

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DEC. 31, 1858.

We avail ourselves of the season to wish all our subscribers a Happy New Year; and to remind them that, if they would reciprocate our good wishes, their best mode of displaying their intentions is, to remit to the editor of the TRUE WITNESS, the amount still due on their respective subscriptions.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The Asia's mail arrived in town on Wednesday evening, confirming the previous reports of the vigorous measures resorted to by the Irish Government for the repression of "secret societies" in Ireland. Strange reports, though most inadequately authenticated, are in circulation in vindication of this act of authority; and we find it stated by the *Cork Daily Reporter* of the 9th inst., that fifteen persons had been arrested upon the charge of being members of a secret club, called the Phoenix Society; and of being engaged in a correspondence with American filibusters, having for its object an invasion of Ireland by the said filibusters, or pirates. Most of the prisoners are young men; twelve of them are from Skibbereen and the others from Bantry.

As we intimated, there is as yet no direct proof of any extraordinary development of Ribbonism in Ireland; but from the activity of Orangeism, and its audacity of late, there are not wanting reasons to fear that counter-secret societies are also on the increase. Where there is Orangeism to any considerable extent, there also we may be sure—even though we see it not—that Ribbonism prevails; and the only process by which the latter can be repressed, is to discourage the former; for it is the nature of wrong always to beget wrong. This is one reason why all Catholics in Canada should seriously address themselves, without delay, to abating the nuisance of Orangeism; which not only menaces the lives and properties of their co-religionists, but their souls also, by provoking them to seek in counter secret organisations that protection for their material interests which the law denies them. This fact we would commend to the serious attention of the *Courier du Canada*; with the remark that every one, no matter what his station, who encourages, or is indifferent to, the growth of Orangeism, is doing his utmost to foster and encourage Ribbonism.

From France we learn that M. De Montalembert's appeal against his sentence was to be heard about the 21st inst. It is thought that the original sentence will be confirmed, but the Emperor's pardon will be again tendered. By men of all parties, the Montalembert trial is looked upon as the greatest misfortune that has as yet occurred to the Imperial Government. The Emperor is daily increasing his army, and the opinion is gaining ground that the spring will open with a war of France and Sardinia against Austria, with the object of establishing French ascendancy in the North of the Italian Peninsula. The other European news is of little interest.

THE "MINERVE" ON "APOSTACY."—There is a society in Lower Canada known by the name of the French Canadian Missionary Society;—whose object it is, to corrupt the faith of the *habitants*, to detach them from their allegiance to the Catholic Church, and to persuade them to renounce the religion of their ancestors, and the religion in which they were themselves baptized. It is, we humbly submit to the *Minerve*, the duty of every Catholic, and of the Catholic journalist especially, to oppose by every means in his power, and without respect of persons, the nefarious designs of the Lower Canada "Swaddlers;" and also to refute and to anticipate their arguments.

Amongst the means to which the above named Society has resorted, for undermining and corrupting the religious faith of our simple, and well-intentioned rural Catholic population, we distinguish two: One is *colportage*, as it is called; or the circulation of anti-Catholic books and tracts, which the *colporteurs* endeavor to persuade their dupes, contain nothing injurious, nothing contrary to the truth, nothing but what may be read without danger either to faith or morals. Satan, when he would deceive the children of men, assumes the garb of an angel of light, the more

easily to lure them to their destruction; and so our "swaddling" *colporteurs* do not commence by an open assault upon the religious belief of those whom they seek to pervert, but proceed rather by sap and mine. They do not at once shew themselves as the sworn enemies of Catholicity; but seek rather to insinuate, than to force their pernicious publications upon the simple and unsuspecting *habitants*; trusting that the poison therein contained, if once imbibed by the latter, will do its work, effectually, even if slowly.

