

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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MONTRÉAL, FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 1852.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The *Canada* arrived at Halifax on the morning of the 30th ult. The interest of the Parliamentary proceedings of the past week, is comprised in the answers of Lord Derby in the House of Lords, and of Mr. D'Israeli in the House of Commons, to the questions of their opponents, as to the financial intentions of the Ministry. Lord Derby said, that the questions at issue betwixt the Protectionists and Free Traders must be decided at a general election; he was determined not to shrink from carrying out his own views, if the sense of the country was favorable to his opinions, but he would not strain the influence of government, nor make use of the important position in which the Sovereign had placed him, in order to force upon the country a measure to which the great majority were opposed. His Lordship's reply was considered vague and unsatisfactory.

Still more mysteriously oracular was the answer of Mr. D'Israeli to Mr. Villiers' question in the House of Commons, respecting the financial and commercial policy of the present government; all that could be ascertained was, the intention of ministers to proceed with the St. Alban's Disfranchisement Bill, the Chancery Reform, and the Militia, Bills.

On the 19th, Lord Derby, in the House of Lords, and Mr. D'Israeli, in the House of Commons, announced the intention of government to dissolve Parliament as soon as the Militia Bill, and other necessary measures were got through with. Great preparations for the electioneering campaign are being made by the two great parties—the Protectionists, and Free Traders.

Rumors are rife, of disagreement amongst the members of the cabinet themselves, and of intestine strife. Like Mr. Micawber, Lord Derby may still hold on a little longer in the desperate hope that something may turn up, (Mr. D'Israeli, it is said, is already turning his attention to coals) but every thing seems to denote the speedy dissolution of the Tory Cabinet.

Lord Eglinton, the new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, arrived in Dublin on Wednesday, the 10th ult., and was received without any enthusiastic demonstrations, either of loyalty or of disapprobation; the people seemed to be glad in so far as they had got rid of a Clarendon, but not to have fully made up their minds whether they had any great cause for congratulation in the advent of an Eglinton. Some attempts to get up a row were made by the Trinity College students, but were quickly put down by the police.

In the defeat of Lord Nass, we may see the first fruits of the Catholic Defence Association; in spite of all the intriguing of false friends, and open enemies—the Chief Secretary of Ireland has been obliged to retire from the contest, and resign his pretensions to Mr. Cogan, a gentleman who is a Catholic, and who is not, either a Whig, or a Tory. The electors of Kildare were called upon by the Catholic Defence Association, to reject Lord Nass—

Because he was the Chief Secretary of Lord Derby's Protestant-ascendancy Government.

Because he was a supporter of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.

Because he opposed the Irish Parliamentary Reform Act.

Because he supported Protestant ascendancy, by attending a No-Popery meeting at the Rotundo, presided over by his relative, Lord Roden, of Dolly's Brae notoriety, and Deputy Grand Master of Orange-men.

They were called upon to support Mr. Cogan—

Because he was neither a Whig nor a Tory, but an independent Irish Catholic.

Because he was a supporter, neither of Lord John Russell, nor of Lord Derby, but of Catholic, and of Irish interests.

Because he had pledged himself to support that policy which overthrew the Russell administration for their aggression on the Catholic religion.

Because he was pledged to maintain civil and religious liberty, and to support every measure to ameliorate the condition of the people.

The Catholic electors of Kildare responded nobly to that appeal, and the result was, that the Orange candidate abandoned the contest as hopeless. From the defeat of their candidate, the ministry may derive a profitable lesson: that the Catholic Defence Association is neither dead, nor sleeping, but can act, as well as pass resolutions, and that it will not shrink from carrying out its avowed object—viz., unremitting hostility to every administration that is not prepared to do full, and speedy justice, to the demands of Irishmen, for civil and religious liberty.

There has been a most amusing trial, arising out of the Jumper nuisance; the circumstances, as detailed in evidence, were as follows:—

O'Callaghan McCarthy, Jumper and Scripture Reader, accused Brother St. John, of St. Mary's Monastery, in Partree, for that the said St. John, not having the fear of Protestant ascendancy before his eyes, scandalised and vilified the holy Protestant religion, as by law established, by burning a copy of the Protestant, or Government version of the Word

of God, and pronouncing it—the Government Word of God—foresaid—to be, a heretic Bible, and not the Word of God at all—in contempt and disgrace of the holy Government religion, as by law established.”

