

husband or wife with whom life has become impossible, but the Church offers a remedy as efficacious for individual security in the separation *a mensa et thoro*, by which she allows the parties to live wholly apart, without, however, allowing either of them to marry again while the other is alive. It may be said that such a restriction imposes hardship on the innocent party. It is this very pretext which affords to advocates of divorce their strongest appeal. But let us remember that the Christian religion does not guarantee that anyone shall be free from trial and hardship in this life or that the innocent shall be preserved from suffering. To hold that is to have a totally wrong conception of the spirit of Christianity. Suffering must be as long as man is in this world, and, moreover, suffering is usually the lot of the just. Again, the suffering and hardship thus imposed through strict marriage laws is far better than the general corruption and dissolution of morals which result from any relaxation of the law. "What God hath joined let no man put asunder." Even from a purely rationalistic point of view, divorce with all its vaunted freedom is an evil out of all proportion in comparison of the minor and rare hardships which are the result of the strict observance of that law of Christian marriage which is the sure foundation of the sanctity of the family and the welfare of society.

MAJORITY RULE

(By the VERY REV. DEAN BURKE.)

We hear it said that the majority has the right to rule in political matters: if anywhere in the body politic there is right an inherent, natural right to govern that right lies with the numerical majority. It took politicians a long time to discover this great obvious principle. I showed in a previous paper that government by numerical majority, by counting heads, was a device introduced late in history. Then for centuries it was merely a tentative plan adopted to settle lighter questions. In clubs, councils, and parliaments, it was found a ready and convenient means to reach decisions and so grew into general use. Now Majority Rule is one of our political fetishes—a fetish before which we must stand in awe and to which we must offer our obedience and loyalty. We are told it is the basis, the vital principle of democracy: it is democracy in action!

Yet one may ask: Has a majority any right to govern the minority beyond what was given by some previous arrangement? Has it any such right founded in the nature of man or of human society? An able political writer puts the answer somewhat after this fashion:—Surely it is above all things democratic to say that one man is not born with the natural right to govern another. Men are by no means born equal: but one is not born, except through some municipal or national regulation, subject to the will of another, in political concerns. If no

one man has the right to rule another where can two united get it? How prove that two men have a right to govern the third? How show that my two neighbors or my twenty neighbors have the natural right to govern me? Whence do they obtain this right?

But, it may be said, Majority Rule is to be applied in the case of large numbers, of political communities and States. The majority in such communities has the inherent right to rule the whole community. But the question recurs again whence do 100 men get the right to make their will prevail over 99 men who have perhaps a juster and wiser will? Whence do 1000 voters composed largely of scallawags from the slums get the right to legislate for and disfranchise, for the time, 999 men largely embracing the teachers, professional men and men of wealth and position in the place? Do not reply by saying that the numerical majority should naturally and fittingly rule. That is the point to be proved. How prove it? Man and society carried on for ages without the help of Majority Rule. It is therefore not essential to, not inherent in the nature of man and society. It is only an agreement, a regulation more or less convenient adopted by clubs, councils and parliaments to carry on government. It is no part of the Eternal Law deserving our pious veneration. The modern statelastist in giving it his homage is placing too much confidence in another "idol of the marketplace"—too often the work of the demagogue and of the party majority-monger.

It may be objected why should a minority stand in the way of the majority. In the Bible-in-schools controversy some years ago, you may remember, this was the clenching argument with one party. We have got the numbers, said Anglican bishops and canons, Presbyterian ministers and Methodist preachers. Why should our will be thwarted by a minority? Give us the Referendum and we will whip up to the ballot-box shoals of ladies old and young, male and female who will overwhelm the minority by five to one! Why stop us by those pleas—right, justice, no plundering of the weak for the benefit of the strong? We have got tyranny able, by numbers and force, to maintain itself; the numerical majority must rule. But stay, dear bishops and canons and preachers! You are preaching the doctrine of Might is Right. Your doctrine would legitimate any tyranny able, by numbers and force, to maintain itself; it is despotism, Prussianism pure and simple. A few years ago holy men were not ashamed to preach the doctrine, Might is Right, the majority must rule, that is,—Prussianism. At present they would not preach it; however they might like to act it. Prussianism is not for the moment respectable. Justice, right, honor, protection for small nations, strong guarantees for minorities form the themes of our press, pulpit, and platform teaching. So minorities may stand in the way of majorities sometimes.

Again except in the case of small groups, such as clubs, companies, synods, Majority Rule is a fiction, an impracticability. In large political communities, among millions, how can you get at the will of the majority, supposing they had the right to legislate and rule. A majority of the people have not expressly voted or declared for any government, code or piece of legislation ever yet set up. Consider that in most countries women, who form half the population, have no votes; consider that large numbers under a fixed age are shut out from the polls, that large numbers are kept away by business, sickness,

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