The other means employed by our adversaries is very similar, and is in perfect harmony with their insidious tactics. It consists in this—that they endeavor to persuade their intended victims that there is, after all, no great harm for a Catholic to assist at Protestant religious exercises, and listen to Protestant preachers; that such things are done every day by good Catholics; and that it is only because an ambitious and unprincipled set of priests desire to keep them—their flocks—in ignorance, in order the more easily to pluck the wool off their backs, that the Church forbids her children to assist at, or take any part in, the preachings, psalm-singing, and other religious exercises of their Protestant neighbors. These, we say, are the tactics of the French Canadian Missionary Society. Their plans are, first—to induce the French Canadians to read Protestant works, under the pretence that those books contain nothing contrary to the truth; and secondly, to assist at Protestant sermons and other acts of Protestant worship, under the pretence that such compliance involves no act of apostasy, and is a frequent practice even amongst model Catholics; men who are considered *par excellence* as men of good principles, or "bons principes." The Satanic cunning of our "swaddling" adversaries, and the skill with which they bait and set their traps, cannot be denied; for it is but a too well established fact, that the Catholic, who, whether from an imprudent curiosity, or from the still viler motive of desiring to stand well with his more wealthy and influential Protestant neighbors, allows himself to be induced to read heretical tracts, or to frequent heretical assemblies, and listen to heretical preachers, is in a fair way of losing his faith. Therefore is it that the Church in her wisdom, and taught by Him Who bids us pray that we be not "led into temptation," forbids her children to read those books, or to take, upon any pretence whatsoever, any part in the religious exercises of their separated brethren. As in the Camp of the Israelites, it was ordered that the leper should be separated from the congregation, and that a clear and unmistakable line of demarcation should be drawn between the clean, and the unclean—so is it in the Church of God; and in spiritual things, the children of light and truth, are forbidden to hold any appearance even of communion with the children of darkness and of error.

Now it must be evident, we should hope, to the meanest understanding, that anything that directly or indirectly tends to obliterate or render less distinct the line of demarcation, traced by divine command, by the hand of God Himself, between the clean and the unclean,—between the Catholic and the Protestant; or that may seem even to countenance the transgression of that line, should be watched with the utmost jealousy by all who wish to preserve the moral health of the community, and who dread the danger of contagion. These principles laid down, and we think that the *Minerve* will scarce contest their truth, we will now proceed to apply them to our own particular case; and in reply to some remarks which our Ministerial cotemporary has been pleased to make on an article that appeared in the TRUE WITNESS of the 17th ult., with reference to the *Quebec Herald* and the *Montreal Pilot*.

Our cotemporary argues that it is not the duty of a Catholic journalist to follow, like a public informer, the steps of its victims into the sanctuary of private life, in order to reveal their faults to the entire world; and that Christian charity should induce us rather to throw a veil over, than to expose those faults.

To this we reply that the TRUE WITNESS is not guilty of that which the *Minerve* imputes to him; and that the former repudiates all personalities, or intention of assailing the private character of any individual in particular. In our controversy with the *Pilot* we had to deal, not with the act imputed by the *Quebec Herald* to a Canadian statesman, but, with an abstract proposition laid down by the *Pilot*—to the effect, that a Catholic statesman "could not well refuse, even if disinclined, to obey a call to devout exercises, made upon him by his gracious lady Sovereign." It is to the refutation of this servile and impious proposition that we have exclusively addressed ourselves; for we are willing to believe, and if authorised by the *Minerve* so to do, shall be most ready to assert, that the Canadian statesman in question was not guilty of that which is directly imputed to him by the *Quebec Herald*, and indirectly by the *Montreal Pilot*; that if he did during his sojourn in England, attend at any of the services of a heretical sect, it was not with the design of taking part, or of allowing himself to appear even to take part, in their "devout exercises," as the *Pilot* calls them; and that he was attracted thither, not by a de-