The burning of a book, called by Protestants the Word of God; but which is looked upon by Catholics, as no more deserving that name, than the Koran, or the Book of Mormon, was clearly proved, though the jury do not seem to have been called upon to try the issue, whether the book so burnt was the Word of God, or not. We think it a pity that this question was not raised; for it would be such an expeditious way of settling religious disputes, to refer them, to the decision of a petty jury. Brother St. John was bound over to keep the peace, and the question whether the Protestant Bible, be the Word of God or no, remains still undecided.

The elections in France have terminated in favor of the government, only five deputies hostile to the President having been returned. The departure of the French ambassador from London, has given rise to some uneasy speculations; amongst other reports circulated, is one to the effect that Louis Napoleon's intellect has been weakened, by the exciting events of the last three months, and that his health is seriously impaired: there seems to be no doubt, but that the sickness of the President has been greatly exaggerated.

The telegraph announced the cessation of hostilities at the Cape of Good Hope; this news has not been confirmed by the journals received in town.

THE GLOBE AND STATE-CHURCHISM.

“Are the French Canadians disposed to separate their Church from their State?” asks the *Globe*. “The French Canadians cannot separate their Church from their State” responds the *Transcript*, giving, at the same time, the best of all possible reasons—“because there is no connection between them.”

Our Montreal cotemporary continues, that, with the exception of the tithes, which are paid by Catholics alone, and a small share of the Clergy Reserves, the whole property of the Catholic Ecclesiastical Corporations, Hospitals, Convents, Seminaries and Colleges, was acquired, not from the State, but by acts of sale, or donation from private individuals, and is, therefore, “protected by every sanctity which legislation and treaty can give to property, either public or private.” The answer of our cotemporary, the *Transcript*, does not satisfy the zealous No-Popery editor of the *Globe*, for, again, he reiterates the same stale, and oft refuted absurdity, of the connexion between Church and State in Lower Canada, professing his inability to discover any difference betwixt State Churchism in Canada, and in other countries, with the exception, that in the former, the dignitaries of the Catholic Church enjoy no judicial or legislative prerogatives. We will endeavor to show our cotemporary the difference in a few words:

In Canada, no Protestant is compelled to pay one farthing for the support of the Catholic Church. In Protestant England, Dissenters—and in Ireland, Catholics, are compelled by law, to pay for the support of a Protestant Government, or State Church; there is here, a trifling difference, upon which our cotemporary would do well to meditate, ere again instituting a comparison between the Church in Canada, supported solely by the contributions of its own members, and the State Church in Protestant Great Britain and Ireland, sustained chiefly by the money of Catholics and Dissenters.

Again, the *Globe* comes to the attack—“We asked if the French Canadians were disposed to separate Church from State, which we hold to be a chief end, and aim of the Reform-party. The *Transcript* says, that there is no connection to be divided. We say there is a connection, and a close one. They have lands belonging to them, on which they have been fattening for many years, building up their male Seminaries, and female Nunneries, using them for bringing the youth under their control, and erecting a Hierarchy strong enough to hold in thrall the minds of the whole French Canadian population. We say that they have the means of enforcing the payment of the exactions from the people, and that if they use it gently, it is only because they fear that it will be taken away. No separation to be made, did he say? We will venture to prophesy, that he will be of a different opinion ere long.”

It is not easy, at first, to distinguish the meaning of the writer, enveloped, as it is, in the grammatical obscurities of this extraordinary rigmorle; no doubt, his meaning is most patriotic and noble, if we only could get hold of it, if only we could ascertain, to what nouns, the mysterious “They” and “Them”, that so often occur, referred. “They” have lands, belonging to “Them”, says our writer: but who, in the name of all that is absurd, are the “They” and the “Them”? Do these mystic words denote the “French Canadians,” or the “Reform Party,” or the Priests, or the Nuns, or the Catholic Ecclesiastical Corporations? and if “They” have lands belonging to “Them”, have not “They” the perfect right to do what they will with what belongs to “Them”? to build thereon male Seminaries, female Nunneries, and episcopal Churches, without being exposed to the reproaches of editors of more than doubtful gender? If the lands upon which “They” were fattened, did not belong to “Them”, we could understand the indignation of our cotemporary against “Them”, but as it is, it seems to us the most natural thing in life, that “They” should make what use “They” think fit, of lands which belong to “Them”. If the *Globe* will drop his “blood and thunder style” for a little, and try to write plain English, which plain men may understand, telling us who are “They”, and who are “Them”, and what are the “exactions”, which “They” have the means of enforcing from the people, we shall be happy to discuss with him the question of Church and State, and how far State-Churchism can be said to exist in Lower Canada.

Another question the *Globe* puts, is—“Are the French Canadians in favor of free education?” It is a little difficult, and would appear very presumptuous for us, to attempt to define the opinions of a whole nation upon this important subject; but, as the great majority of the French Canadians are Catholics, and as all true Catholics are, and must be, in favor of “free education,” it is highly probable that the French Canadians are favorably disposed toward perfect freedom of education also.

