

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, AUG. 19, 1859.

OUR POSITION.

In publishing, to-day, the Declaration of His Lordship the Bishop of Montreal, as read on Sunday last in the St. Patrick's, St. Anne's, and St. Bridget's churches of this City, we are requested to produce also the annexed Resolutions; communicated to us in the month of May last, by His Lordship the Bishop of Montreal, on the part of their Lordships the Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Quebec, and intended to direct us in the task of editing the TRUE WITNESS:—

1. "That the TRUE WITNESS should continue, with prudence, but at the same time with energy and independence, to insist upon the rights of Catholics with regard to Separate Schools, Divorce, Religious Marriages, Representation, Orangism, and Secret Societies generally."

2. "That journal should be exclusively religious, discussing such questions only as concern the interests of religion."

3. "It should carefully respect persons, especially those in authority; whilst at the same time, adhering to the principles of sound doctrine, which it should defend with a perfect independence of all political parties."

4. "In election matters, it should seek to enlighten the electors, by keeping before their eyes the important duties they have to discharge, in appointing candidates endowed with the necessary qualifications; but it should not interfere with the selection of individuals."

Our readers will estimate, as they deserve, these rules laid down for our guidance by those who of right are our directors in all matters appertaining to religion; and they will judge for themselves how far we are docile to the voice of our Pastors.

As to the discussion of principles which we have had to maintain for some months past, the Declaration which we publish below will be for everybody, together with the above published Resolutions, a pledge that we have not of ourselves set ourselves up as a teacher to our Catholic readers; but that we have taken our instructions from legitimate sources.

At the same time, if any expression of which we have made use, may have appeared harsh; or if under certain circumstances, we have sided with any political party, these things can in no sense be attributed to their Lordships the Bishops, whose action with regard to the TRUE WITNESS has been limited to a *surveillance* over its religious teachings. And we would add, that we, and we alone, are responsible for all that appears in the TRUE WITNESS—that its errors are our own, and ours only; and that if we have wronged, or unjustly given pain to any one—we regret sincerely the fault into which the warmth of discussion may have betrayed us, in this respect. We now lay before our readers the document above alluded to, which will, we trust, convince them of the rectitude of our principles:—

DECLARATION READ ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 14TH, IN THE ST. PATRICK'S, ST. ANNE'S, AND ST. BRIDGET'S CHURCHES OF MONTREAL.

"We deeply regret, Dear Brethren, to be obliged, by the uneasiness, and mental anxiety which we know to exist amongst you, to rectify for the second time within a few months, the opinions of the Catholic readers of a journal, whose establishment you yourselves solicited; and whose principles in matters connected with Religion you wished should be watched over by your Bishops. Already, in the month of February last, we have made known that we approved, in general, of the Theses sustained with conscientious energy by the TRUE WITNESS; and we then invited you to give the interests of Catholicity precedence over all other interests, and to support a journal which defended those interests with a pen as powerful as it was disinterested. The advice which we then gave, was received by all of you with that docility of a lively faith, which characterises you; and we are happy to have it in our power, when availing ourselves of the present opportunity, to give you this praise which you have so well merited. We deem it our duty, nevertheless, to reiterate to-day our counsel; because we have seen with pain that great efforts are being made to detach you from those true principles, which all good Catholics should follow.

God forbid, Dear Brethren, that we should afflict any Catholics by taking the part of one person against another. For we have no concern with personal questions; and we embrace all our beloved children in the Faith, in our common affection and tenderness. But as Catholic readers expect from us, direction in matters involving principles, and affecting Religion, we inform them that:—

"1. It is with the approbation of the Episcopacy that the TRUE WITNESS opposes Protestant Ascendancy; in rejecting as a snare the pretended guar-

tees by means of which, certain politicians would impose on us 'Representation by Population,' in our present political and social condition.

"2. That it is also with the authorisation of the Episcopate that the TRUE WITNESS repudiates the Voluntary Principle as laid down by the subtle enemies of your religious institutions.

"3. That it is with the formal consent of the Bishops that the TRUE WITNESS maintains, unflinchingly, and without deviation of principle, the thesis of Separate Schools; and that he treats as illusory, and as impossible, the proposals for a mixed, reformed, and improved school system; to be borrowed from foreign countries. At the same time, the Bishops have not the slightest desire to deprive Protestants of their mixed schools, if the latter find that they suit them.

4. Finally, that it is with the most ardent good wishes of the Episcopate that the TRUE WITNESS so vigorously condemns the conduct of those politicians, whomsoever they may be, who through imprudence or through malice, foment prejudices of race amongst their brethren, to the manifest detriment of all divine and human interests. To the editor of that journal—the TRUE WITNESS—must be yielded the honorable testimony that upon this head he conscientiously discharges his duty; and we believe that God will bless him, by granting to him a complete success, since he maintains a painful contest only for His glory and the honor of His Church.