sire of doing pleasure to an earthly sovereign, but, solely by a curiosity—(imprudent perhaps considering the circumstances)—to witness the ceremonies of an alien sect, and to listen to its music, much of which is very fine. In so doing there might perhaps be great imprudence, and danger of scandal, but there might be no sin of a very heinous die; provided only that the Catholic so attending at any Protestant religious exercises, should have taken care to show the world that he was a looker-on merely, at their heretical rites—just as he might from curiosity have looked on at the idolatrous ceremonies of the Chinese—and was by no means a participator in their religious exercises. These we say were very likely, and in charity we hope that they were, the motives which prompted the act denounced by the *Quebec Herald*; and whilst therefore we pronounced no condemnation on the individual in question, we could not consistently with our duty as a Catholic journalist, allow to pass unrebuked the insidious apology offered for him by the *Montreal Pilot*.

For—and it is to this that, as a French Canadian, and a professing Catholic, we would call the attention of the editor of the *Minerve*—with what of decency, or of consistency, could we, as Catholic journalists who have always sincerely, even if feebly opposed the designs, and faithfully endeavored to expose the nefarious artifices, of the French Canadian Missionary Society—warn our readers against allowing themselves to be seduced by the *Colporteurs* into the perusal of heretical books, or attendance upon heretical worship in Canada, if we had allowed to pass unnoticed and uncondemned similar conduct, when publicly even if erroneously, attributed, through the columns of the public press, to one of our leading public men, a Minister and a member of Parliament? We do not wish to lay ourselves open to the disgraceful imputation of having two sets of weights and measures; one for the poor "*habitants*;" the other for the wealthy and influential Minister, who has government situations, and government salaries at his disposal. No! without offering any opinion as to the truth or falsity of the statements in the *Quebec Herald*, we contented ourselves with warning our readers against the miserable sophistries with which the Protestant *Pilot* attempted to maintain the propriety of a Catholic's assistance at Protestant worship. By so doing, we were depriving the French Canadian Missionary Society of a most powerful argument, which its agents would not have been slow to avail themselves of, when trying to persuade the poor simple Canadian "*habitant*" to assist at the devotions of the conventicle. "See"—they might but for the TRUE WITNESS have argued—"See, how partial and iniquitous are the commands of your priests. They forbid you, because you are poor and unimportant, from going to a Protestant church; but when it was publicly stated that a wealthy statesman of your faith did no more than what we are asking you to do, not a voice throughout the length and breadth of the land was raised to condemn the act." Thus we say, but for the TRUE WITNESS, might the *colporteurs* have argued; and if they cannot do so, it is because one Catholic journalist, at all events, has, even at the risk of incurring the displeasure of the Ministerial *Minerve*, dared to denounce the miserable apology of the *Pilot*; and to proclaim the Catholic doctrine, that, never under any conceivable circumstances, is the Catholic authorised to take part, or to allow himself to appear to the world as taking part, in any act of heathen or heretical worship.

And we will say more; for we contend that if it is always, and everywhere, wrong for Catholics to join, even in appearance, in the religious exercises of Protestants, there above all is such compliance doubly infamous, where their spiritual mother is hated, and reviled, and their religion socially proscribed. We can conceive of a Catholic in a Catholic country, where his Church is wealthy, powerful, and honored, being sometimes a little too lax, and indifferent to his duties. But put that man in a Protestant country, in the midst of a wealthy and aristocratic Protestant society, by whom Popery is scorned, hated, and looked upon as a "*low religion*;" and if he has one spark of honor, or of the generous feelings of the gentleman, there, if no where else, will he openly show his faith, and almost make a parade of his devout submission to his holy mother;—there will be prompt to vindicate her honor, and to challenge for her the respect of the world; there, if no where else, will he scorn to appear, even, on the side of her enemies; and under such circumstances a noble pride will force him to yield implicit obedience to her slightest wish.—Thus, exiles by the rivers of Babylon, the daughters of Jerusalem wept as they remembered Zion, whilst their tongues refused to sing the Lord's song in a strange land; thus too amongst heretics will the Catholic's heart yearn towards his Church; and thus too will he show forth his generous love for her who bore him.

