

loonist, and the aeronaut of a German balloon sent up to intercept him and his despatches. But the day is, we think, still far off when either airships or flying machines will be able to carry crews of any strength or any considerable weight of high explosive to rain as 'a ghastly dew' upon either ship or shore.

Treason by 'Loyalists'

It was a kindly thought that moved King Edward and Queen Alexandra to attend the Requiem for his intimate friend, the murdered King of Portugal, at St. James's, Spanish Place, London. 'This,' says an English contemporary, 'is the first time since the establishment of the Protestant succession that an English Sovereign has attended Mass on British soil'. And the 'Catholic Weekly' is credibly informed that the Queen 'made a pious use of a Catholic prayer-book during the Mass.' In all the circumstances, one can understand the white heat to which the anger of the Protestant Alliance and kindred organisations arose. Their protest was made the subject of a cable message, on which we commented at the time. It now turns out that these fiery 'loyalists' protest was, in reality, an act of treason. But the great British Public look with an amused and tolerant smile on the spasms and jerks and oratorical fireworks of these fiery-tempered enthusiasts. Even volcanoes have their use—they are the earth's safety-valves. The recent demonstration of British 'loyalists' against British Royalty has afforded the demonstrators a safety-valve for super-heated feeling. And playing at treason has done the King and Queen no harm.

CATHOLIC MARRIAGES

A CHRISTCHURCH CONTROVERSY

The controversy on 'Catholic Marriages' in the Christchurch 'Press' has reached a further stage. The Rev. Mr. Carrington, of Christ's College, has announced his retirement from the discussion. In his letter of March 23, he protested that it was 'false' to say that he misquoted St. Thomas. 'I did not quote the whole section,' added he, 'because it would fill a whole issue of the "Press".' It could, we think, be neatly set up within one column of the 'Tablet'. 'I knew,' he adds again, 'about the "impedimenta" and "dirimentia", and left them alone'. 'Impedimenta' (i.e. impediments) to marriage, we know; but what on earth as (or are) 'dirimentia'? The editor of the 'Tablet' (he contends) 'ignores the words I have emphasised in every letter by inverted commas, "null and void, still unmarried, in the sight of God".' This phrase removes the whole question out of the ecclesiastical sphere into the moral sphere. Here are two separate propositions: (a) nullification in the sight of the Church, (b) nullification in the sight of God. The editor of the 'Tablet' perhaps regards them as identical; I cannot.

The following reply by the editor of the 'Tablet' (which was held over) appeared in the 'Press' of Thursday of last week:—

Sir,—The golden rule of discussion is to evolve more light than heat. The Rev. Mr. Carrington's letters, and especially his last, have, however, been marked by very high controversial temperatures, but, thus far, he has thrown no light whatever upon the very matters on which it is his duty to illuminate your readers. I refer to the two sets of enthusiastically positive indictments fulminated by him against the recent decree extending from a part to the whole of the Catholic world (with certain modifications), the three-century-old legislation of the Church against clandestine marriages. (1) I have naturally taken first the thing which, in all the decree, filled the reverend accuser with most amazement—namely, that (as he said in your issues of March 3rd and 12th) it annuls the tenets of 'Roman theology' and cancels 'the authoritative teaching of Catholicism.' (2) The other leading accusation appeared in your issues of March 3rd and 19th. The Catholic Church (it says) is guilty of 'immoral' teaching, and of 'upsetting the very foundation of social morality,' in holding that marriages which are null and void in her sight are null and void in the sight of heaven.

These grave charges are as positive and dogmatic as human language could well make them. But their truth

is not self-evident; it is not to be assumed, but proved. Now, the Rev. Mr. Carrington is either able to prove his accusations or he is not. If he is able, why does he not do so? If he is not able, why does he not frankly and manfully say so, and retire from a controversy on which he ought never to have entered? Unable to face the first count of his indictment, he now clamors for me to proceed to the second. But any delay that has occurred in determining his first series of accusations is due wholly and solely to the Rev. Mr. Carrington's persistent shirking of his own accusations; it is due to his refusal to do what the law would compel him to do if he made against a reputable citizen of Christchurch charges as gravely dishonoring as he has published against the responsible heads of the greatest Christian Communion. He has set these issues, not I. He must abide by them so long as this discussion lasts, and he must learn still further the useful lesson that hasty attack has its perils and its penalties. I have already expressed my determination to meet him, at an early moment, on the question of the nullity of certain marriages in the eyes of the Church and in the sight of heaven. It is, in fact, the issue of all others that I desire to discuss with him. And I may state here and now that I intend, if permitted, to push this whole question back to its very foundations.

Meantime, in order to clear the ground for the discussion of this second accusation, I will sum up the position as regards the first. The Rev. Mr. Carrington charged (1) that the recent decree annuls 'what has always been held binding by Roman theology,' and (2) that it has 'cancelled the authoritative teaching of Catholicism.' He has not tendered, nor can he tender, so much as a scrap of evidence in support of these assertions. (3) He has not attempted to show that the decree is a 'moral law,' much less that it is 'a new moral law.' In all these cases, the old legal maxim applies: 'De non apparentibus et de non existentibus, eadem est ratio'—the evidence that is not forthcoming is to be treated as evidence that has no existence. On these issues I am entitled to, and claim, judgment by default. (4) According to the Rev. Mr. Carrington, the papal decree makes 'the priestly benediction' 'of the essence of the sacrament' of matrimony. But section xii. of the decree expressly provides for the celebration of true sacramental marriages, in given circumstances, without either the presence or the blessing of the priest. (5) The Rev. Mr. Carrington says: 'All whom Rome has not married are in the sight of God and the Church not married at all.' What! 'All'? Well, section xi. of the decree, subsection 3, dynamites this assertion. It exempts all 'non-Catholics, whether baptised or unbaptised,' from the operation of the decree. (6) The Pope and the Congregation of the Council say that the decree is a law of 'discipline.' The Rev. Mr. Carrington is dead sure that, according to 'Roman theology,' it is no such thing. We are all acquainted with a few of the good souls who, as Samuel Butler phrases it,

'Know more of any trade o' a hint
Than those that have been bred up in't.'

Yet, until substantial evidence to the contrary is forthcoming, I must decline to believe that the reverend gentleman knows more of 'Roman theology' and Roman Canon Law than 'those that have been bred up in't.'

I now direct the attention of your readers to the extraordinary theory of marriage which was broached by the Rev. Mr. Carrington, in order to truss up one of his first series of accusations against the Catholic Church. 'Consent,' says he, 'makes matrimony.' This (he adds) is 'the principle for which I contend, viz., that a man's pledged word has a sacramental value of its own, which cannot be made null and void.' Let us see how this Carringtonian 'principle' works out in practice. Having read the proclamation of this 'new moral law' in the 'Press,' the following 'charmin' variety' of candidates for matrimony call, say, upon the Rev. Mr. Carrington to tie the nuptial knot: a father to wed his daughter, a brother his sister, a mother her son, and sundry disgruntled married men and women to wed new partners. In every case there is full, free, and mutual consent. And, of course, 'consent makes matrimony,' and 'a man's' (and presumably a woman's) 'pledged word has a sacramental value of its own, which cannot be made null and void.' So the menagerie of strange couples is joined in 'holy' wedlock, and as they pass out of church they

'Hear the mellow wedding bells!
Golden bells!'

Nay, the Carringtonian 'principle' would 'throw a sacramental value' over abominations of a still more unspeakable kind, and issue in a state of things that would subvert 'the very foundation of social morality.'

Whatever may be the Rev. Mr. Carrington's private

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