We think, Dear Brethren, that we have been explicit enough in these counsels, to be understood by all of you. We desire that public opinion should submit to principles and not that principles should yield to party, to the exigencies of prejudices of race, and personal interests. For all we claim equal rights, and nothing more. Above all we desire a union of hearts in the bonds of Catholic Charity.

Now if our frank declaration should shock any one, we should be grieved; but we rely with confidence on the approbation of all those whose minds and hearts are upright; and we believe, therefore, that the number of those who differ from us, if such there be, will be but small.

† G., Bishop of Montreal.

Montreal, 13th of August, 1859.

We are also authorized to state, that, since the reading of the above document, this Declaration has already received the adhesion of their Lordships the Bishops of the Province, whose names are annexed:—

† Mgr. F. V. BAILLARGON, Bishop of

Tloa, and Administrator of the

Archdiocese of Quebec.

† Mgr. J. C. PINCE, Bishop of St.

Hyacinthe.

† M. J. GIGUÈRE, Bishop of Bytown.

† Mgr. AR. DE CHANDONNE, Bishop of

Toronto.

† Mgr. TU. COOKE, Bishop of Three

Rivers.

† Mgr. J. LA ROCQUE, Bishop of Cydo-

nia, and Coadjutor of Montreal.

† Mgr. J. FARNELL, Bishop of Hamilton.

† Mgr. AL. PINSONAULT, Bishop of Sand-

wich.

† Mgr. J. C. HONAN, Bishop of Kingston.

that henceforward they will bear in mind the importance of not allowing arrears to accumulate.

And whilst upon this point, we would strongly recommend to the favorable attention of our Ottawa friends, our agent for that City and district, Mr. Rowland. He enjoys our entire confidence; and is by us fully authorised to receive payments; and to give receipts for all sums due to this office. Mr. Rowland is anxious also to increase the list of subscribers in his district; and that he may succeed in this purpose, we heartily commend that gentleman to the kind offices of our friends in Ottawa City and its vicinity. We are convinced that thus aided, Mr. Rowland's services will be highly profitable.

And lastly, we would say a few words on the unhappy controversy in which for some time past we have been engaged with our talented cotemporary of Upper Canada—the *Toronto Freeman*. We need scarcely say now, for we have often said it before, that we earnestly desire that that controversy be put an end to at once, and for ever; and that, for ourselves, we are prepared to make every sacrifice, except a sacrifice of principle, to attain so desirable an end. For this purpose we have once and again proffered terms of peace and amity to our cotemporary; we have indicated the importance of a close and permanent alliance betwixt Catholics of all origins, and of both sections of the Province; we have insisted upon the perfect identity of their rights, their duties, and their interests; and it is only because the course of policy by him advocated would necessarily prove fatal to that alliance, that we have unfortunately found ourselves in strong opposition with one with whom we sincerely desire to be on good terms.

For what is that we ask? That the *Freeman*—professionally a Catholic paper, and therefore ostensibly the advocate of our religious interests—should not only refrain from countenancing, but should openly repudiate, any political connection with the party long distinguished amongst all other parties in the State for its hostility to Popery, and the ecclesiastical institutions of Lower Canada. This party, called sometimes "*Clear Grits*," sometimes "*Protestant Reformers*," is composed of all that is most ultra-Protestant, all that is most anti-Catholic in the Province. Arrayed under the banners of George Brown, it incessantly clamors for such changes in the Union Act as shall give to the Upper and Protestant section of the Province a preponderating influence in the Legislature; and though it prates to us about "*checks*" and "*guarantees*"—as if such things were possible, or as if a Protestant majority would consent to be bound by them—it makes no secret that "*Representation by Population*" is with it not an end, but the means to an end; and that that end is "*Protestant Ascendancy*."

We meet this party then frankly; and tell it, and all its supporters, *without distinction*, that we look upon them as our political enemies.—That not only is the present agitation to unsettle the terms of the Union Act most unjust, but that if successful it would be ruinous to Lower Canada; destructive of her autonomy, and fraught with peril to all our social and religious institutions; and, at the same time, that it would be fatal to the civil and religious liberties of Catholics in Upper Canada. On this point then we will hearken to no terms of compromise; we will enter into no treaty, and will tolerate no discussion. "*Equality of Representation*," or "*Repeal of the Legislative Union*—(though we certainly are no advocates of the latter measure)—are the only alternatives that we will accept of.