Freedom of education is what the Catholics of this Colony, of the United States, of the British Empire, have long been battling for, with the firm determination, never to lay down their arms until perfect freedom of education shall have been obtained. If our Protestant cotemporary be indeed a friend of free education, we promise him that he shall find in the Catholics of this country warm and zealous, if not able, allies—men who will join him in the cry, for freedom in religion, freedom in education, for no State-Churchism, and no State-Schoolism; but ere concluding a treaty of alliance, we should like to know what our cotemporary means by “free education,”—we should like to have from him an answer to the following questions:—

Does freedom of education mean the voluntary principle?

Does freedom of education mean the right of every man to give what education to his children he thinks fit?

Does freedom of education mean that no man shall be compelled to pay for the support of an educational system, of which, in his conscience, he disapproves?

Does freedom of education mean the emancipation of the education of the people from all State control?

If our cotemporary can answer these questions in the affirmative, we are with him, heart and soul. We will toss up our caps into the air, and shout with him “Hurrah for the Voluntary Principle,” “Down with State-Churchism,” “Down, down to the dogs, with all State-Schoolism;” we will inscribe Freedom of Education on our banners, and fight with him in the same ranks. Our cotemporary has only to speak out honestly, and he will find plenty of French Canadian Catholics ready to back him in the struggle, for Freedom of Education, Free Religion, and Free Trade; who deprecate all State interference with any one of them, with Religion, with Education, or with Trade, but especially with Religion and Education. The Voluntary Principle, that is our ticket, and we invite the *Globe*, if he be sincere in his aspirations after “freedom of education,” to come up on our platform.

But if, by freedom of education, the *Globe* means—as we fear he does—State-Schoolism, the right of the State to overrule the rights of the parent, the right of a tyrant majority to oppress the conscience of the minority, by forcing them to pay for a system of education, of which, as honest Catholics, they cannot avail themselves; if, by freedom, the *Globe* means servitude, and the vilest and most degrading of all servitudes; if he means the right of the State to trample upon the rights of the Church, and of the parent; then, indeed, we say, God forbid that any French Canadian, that any Catholic, that any honest man, should be in favor of such freedom of education as this. No, they will oppose it; no matter at what risk, at what hazards. They deprecate all violence, all resistance to human laws; but the law of God, the law of the Church, is higher than any human law, and if they must needs disobey one, they will not disobey the Higher Law. If there be a cause in which resistance would be not only lawful, but a duty, it would be in the cause of Freedom of Education, and Freedom of Religion, for the two are one. Catholics have the right—and it is their duty to resist State-Schoolism—to say that the State, or majority, shall not interfere with the education of their children, shall not dictate to them how they shall be educated, or compel them to pay for the support of Schools which their Church condemns; and, if necessary, it will be their duty to make good these words, by deeds.

With whatever defects, or shortcomings, Protestantism may be taxed, it cannot be accused of not inspiring its professors with “a good conceit of themselves,” and a proportionate contempt for all others. From their childhood, Protestants are taught to believe, that to the glorious revolution of the sixteenth century, Europe is indebted for its arts and sciences, its literature and its free institutions—that before the advent of St. Luther, and until gospel light flashed from Anne Boleyn's eyes, the world sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, every effort of the people, to emancipate themselves from the iron yoke of their feudal oppressors, repressed by the tyrant of Rome, aided and abetted by an army of ignorant and bigoted priests; that the Church had but one object—to increase its influence over the minds of the people, by keeping them in profound ignorance, and that the mass of the people, by their profound indifference to the advantages of education, seconded the views of their spiritual despots. So often, and under so many forms, are these assertions repeated—so averse are the majority of Protestants to examine, for themselves, and to study the records of the “dark ages,” to find whether these things were so, or no, that it is not surprising, that they are generally received as indisputable facts; and that Popery and ignorance, Protestantism and intelligence, are invariably coupled together, by every scribbler against the Church of Christ.

Selfishness seems to have been in the dark ages,” we suppose the writer means the middle ages, extending from the sixth to the fifteenth century, “the predominant feeling of the human family, each member of which, aimed to raise himself above his fellows, in the social scale, and to profit by the ignorance or weakness of others.”

altogether withheld from the lower classes, and, even among the wealthy, little more than the rudiments were acquired, except by a few who devoted themselves to the priesthood, or the learned professions.

It was the maxim of princes, rulers, and priests, that in order to govern a community, the members composing it should be kept in mental darkness.”

