

The True Witness

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE. PRINTED AND PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY BY THE PROPRIETOR.

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TO OUR CATHOLIC FELLOW-CITIZENS OF CANADA.

(From the True Witness of the 16th August, 1850.)

It has often been the subject of wondering remark, to many of sincere regret, that, whilst our Protestant fellow-citizens, of almost every denomination, have each their avowed organ, through which they can express their wants and feelings, and advocate each their own peculiar views of what they consider truth, the Catholics alone, that is that numerous portion of the community, who professing the Catholic faith, speak the English language should not possess, throughout the entire Province, a single publication, in the columns of which they can give utterance to their indignation, protest, against the illiberal, and often libellous charges with which they stand accused.

As men, as citizens, we are insulted by the meditated invasion upon the sacred right of property, by the cry raised against our religious establishments, and the property of the Clergy: by the cry raised for their destruction; not because it is even pretended that the funds created by the far-seeing piety of former generations have been wasted, or misapplied; not because our religious establishments have been found, by experience, impotent for good, or productive of evil, but because of their very efficacy, but because of the living testimony that they bear to the unity of the true Church of Christ.

As intelligent beings, we are insulted by the taunts of mental blindness, of bigotry, and of superstition—by mental blindness, because, in our researches after truth, we refuse to be guided, by the new light of the conventicle;—of bigotry, because, believing in the unity of truth, we can recognise no Church of God save one; of superstition, because we submit our reason to the teaching of that Church and are content to adore, where we cannot comprehend.

As Christians, our feelings are continually outraged, by the foul charge of idolatry, whilst the most solemn offices of our holy religion, are made the subject of the scoerner's unbalanced mirth.

And, if ever mindful of the precepts of our Divine Master "not to render railing for railing," we have long borne all this in silence, could we hope, by patience, and calm endurance, to disarm, or weary out the malice of our adversaries, we yet could bear.

We will endeavour to show cause why it is not expedient to violate treaties, to infringe upon the sacred rights of property to destroy the establishments for educational purposes, and to annihilate the only provision existing in this country for the relief of the poor and needy.

And, by the help of God, we will no longer tamely submit to have our religion reviled—our holy things profaned—our clergy insulted—and the meek inmates of our religious communities exposed to the ribald taunts, and cowardly insinuations of the infidel or the fanatic.

We will endeavour to show, that it is owing to these much abused institutions, and to them alone, that this country is not, like Protestant England, burdened with a daily increasing mass of pauperism, and its hideous attendant crime,—that these establishments offer the only effectual provision for the suffering members of the community.

Not indeed to the discussion of abstract points of Catholic theology, or to treatises upon the incomprehensible "mysteries of our faith"—the love and condescension of God towards man, as manifested in the Incarnation and Real Presence in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar—His mysterious nature, revealed to us, and by us worshipped in Unity of essence, and Trinity of persons, are topics too vast, too holy to be lightly treated of in the fleeting col-

umna of a weekly periodical too awful and sacred to be irreverently mixed up with accidents and offences, shipping intelligence and police reports. But to explain what are the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and what her teaching to her children,—to declare what as Catholics we hold, and what reject,—to repel the charges of idolatry, and of superstition, brought against us—these will be our object, these the end of all our efforts.

Catholicity is of no nation, of no particular shade of politics. The "True Witness" therefore will not be a political paper, in the ordinary acceptation of the term. Confining ourselves to the discussion of those measures, the effects of which may be advantageous, or prejudicial to the moral and religious well-being of the community—the acts, and not the persons of the members of the Ministry, will alone form the subjects of our censures or of our praise.

Translations from, and notices of, foreign authors, together with extracts from the more amusing portions of the light literature of the day, will here also find their allotted place.

And now we trust we have sufficiently explained our objects, and the means by which we hope to obtain that support and encouragement which are necessary to ensure success; and, therefore, would we call upon the Catholics of Canada, whose religion is dear unto them, to assist us with their literary and pecuniary contributions.