Feeling then so strongly as we do, as every friend to Lower Canada, as every true Catholic should feel, on this all-important question of Representation, our cotemporary will not wonder at our opposition to any one who seems even, to give the slightest appearance of countenance to the "*Clear Grit*" agitation for "*Representation by Population*." To us of Lower Canada that question is one of life or death; to agitate it even, is an act of hostility against us; to advocate it, in any form, or under any conceivable circumstances, so long as the Legislative Union lasts, is, on the part of a Lower Canadian, or Catholic member, an act of vilest treason against the nationality and the religion of Lower Canada.

To the Catholics of Upper Canada, as well as to those of this section of the Province, the question of maintaining the "*Constitution of Canada as it is*," is one of vital importance. Crushed beneath a Protestant majority as they are at present; unable to make themselves heard in the Halls of the Legislature, they would be utterly helpless were it not for Lower Canada; were it not that we can come to their aid, and plead their cause. But what would be their lot, if the Protestant element in the Legislature were to be increased? if the voice of the Catholic members for Lower Canada were to be silenced, as it would be were "*Representation by Population*" *un fait accompli*? What chances would there then be of effecting any reform in the existing school laws of Upper Canada? Nay! what would become of the miserable installment of justice that they now enjoy in the shape of Separate Schools? "*Freedom of Education*" would be impossible under such circumstances; and when too late, the Ca-

tholics of Upper Canada would see, and bitterly deplore, their incredible folly in listening to the traitorous counsels of those false friends who would persuade them that, not their coreligionists, but the bitterest enemies of their race and creed, are their natural allies. For their own sakes then, as well as for the sake of Lower Canada, are our brethren of Upper Canada bound to uphold the "*Constitution of Canada as it is*."

We insist, therefore, and with reason, that all who call themselves our friends; that they in particular who pretend to represent us of Lower Canada, and who put themselves forward as the champions of our religion—shall not only refrain from giving any countenance, direct or indirect, to any party in the State that adopts "*Representation by Population*" as a plank of its political platform; but shall openly and loudly repudiate all connection with any and every such party; and shall treat it, and all its members as their enemy, and as their enemies, because the enemies of Lower Canada, of her laws, her language, and of her religion, which is also their religion. In fine, the question of "*Representation by Population*" is one that we will not allow to be discussed even, by those who pretend to be our friends, except with the view of opposing it. It should be left amongst the *arcana* or sacred hidden things of the Constitutional temple; never should it be brought forth into the garish light of day, or exposed to profane gaze; and therefore we look, and still must look, upon every man who gives any sanction even to the agitation of that question—or who in any manner connects himself with those who agitate it—as our "*political enemy*."

From this position we will not recede—no, not one inch; not even to close the breach unhappily existing betwixt us and the *Toronto Freeman*. But if the latter will but join with us in insisting that—no matter at what cost—the "*Constitution of Canada, as it is*," shall be maintained; if he will repudiate all connection with any and every party that does not pledge itself to maintain that "*Constitution as it is*," we see not any reason for prolonging a controversy neither creditable, nor profitable to either party. We of Lower Canada offer our aid to effect the satisfactory settlement of those politico-religious questions in which the Catholic minority of Upper Canada are more directly interested; and in return, we ask of them to aid us against our enemies, and their enemies, in resisting the strenuous efforts of the "*Protestant Reformers*" to overthrow the "*Constitution of Canada as it is*." These are the terms of our proposed alliance, betwixt Upper and Lower Canadian Catholics, betwixt Irish Papists, and French Canadian Papists. No man can deny, that the terms are reasonable, that they involve no dereliction of principle; and that the alliance which we advocate would, if consummated, tend greatly to promote the interests of our common religion, and of the Catholic community in both sections of the Province.

Again then we urge our terms of peace on the *Freeman*, and those of whose views it is the exponent. Let us cease from intestine strife, and direct our united energies against the common foe; against all who withhold our rights to educate our little ones in the precepts of our faith; against all who menace to deprive us of those rights which we now enjoy. We extend our hands; we stretch forth the olive branch; and do hope that henceforward all strife, all unfriendly controversy betwixt us and the *Freeman* may cease for ever.

THE MISS STARR CASE.—The facts of this case, in so far as the action therein of the Seminary, the Grey Nuns, and the ecclesiastics generally, of Montreal is concerned, have been so thoroughly ventilated, that it would be but warisome to our readers to recapitulate them. As the Protestant press however, still loudly and vehemently imputes criminality to the agents in this business, we will say a few words on its merits. And first would we state, as concisely as possible, the facts of the case, upon whose merits we are pronouncing opinion.

