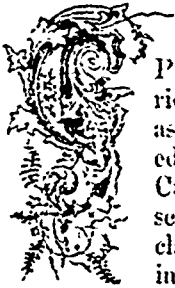


THE PRESBYTERIAN.

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CONFEDERATION of the Provinces has at last been carried, waiting only the Royal assent to be confirmed. The education question in Lower Canada has been practically settled, and it has been declared that sectarian schools in their very worst form are to be continued amongst us. The mistake which we were alone in pointing out, of advocating sectarianism against sectarianism—Protestant schools against Roman Catholic schools—has borne the fruit which alone could have been expected. Repeatedly we have pointed out that the true ground to have taken, in opposing the claims of the Roman Catholics to control the educational institutions of Lower Canada, was to demand for Lower Canada not Protestant but Common Schools, where those of all creeds and denominations could receive their education together, and meet on one common ground. This was not done. An association was formed for the promotion of Protestant education in Lower Canada, and the result that might have been foreseen has taken place. By a juggling upon words the Romish priesthood put forward their demand, that before justice would be done to Lower Canada the Common School system of Upper Canada must be broken up, and what they were pleased to call the privileges granted to Protestants in Lower Canada must be extended to Roman Catholics in Upper Canada, while they know that the two systems are diametrically opposite to each other. The amount of ignorance on this subject seems almost incredible. Led away by the name of Protestant, as applied to the movement for obtaining some small measure of justice to those who object to the teaching of Romish Catechisms, creeds and idolatry in what ought to be the Common Schools of Lower Canada, our legislators appear to have been unable to judge for themselves as to the real merits of the question. At first sight it might seem as if the difference that exists between the two sections of the Province might be easily understood. Yet so little has the question been studied, so indifferent are even those who profess to lead public opinion as to the true points at issue, that mistakes of the most ludicrous kind, were their effects not so serious, have been and are being daily committed. At the risk of repeating what ought to be well known we may briefly recapitulate the differences between the two systems, merely reminding our readers that nominally they are the same, and that whenever a fresh demand is to be made by Roman Catholics, it is taken for granted that they are used in the same way by the respective majorities, Protestants in Upper Canada teaching their peculiar religious dogmas, exactly in the same way as Roman Catholics in Lower Canada teach theirs, and that, therefore, if non-catholics object to have their children taught Roman Catholic doctrines in Common Schools in Lower Canada, Roman Catholics in Upper Canada ask simply that their children shall not be taught Protestant doctrines in the Common Schools of that part of the Province. What is the real position of these schools? In Upper Canada, they are emphatically the "Common" Schools of the country, in which all the necessary branches of a secular education are taught, in which the children of parents of every belief known on earth may meet together without any attempt being made to influence them in their religious opinions. To throw them open to all, Protestants, who are the large majority of the population of Upper Canada, after long and serious deliberation resolved to do without the use of even the Bible, so that Roman Catholics, who profess to believe in that Holy Book, and yet dread its teachings, might not have the shadow of an objection to offer. It was a great sacrifice to make, it marked a noble resolution on the part of