Especially would we call upon our Irish brethren for countenance and support—by the love they bear to their own Green Isle, and to their Ancestral Faith—by the memory of the trials and persecutions they so oft have borne in the cause of truth. We would implore them to come forward now, and prove that here, in Canada, as in Ireland, and elsewhere, they are ever ready to do battle for their Church; always prepared to give every man a reason for the faith that is in them.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER.

Five and twenty years ago the Founder of the True Witness announcing his first entry in the list of Canadian Journalists, addressed to our Catholic Fellow-Citizens of Canada the words which we reproduce and repeat to-day. To their reproduction and repetition we strictly confine ourselves. We do so not only because such words give to our own programme the most perfect expression, but because we wish from the very outset and in the most articulate way to proclaim that our own personal purpose in our new position is simply to continue the work of our illustrious predecessor.

Both to the Truth and to the Church there are, of course, almost daily, new enemies arising; and these, adopting as they most frequently do adopt new arms and new modes of fighting, cannot be always satisfactorily encountered according to the rules and customs of old campaigns. But the two great principles, of untarnished loyalty to the Church and of even-handed justice to all must still and for ever determine and direct our warfare. That by these two principles every movement of ours as Editor of the True Witness shall be determined and directed, our Patrons and Readers may consider sure.

And, of that Truth and of that Church, we, like unto our predecessor, regard ourselves solely as, in a small way and for a special place, the humble defender.

man for the defence of any. He does not know anything," says Goethe, "who knows nothing else" and "the man of one book" is man to be feared. In many more ways than Cicero dreamed of. More especially is this verified of the reciprocal relations between Religion on the one hand and Politics Literature, Social Life on the other where the influence of Religion is so essentially extensive and so essentially inevitable that where the ablest thinkers fall into constant error because of a narrow exclusiveness of education, which begets a narrow exclusiveness of thought and which, making no allowance for influences not the less powerful because they are unseen, sees its calculations falsified and its projects fail.

It will be our endeavour through severe and earnest study to keep ourselves well to the front in the amassing of such knowledge as will make our work not only conscientious but enlightened, not only sincere but scholarly; and while in all cases we shall express our conviction with the most unmistakable decision we shall in no case neglect the labour necessary to make our judgments worthy of our Patrons and worthy of our cause. In the political domain especially we propose to proceed with care. Of the truth, as known to us by long and rigorous scholastic training, we shall soften or conceal no single tittle; from every influence of clique or party we shall hold ourselves always jealously aloof; with Politics, except in so far as they enter the province of a Catholic journalist we shall consistently decline to intermeddle; but while carefully separating both our journal and ourselves from all partisanship of whatever reputation we shall always give not only our hearty approval but our best support to every true and reputable political principle.

In the external shape and seeming of our journal it is our intention to make some important changes. Progress in the mere mechanical departments of newspaper management has during the last twenty years been very decided; and the benefit of that progress we deem it our duty to extend to our Readers. The present proprietor of the True Witness, Mr. John Gillies, will spare no expense necessary to carry out our plans. When these plans are realized, our paper, we think, will, for form and finish, have no superior among American journals, nor shall we be satisfied until it has been made worthy in all respects of the fresh young Catholicity of our great Dominion, like that Catholicity, with a brilliant past, and like that Catholicity resolute that upon its future there shall be no stain.

Whilst in these opening remarks we address ourselves to all Catholics irrespective of nationality, we should be very untrue to our own nature if we did not direct a specially tender and truthful word to those who, whether by blood or birth, are, like ourselves, children of Ireland. To them our predecessor, knowing, though he was not of them, their natural nobleness of heart and their long-proved loyalty of soul, made particular appeal. What twenty-five years ago he did, we do to-day. We do so without apology; our spoken words have already demonstrated to our countrymen that their cause is also ours. We do so without fear; our own personal experience, no less than the world's general history has already made it evident that no Catholic cause ever called on Irishmen and called in vain. On our countrymen we, without pretence and without petitioning, can rely.

FALSE WITNESSING. Wise men always Affirm and say That 'tis best for a man Diligently For to apply To the business he can, And in no wise To enterprise Another faculty. A simple better Should not go smatter In philosophy; Nor ought a peddler Become a meddler In theology.