A young person, of nearly twenty-one years of age, presents herself—*proprio motu*—before the Catholic priest; states that for many years she has been at heart a Catholic; that for several years she has been, in fact, as well as in desire, an admitted member of the Catholic Church;—that, nevertheless, in consequence of the insuperable aversion of her parents, under whose roof she was resident, to Catholicity, she had been compelled to disguise her faith, and even to participate openly in acts of Protestant worship; that she felt assured that so long as she continued in her father's house, it would be impossible for her to practise her religion, or to avoid apostasy; and that for these reasons she proposed, as soon as she should have attained her legal majority, to quit that house, and embrace the religious life. This was Miss Starr's statement to the priest; and upon this statement she asked his opinion, as her spiritual adviser, as to what she ought to do; and how far her purposed abandonment of the paternal roof, under the circumstances she had described, was lawful or desirable.

To this statement, and to this request for ad-

vice, the priest replied, in substance, as follows:—
"That, if the facts of her case were as she represented them to be—if she could not practise her religion under her father's roof—and if she was, because of her position, exposed to the constant danger of falling into apostasy, or mortal sin—then, under such circumstances, not only was it lawful for her, but it was her bounden duty, to leave that house which to her had become an immediate occasion of sin; and that, so far from breaking any of God's Commandments by so doing, she would be but acting in accordance with the positive injunctions of Him Who said:—St. Matth. x., 35, 37, 38:—

"For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law,—
"He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me;
"And he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me."

The spiritual adviser, taking the Word of God as his guide; and taking the facts to be as Miss Starr represented them to be—just as the medical adviser gathers the details and symptoms of his patient's case from the latter's statements—countenanced her proposed scheme of abandoning her father's house, and seeking shelter elsewhere, where she might duly practise the religion she professed.

In so doing, the spiritual adviser violated no divine law, and acted strictly in accordance with the spirit of the teachings of Him whose minister he was. There is therefore, we contend, in this part of the case, no grounds for the charge of wrongdoing brought by the Protestant press against him. However, this point we are prepared to argue with any who dare enter the lists against us.

But then the "*secrecy*" we shall be told;—that at least was wrong. It was the duty of the priest to make known to the anxious father in search of his daughter, the secret of her hiding place, which had been by her communicated to the priest as her spiritual adviser. Here, again, we, who derive our opinions as to right and wrong, from a higher source than any to which Protestants can possibly have access, are completely at issue with those who contend that it was the duty of the priest to divulge the secret of Miss Starr's place of refuge against domestic persecution.

For, in the first place, it was not the priest, but Miss Starr herself, who imposed the obligation of secrecy. The former had no interest therein; and in observing it, he did but keep a promise that had been exacted from him, and fulfill a duty incumbent upon him in his spiritual capacity. The world would deem the lawyer, or the medical man, infamous who should divulge the secrets of his client, or of his patient, revealed to him in his professional capacity, and under the pledge of secrecy; with what face then can it be pretended that the priest is at liberty to violate the confidence reposed in him by those who of his lips seek wisdom? or that the spiritual adviser's communications with his patients, are not at least as sacred, as privileged, as are those of the surgeon with the sick man coming to him for relief for the body? In opposition to the clamor of the Protestant press, we contend that the priest, in Miss Starr's case, was bound in honor, and by the laws of God, to maintain an inviolable secrecy as to every thing that had transpired betwixt himself and that young person; and this our opinion we are prepared to make good against any who may be rash enough to impugn it.

Besides, it must be remembered that, as the priest had no interest whatever in keeping secret the place of Miss Starr's retreat, so from first to last it was left in her power to raise the veil at any moment she pleased. No promise of any kind was exacted from her; the necessity of concealment was never imposed upon her. She was left absolute mistress of all her actions; so much so, that even Protestants noticed, and have commented upon, the absence of all appearance even of restraint upon, or *surveillance* over, her.—She knew of the researches being made by her family; and had it in her power to communicate directly with them, through the very simple and unobtrusive medium of the Post-Office. Every facility was offered to her to return to her parents. No inducements were held out to her to embrace the religious life; which, on the contrary, was always, by her own admission, presented to her in its least attractive light; and whilst the good Sisters of Toledo did for her all that the laws of hospitality, all that the laws of Christian charity could require, it is pretty plain that they did not by any means seek or desire to retain Miss Starr within their walls, or to make a "*proselete*" of her. In keeping her secret, therefore, the priest consulted not his, but what he believed to be Miss Starr's interests; and accomplished what he felt to be a duty, indeed, though by no means a pleasant one, imposed upon him as a Minister of the Gospel.

But if morally blameless both as to the countenance by him given to Miss Starr's departure from her father's house, and on the score of secrecy—is not the priest obnoxious to the charge of want of worldly prudence? Was not his conduct, though in harmony with the laws of God, at variance with the maxims of society, and re-