specially made to please men. . . All their education should be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honored by them, to bring them up when young, to take care of them when grown up, to counsel, to console them, to make their lives agreeable and pleasant—these, in all ages, have been the duties of women, and it is for these duties that they should be educated from infancy.' Rousseau would, in addition, permit woman no religious freedom or rights of conscience. Such was the position of woman under ancient paganism and under the French infidel régime of the Revolution. If she ever becomes similarly degraded again it will be by the modern paganism that ignores Christianity.

The remedy for the rodent ulcer that is eating into the very vitals of the social system in America is, to Catholics, clear and obvious. It was indicated by Cardinal Gibbons in the interview already referred to. The present deplorable state of things, said his Eminence, 'is the result of a false, loose interpretation of the Gospel. Every one of the Gospels is opposed to divorce. If divorce is

to be checked, there must be a stricter regard for the truths of the Christian religion as they are taught by the Catholic Church. If we profess to be Christians, let us be Christians.' That is the beginning and end of the matter. Checks and palliatives there may be—such as stricter legislation and a policy of social ostracism towards divorced people—but when all is said and done there is but one remedy for this distemper, and that is the absolute prohibition of divorce in accordance with the teaching of the Gospel and the inflexible rule of the Catholic Church. The discontented owner of an unshapely cur fancied he could beautify it by cutting two inches from its tail. 'If you want to make the dog beautiful,' said a philosophic friend, 'you must cut his tail off two inches behind the ear.' It is only by a similarly drastic application of the knife that the divorce canker—the ugliest and most loathsome portent in modern society—can be fully and finally destroyed.

Notes

Our Drink Bill

New Zealand's drink bill for 1908 amounts to the tidy fortune of £3,751,968. This represents (says a Press Association message) 'the cost to consumers of all liquor passed through the Customs and Excise at per gallon rates, and is therefore much under the actual cost.' It is some comfort to learn that the figures given above represent 'a reduction of 4½d per head of the population.' We must be thankful even for this small mercy.

Some Admissions

The Boston *S.H. Review* of December 26 quotes the *Lamp* (a well-known Protestant Episcopal organ) as claiming to have 'established its contention that an *Ecclesia Anglicana* (or Anglican Church) independent of the Holy See in spirituals was a phenomenon unknown to history prior to the Reformation.' Commenting on Episcopalian claims to some seceded Catholic priests, the *Lamp* is further quoted as follows: 'In measuring the loss or gain to the two communions, we should take into consideration quality much more than quantity. When has Rome lost to us a Newman, a Manning, or a Faber, or (to come nearer home) a Bishop Ives, a James Kent Stone, a Wadhams, or a Walworth?'

The Education Grievance

The *Austral Light* complains with much reason that in Victoria, as elsewhere in Australasia, 'we have to pay the State for an education that we do not get, and pay again for the education we do get.' Thirty-five years ago (adds our clever contemporary) 'the bigots coalesced with the secularists, and declared against paying for Catholic religious education. Now, when they are endeavoring to persuade the State into paying for Protestant religious teaching, they are challenging all and sundry to show that it would cost the State anything more than it is now paying for education. We reply to the challengers by asking them to show that it would have cost the State anything extra for Catholic religious teaching if it had paid for the secular education imparted in our schools, as it was in justice bound, after having received from us in taxes the money wherewith to pay for such education. That new point raised by the Scripture Lesson advocates is not going to extricate them from any difficulties.'

The Accession Oath

The movement for the amendment of the insulting features of the Accession Oath goes gaily on in England. The opposition to this measure of Catholic relief is confined to the happily small, though noisy, section of the population whose bodies live in the present, but whose souls belong to the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. 'Sensible men,' says the *Catholic Times*, 'are convinced that the King should not be called upon to outrage the religious beliefs of any class of citizens who go to form the State of which he is the head. The *Guardian*, while cordially hoping that a Bill may be got through Parliament, feels by no means sure whether any measure can be framed satisfactory to "militant Protestants and punctilious Roman Catholics." It has an idea that the problem will be solved, not by Parliament, but by the present Prince of Wales. It says: "A declaration by the next King to the effect that, on his honor, he professed himself a sincere member of the Church of England, and rejected the claim of any foreign Prelate to exercise jurisdiction in this country, would satisfy the vast majority of his subjects, without giving the slightest cause of legitimate offence to Roman Catholics, and we rather think that it would fare ill with any devoted

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