Before our appointment to the Editorial chair of the True Witness we had written but one article for any Journal of Montreal. That solitary specimen of our Journalistic manner appeared in our issue of 22nd of October. It appeared under the caption "An Unexpected Conversion." Though the article was very far from ambitious notoriety, it had the good fortune to attract at once considerable attention. The Editor of the Montreal Daily Witness unexpectedly paid it a very distinguished honour. In a special editorial he spoke of it with a general effect of praise; a large portion of it reproduced in his own remarkable and respectable journal, and very recently he made, in its regard, such a marked reference as evidenced that, in the first place, he wished to treat it with a certain respect and that in the second place though it was as he

says very "pretty and polite" it still managed to leave behind it in his soft soul, a rather rankling memory. His editorial was certainly a literary curiosity. That the inhabitants of a certain portion of the British Empire are proverbially impervious to a joke except it come through the agency of a surgical operation is what we have often heard but it is what, remembering the "great things" done for humorous literature by the Scottish Race, we have never thought it proper to believe. And still when we "politely and prettily" twit the Editor of the Montreal Witness with his "unexpected conversion" he sets himself as gravely as a "convicted" Covenanter to prove to the world that he, the notorious champion of Protestantism, is not a Papist after all. Very laughable that would be were it not so suspicious. We admonish his patrons: once more to be on their guard. Anxiety to repel an insinuation made only in evident playfulness, "politely and prettily," is good proof that the insinuation went right to the mark.

Then again his manner of meeting our gentle reference to the respective characters of Dr. Newman and Mr. Chiniquy possesses for us a touching interest. We had said:—"Even the Editor's own aesthetic perfections will hasten his passage to the Catholic Church. He is essentially a man of taste; and, for a man of taste, the company of Dr. Newman must be much more desirable than the companionship of Mr. Chiniquy." We, in a vain endeavour to pay the Editor a compliment which as an educated person he might be capable of understanding, put the religious question to him prettily and politely as a question of taste; and we expressed an opinion that on aesthetic principles he, being notoriously an individual of delicate culture, would have eventually to part company with that eminent divine who speaks of himself as "poor old Chiniquy" and who takes his illustrations from "an old cow" which he informs his hearers he keeps at Kankakee. The Editor triumphantly retorts that Mr. Chiniquy, whatever he is, is a Roman Catholic production, and that Dr. Newman, no matter how perfect, is of Protestant growth. The retort is not distinguished by logical directness. If Mr. Chiniquy be the legitimate offspring of Roman Catholicity it is somewhat strange that he found himself uncomfortable in his parental house; and if Protestantism made Dr. Newman the wonder that he is, it is very strange that in his parental Protestantism Dr. Newman could not find a home. We make no remark at present on the statements that Mr. Chiniquy received a specially splendid Catholic education and that Protestantism still possesses numbers of men as gifted and as learned as John Henry Newman. We are only considering the question as a question of taste. And we suggest as rather curious that Dr. Newman's matchless culture brought him to Catholicity; while Mr. Chiniquy's suspicious sympathies with the literature of filth led him at last to the faith and to the friendship of the Daily Witness of Montreal. A society which is never abandoned except by unworthy members must, as it keeps the good, have some good elements of attraction; a society whose best members, they who know it most nearly and clearly, rush from it invariably as corrupt and corrupting, as saving only by invincible ignorance, and surviving only by stolen sacraments, cannot be regarded as a very inviting locality wherein to make one's home. Now, Protestantism has never been able to retain such men as Dr. Newman or Cardinal Manning, though it has been able to retain such men as Mr. Newdegate and the Editor of the Witness; while Catholicity has never lost hold of any Bossuet or any Wiseman, though sometimes she has been obliged to let go such special spirits as Mr. Gerdmann of Philadelphia and Mr. Chiniquy of Illinois. Does the Editor of the Witness apprehend?