It is to a writer on Education, in the *Montreal Witness*, that we are indebted for the above sketch of the moral and intellectual tendencies of mankind, during the “dark” or middle ages—selfishness and ignorance being their most striking characteristics. How far the history of these “dark” ages, will bear the writer out in his assertions, we intend briefly to examine.

The first great characteristic of mankind, during the ages of Popery, and mental darkness, “seems,” according to our cotemporary, “to have been selfishness;” an eager desire on the part of every member of the human family, “to raise himself above his fellows in the social scale,” and a profound indifference to the welfare of others.

Ignorance, spiritual despotism, priestcraft, and superstition, are charges, that we have been accustomed to meet with, against the social system of the middle ages, but selfishness is something new, and for which we were not prepared. We did think, that, if there was an age distinguished for true, unmitigated selfishness—for a perfect indifference to the wrongs of others—for the continual struggle of every man “to raise himself above his fellows, in the social scale, and to profit by the weakness or ignorance of others,” coupled, at the same time, with the most nauseating cant about “rights of men,” and “rights of women,” “fraternity and philanthropy,” it was the present commercial and go-a-head nineteenth century; we did think that “chivalry” had been one of the predominant characteristics of the dark ages, and we knew that chivalry, whatever extravagancies it may have produced, into whatever follies it may have led its votaries, was the antagonistic principle of selfishness.

The men of the middle ages, may have been sometimes licentious in their morals, and rather lax, to use no harsher term, in their notions of gallantry, but selfishness is the last vice, with which the ages of chivalry can, with justice, be taxed: in those days, munificence, and courtesy, no less than valor and loyalty, were looked upon as the indispensable qualifications of the poorest gentleman; the very essence of chivalry, that alone which prevents us from looking upon it as a fit subject for ridicule, was “an active sense of justice, an ardent indignation against wrong, and a determination of courage to its best end, the prevention or redress of injury” (*Hullam*); to redress the wrongs of the oppressed, to uphold the weak, to distribute bountifully to the poor and needy, were the principles which were inculcated, and chiefly dwelt upon, in the lays and romances of the selfish middle ages: how faithfully these mirrored the manners of the age, we need not mention, but we may be sure that the predominant feeling of an age, whose most characteristic folly was the passion for tales of knight-errantry, was certainly not selfishness, or an indifference to the wrongs of others. “To check the insolence of overgrown oppressors; to rescue the helpless from captivity; to protect, or to avenge women, orphans, and ecclesiastics, who could not bear arms in their own defence; to redress wrongs, and to remove grievances, were deemed acts of the highest prowess and merit. Valour, humanity, courtesy, justice, honour, were the characteristics of chivalry. To these was added religion, which mingled itself with every passion and institution during the middle ages, and by infusing a large proportion of enthusiastic zeal, gave them such force as carried them to romantic excess.” These, according to the Protestant historian Robertson, were the characteristics of the middle ages: valor and honor, tempered with religion, were their arts, for the practice of which, in spite of the “romantic excesses,” we cannot refuse to them the tribute of our admiration. There were, it is true, no societies of ladies and gentlemen, to hold charitable soirees, and to raise funds for sending out flannel petticoats, and woollen stockings, to the niggers on the Coast of Guinea; but then, in those days, if men talked about philanthropy a good deal less, they practised charity a good deal more, than they do at the present day: now men think that they have done a great thing, if they have attended a meeting, and passed a string of sympathising resolutions; in the dark ages, when selfishness was the predominant feeling of the human family, not only convents and hospitals were founded and largely endowed, not only was the wealth of the Church made available for the redemption of captives, but when all other means failed, it often happened that these selfish bigots, having spent all that they possessed, gave themselves up as voluntary captives, in order to ransom their brethren, as in the case of St. Peter Armengol, who, wanting all resources to deliver some unfortunates from slavery, remained as a hostage in their place, and when the day of ransom had expired, resigned himself to be hung, because the money had not arrived from Europe. Examples such as these, were not rare in the selfish “dark ages;” though we fear, that the present is far too enlightened an age, to tolerate such superstitious practices; at least, we have never heard of the conduct of St. Peter Armengol having been held up in Exeter Hall, as worthy of imitation; and certainly the conduct of many of our liberal Protestant brethren, in seasons of sickness and danger, as, for instance, in the year of the typhus fever, rather induces us to imagine, that in spite of all their vaunted philanthropy, and sympathy for suffering humanity, they would still prefer talking about the great things they were just about to do, to exposing themselves to any great amount of hardship or inconvenience, even for the sake of “a man and a brother.”

The present age has many good qualities, that nobody will deny—but it must not lay claim to any.