

THE "TRAPPIST" WHO GOT MARRIED

MODERN EDITION OF MARIA MONK.

One of the leading South African dailies, a few weeks ago (says the *Southern Cross*, of Capetown), reproduced with great gusto, as did the Dunedin and other New Zealand papers, the following report from a section of the London press:

"A former Trappist monk, Father Alberic, now known to the world as Mr. James Cornell Biddle, a member of one of Philadelphia's oldest and richest families, is the chief figure in a romance which culminated yesterday in his marriage to Miss Mary Lena Gaines, of Warrenton, Virginia.

"The couple are bound for "Paradise," the fine old Virginian estate belonging to the bride, where they will make their permanent home.

"For thirty years the bridegroom lived a life of perpetual silence in seclusion, penitence, and prayer at the Trappist monastery situated at Broad Knoll, Gethsemane, 48 miles south of Louisville, Kentucky. Daily there he performed certain manual tasks and contemplated the graves made ready for each monk, dedicating the remainder of his time to studying the early Christian writers. A year ago he renounced his vows, having reached the conclusion that 'the Protestant or Evangelical form of Church government was the primitive form.'

"I was influenced," he said, 'by the writings of St. Paul, and became convinced that celibacy was not obligatory for the clergy.'

"Mr. Biddle, after the marriage ceremony, received reporters, to whom he repeated over and over again that his was not a *Garden of Allah* romance. 'In the *Garden of Allah*,' he observed, 'the monk took his step against his conscience. In my case I am absolutely at peace with my conscience.' The bridegroom gave his age as 52 and the bride as 48."

THE TRUTH.

We have now received a copy of the English weekly, *Plain English*, which completely exposes this "latest example of American fiction."

It is true (says *Plain English*) that the "bridegroom, belongs to a 'rich and old family' His parents are leading stockholders in one of the largest jewellery firms in the world, namely, Messrs. Bailey, Banks, and Biddle. Some years ago his relations, who are Protestants, had him certified in the usual way as a lunatic. In one of his lucid moments he was admitted to a retreat house, conducted by Catholics, where he could harm no one, and where it was hoped prayer and study might improve his condition. But he was never anything but a hopeless humbug. His relations withheld his money from him, with the understanding that on emerging from his retreat as a Protestant he could have it.

He was apparently under the delusion that he was a Trappist sworn to silence, and several priests, who observed his conduct and his refusal to speak, considered that he was as mad as ever. Annoyed at their attitude, he left the retreat house for the woman whom he afterwards married.

The "Paradise" fine old Virginian estate belonging to the bride is simply a brick house of the Colonial period surrounded by a few cornfields in the midst of a negro settlement. As the property is mortgaged for two-thirds of its value, the charming bride seems to have trapped her "Trappist" with considerable advantage to herself.

But in the meantime grave scandal has been caused by the suggestion that the bridegroom was a Trappist monk. The general public may be unaware that the Cistercian Order, commonly called the Trappists, frequently undertakes the care of victims of drugging or intemperance. But, to say the least, it is unfortunate that the good monks should have scandal brought upon their Order because a semi-lunatic believes himself to have been a monk. In so doing, Mr. Biddle has copied the notorious Maria Monk, who, as an inmate in a rescue home, supposed herself to be a nun, after she "escaped" and resumed her immoral life.

Look about you in the universe and see nature always smiling, see every species of lower life praising God for His benefactions. Why should man be the only exception?

FARMER READERS.—Where do you get your Butter Wrappers printed? Why not patronise the printing department of the *N.Z. Tablet*, Dunedin? Every order, no matter how small, is welcome. Prices on application to the Manager for 1lb or ½lb wrappers.

ITALIAN PRESS ON THE BRITISH POLICY IN IRELAND

A correspondent in Rome writes:—

Italian journals continue to show their interest in Irish events, an interest which arouses some not over dignified manifestations of displeasure from certain types of Englishmen in Rome.

The *Corriere d'Italia* for December 10, in an article entitled "Freemasonry and the Irish Crisis," points out the development and activity of English Freemasonry in recent years. English Freemasonry, it points out, whatever protestations may be made by it or its apologists, is identical in principle and aims with its more noisy or more open Continental sister. It notes the all-powerful influence of Freemasonry in English politics and government, especially as regards projects of law purporting to apply to Ireland, and points out that Freemasonry is the only political society which the R.I.C. and D.M.P. were officially authorised to join. It emphasises the coincidence between the renewed activity of English Freemasonry and the increase of savage reprisals, and in general the present English policy in Ireland. "We cannot," it concludes, "but feel a new thrill of sympathy for our Irish brethren, knowing them engaged in a life-and-death struggle against the common enemy."

Even the *Giornale d'Italia*, usually of decidedly pro-English tendencies, in its London correspondence for December 12, remarks that Mr. Lloyd George, in initiating his policy of terrorism in Ireland "perhaps did not even realise the possibility that the Irish would merely make up their minds to resist it."

An article entitled "David and Goliath" appears in the *Tempo* for December 21 from the brilliant pen of Prof. Ernesto Buonaiuti, already well known to Italian sympathisers with Ireland by the little book, *L'Isola di Emeraldia*, in which he and Father Turchi record their impressions of a visit to Ireland.

"The chronicle," he writes, "speaks daily of the skirmishes in which the war declared by the little David on the giant Goliath is carried on, and of the horrible reprisals which the giant, grown furious, takes on defenceless villages and solitary factories. The chronicle must prepare to register still more sanguinary encounters and still more eager campaigns. What will Lloyd George do when the Republic of de Valera, which has already constituted its armies and organised its tribunals, will refuse to pay the ordained taxes to the Imperial treasury?"

In such a struggle, he concludes, every surprise is possible. "When the soft warmth of spring is at hand, the winter in its agony loves to let loose all the more furiously the violence of its parting blast."

The *Conquista Popolare*, a Catholic weekly of Verona, publishes an article entitled "The Shame of Our Age." It remarks that since the *Conquista Popolare* commenced publication a year ago, it has been dealing with the Irish question as one of the points of its programme as regards international affairs. It notes the falsifying of information on Ireland through English agency, in keeping with the policy of England, "whose most certain and uninterrupted tradition is hypocrisy." It notes what has been accomplished by French journals to secure genuine information on events in Ireland, and promises to do the same for Italy. "It will be seen," it adds, "how in the first quarter of the twentieth century of the Christian era the greatest infamy of our age belongs, not to the Turks, not to the Japanese, not to the Chinese, not to the Russians, not to . . . the Hottentots, but to England—the Paladin, as we know, of Belgium and Serbia and all the small nations of the universe."

The Provincial Council of Milan has passed a resolution in favor of Irish independence. Similarly the General Assembly of the Italian Popular Party, Roman section, has expressed its "wish that the Direction of the Party and the Parliamentary Group take efficacious action in Parliament and through the country in defence of the martyr people against the tyrannical oppression of capitalistic England."

It is curious to note a certain coincidence. After such recent manifestations of Italian interest in Ireland, and before the introduction of the Hon. Mauri's motion in the Italian Parliament, the price of capitalistic England's coal has been reduced very considerably for the benefit of Italy.

Anticipate the wants of others without waiting till you are asked. True charity teaches us how they may stand in need.

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