But to these subjects we shall come formally at another time. It is not for their sakes that we are writing now. We write for the sake of the Editor of the Witness. We desire frankly to put him upon his guard, warning him as we hereby warn him that we are very patient and very persistent; that as we "set naught down in malice" so do we "nothing extenuate"; and that while he will uniformly find us much too sincerely Christian to care to practice sophistry or chicanery, he will also find us much too sternly bent on faithfully fulfilling the duties of our office, to let any little trick of his escape exposure. One such little trick—a very little one but still as a sample quite sufficient—we mention now. In our article of the 22nd October we used certain expressions in allusion to certain ridiculous remarks made by the Editor of the Witness in preferring certain charges against Catholicity. Evidently the expressions of which we made use, though "polite and pretty," were far from pleasing. It would not suit the Editor to have such things come before his patrons' eyes. He puts his patrons softly of their guard. He comments upon the article with a certain amount of favor, and he quotes from it at length the two introductory paragraphs. But these paragraphs being introductory should be argumentative harmless. He bides his time. Nearly three weeks afterwards, in the Witness of November 10th, he endeavours, by a passing parenthetical allusion to our article, to produce an impression about us for which he can scarcely help knowing our article supplies not the slightest grounds. He is writing on Louise Latéau; and the allusion to which we refer is, found in the following sentence:—"But why intelligent people who are keen enough to detect imposture in worldly affairs allow themselves to be so easily gulled in matters of religion, a much more important and momentous domain, even Father Murphy, who seems willing to confine human reason to the keeping of groceries, has failed to satisfactorily explain." We courteously acknowledge the implied compliment which that sentence accords us. But the statement in the phrase which we have italicized is deplorably disingenuous. A direct answer to it, truthful but not complimentary, is that about the proper office of human reason in general we expressed no opinion; that an opinion we did express about that special human reason possessed by the Editor of the Witness, and that the noble faculty with which he has been endowed might and, we thought, its fit occupation, in keeping a grocery. (Such a direct answer, of course, need not, nor perhaps does, the statement require an answer at all. But we have resolved to reply to it in a fashion which may be in-

structive. Our reply will be to reprint those portions of our article to which in his first notice the Editor made no allusion, but to which he long subsequently alluded and alluded unfairly. Perhaps he may be induced to supplement his former generosity, and to let his patrons read now what he gave them no opportunity of reading before.

After expressing our conviction that the Editor of the Witness is on "the road to Rome," and after assuring him that he has on his journey "our warmest wishes and our best prayers," we, in the article referred to, thus proceed:—

"But he shall have more." It is just possible that on some doctrinal points his mind is not yet completely satisfied. We gather as much from the interesting paragraph with which his little sketch concludes: "The noble faculty of reason was not," he says, "given merely to weigh sugar and tea withal." It was bestowed, he informs us, to have free exercise "in the higher realms of religious enquiry." But the Church of Rome, he announces, restricts the noble faculty to the department of sugar and tea; whence it follows, not only that we Romanists are all grocers; which is our own inference, but that the Editor's inference—we are false to our reason and lose some commodity which he prizes highly and to which he gives the name of "dignity." Being false to our reason and being deprived of our dignity, we, he argues, believe and disbelieve, with precisely what our tyrant tells us. And that, he proceeds, is the true cause why so many "eminent divines" who formerly opposed the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, "gave into it"—his own excellent expression—"after it was decreed," and thus won for themselves the "pity" of himself and of others who "enjoy freedom of conscience outside the Church of Rome." We gather, therefore, that his points of complaint are reducible to two. He complains, firstly, that when he himself becomes a Catholic he shall be allowed to exercise his noble faculty of reason only in the weighing of sugar and tea; he complains, secondly, that those Catholics who formerly rejecting the Papal Infallibility now accept it, do so in direct disobedience of what their noble faculty clearly commands.

"Let him be comforted. Even if his Catholic Director should counsel him to betake himself in his declining years to the safe employment of keeping a grocery, the loss to himself and to the world may not be severe. We know him now for a long time; we have been always keenly interested in endeavoring to discover his precise natural and supernatural vocation; and we have long been profoundly certain that his allotted calling is more intimately associated with the white apron and the brass scales than with the strong swift wings that waft one to the 'higher realms of religious enquiry.' The exact extent of his fitness for disburdening tea and sugar we have not, indeed, been able to discover. But unless he maliciously take up the trade of public poisoning, mingling Bella Donna with Young Hyson and Aromatic with Double Refined, the vocation to which he is destined cannot but be, both for the public and for himself, much more healthful than was the old. On this matter, however, we prefer to leave him in his Director's hands.

"But when he passes from commiserating himself to commiserating 'eminent divines,' it is our own happy office to assist in bringing him to a better mind. His noble faculty of reason, (by which alone, he tells us, he is distinguished from the lower animals,) is not just now without its pecuniary, that is, its tea-and-sugar perplexities; and that we presume is the cause of some small inaccuracies into which its nobility has been betrayed. As an instance: for those Catholics who, before the Vatican Council, denied, and, after the Vatican Council, admitted, the Papal Infallibility, he has, he says, a profound 'pity.' We do not think he describes his mind correctly. The sentiment which his nobility entertains towards the magnificent German Bishops who humbly subjected their own private opinion to the public judgment of their 800 brethren, is not mere pity, it is sovereign contempt. That however is only an inaccuracy of expression; and to an inaccuracy of reasoning it is that we would respectfully draw his especial attention.—For whether he pities or despises 'the eminent divines who,' &c., he, by entertaining either sentiment, does, we fear, his noble faculty a grave injustice. The conduct of those eminent divines, if he only regard it closely will not, we are afraid seem so unreasonable after all. Let him consider it in this way. Suppose him already engaged in the tea and sugar line. He has, suppose, a firm conviction that his employer—what we may call his Head Boss,—is a very fallible judge of tea. But he admits, suppose, that when the Boss Grocers of the universe meet in Council, their decisions on tea and on judges of tea, are infallible. The Boss Grocers of the universe suddenly come together; hold a council; discuss the claims of his own employer; and end by pronouncing that employer so good a judge of tea that he has the same infallibility which they themselves collectively are admitted to enjoy. Can our friend any longer doubt his employer's inerrancy in the matter of tea? It he still persists in his old notion, while the Boss Grocers of the universe (whom he holds to be infallible) pronounce his old notion false, will his persistence not prove that his noble faculty has quite deserted him, and that, being no longer distinguished from the lower animals, a certain brutal obstinacy is, in his character, not quite unnatural. To these questions the Editor, we hope, will be able to give affirmative replies. But observe the consequence. The illustration from the business to which he is called, is very pertinent to the case of the 'eminent divines' Bishop Von Ketteler, for instance, believed before the Vatican Council that the Infallibility of the Pope was a fiction. But he also believed that whatever the Council said on the subject would be infallibly true. The Council declared and defined that the Pope is infallible. After such a declaration was it unreasonable, (and meritorious of the profound pity of the mighty Witness of Montreal), for Bishop Von Ketteler to change his mind? Our noble faculty does not think so. The great brave Bishop had the misfortune to be, after the Council as before, it not quite fit for a place at Longport. And so it did not strike him (as it struck the Editor) that in believing the Papal Infallibility, when a Council, which he held infallible, defined it, he was 'false to his reason.' It only struck him that he was doing a thing which as long as his reason remained he could not help doing; for he was simply renouncing his own private opinion for the collective judgment of 800 of his brethren, who, first of all, were as good as he; and who, secondly, in their collective judgment upon the point at issue were as he himself believed, divinely endowed, with the privilege of infallibility. All this we commend to our distinguished convert's most candid consideration.

There is yet another point on which we can lend him a little aid. He states with sufficient plainness that he has some special means of knowing what the Rev. M. Rousselot thinks of the Guibord complication; and he leaves his readers to understand that when privately interviewed on the subject of the Guibord burial, the Rev. 'Cure' finds fault with the Right Reverend Bishop. We assure our dear private proselyte that he is mistaken. It is somewhat hard on the Seminary to have to pay six thousand dollars for doing its duty, and to be doomed perhaps for the same offence to pay some thousands more, and of that M. Rousselot has a right to complain. But of that hardship, as no one knows better than the learned 'Cure' of Notre-Dame, the Bishop is not the cause. The Rev. M. Rousselot, we may inform the Editor, along with being 'good