"Si oblitus fuero tui Jerusalem, oblivioni detur dextera mea."—Ps. cxxxvi. 5.

The *Minerve* will therefore please observe that we deal, exclusively, with the wretched arguments, or rather sophistries, of the *Pilot*;—that as to the truth of the facts made public by

the *Quebec Herald*, we offer no opinion; whilst we readily admit that they are susceptible of a very different interpretation from that which both *Pilot* and *Herald* have placed upon them; and that we address ourselves simply to the consideration of a purely religious question, more important in our eyes than the fate of any Minister, or of any Ministry—viz., "Is it lawful for the Catholic, under any circumstances, to take part, in the religious exercises of Protestants?" The *Pilot* says—"It is lawful;" the TRUE WITNESS, with an eye to the snares of the F. C. M. Society, and the School Question, says—"No, such compliance is never lawful, is always sinful." What says the *Minerve*?

When again addressing ourselves to our respected cotemporary the *Courier du Canada*, we gladly avail ourselves of the occasion to acknowledge his liberality, and fair play towards the TRUE WITNESS; in not only laying before his readers the "*Orange Manifesto*" re-produced by us in our issue of the 17th inst., but in also translating the entire of our article of that date. We can assure our cotemporary that we fully appreciate his generosity, and that we heartily wish that all his compatriots were as just towards us as he has shown himself to be. We shall now continue the observations that we have to offer upon the previous articles of the *Courier du Canada*, with respect to the principles and policy of the TRUE WITNESS.

We have already frankly stated our opinion with regard to an alliance between Irish Catholics and Upper Canada democrats. We have repudiated that alliance as impossible, even were it desirable; and as disgraceful and impolitic, even were it possible. We have expressed our opinion that the only alliance in politics which Irish Catholics can consistently, profitably and honorably contract, is an alliance with their French Canadian coreligionists; and that such an alliance is as necessary to the latter as it is to the former. We, at the same time, recognised the fact that, between the two races who have so many good reasons to draw close to one another, and none whatever for keeping apart, there was a slight estrangement; and we promised to indicate what, in our opinion, were the obstacles to the cementing of that close and permanent union between the Catholics of the two races, which every true Canadian, and sincere Catholic ought to have at heart. Happy should we be if our humble efforts should have the effect of preparing the way for that most desirable alliance; the only alliance, we repeat, which either French Canadian, or Irish, Catholics can contract without dishonor to themselves, and serious injury to their common religion.

And here we feel that we are venturing upon very dangerous ground; for there are so many susceptibilities, and so many prejudices; and there are, unfortunately, but too many evil disposed persons ever on the watch to avail themselves of those susceptibilities and prejudices, in order to kindle and perpetuate strife between the several component parts of our Canadian Catholic population. Yet so confident are we of the integrity of our intentions, and of the soundness of our views as to the desirableness of a cordial union between Catholics of all origins, that though fully conscious of our own incapacity to treat the subject as it deserves, we shall humbly endeavor to show what, in our opinion, are the existing obstacles to that union, and how in a great measure they may be removed.

And first we would premise that it is not our intention to attach blame to any one in particular; for our object is not to create, but to allay strife. Suffice it to say that there is not that cordial union between the French Canadian, and the English speaking portion of our Catholic community that there ought to be; and that it is the duty of both, more especially of those amongst them whom we have any influence over their brethren, to try and bring about a good understanding between them. Above all is this duty imperative at a time like this, when the song of the heavenly host is still ringing in our ears, welcoming the birth of our common Saviour; and announcing the Gospel or glad tidings of "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth Peace to men of good will."

Now foremost amongst the causes that tend to keep the French Canadian, and Irish, Catholics apart from one another, we feel inclined to place the suspicions which the former entertain that the latter are about to join the ranks of the "*Clear Grit*" enemies of Lower Canada; and the natural and well-grounded jealousy with which Irish Catholics view the apparent intimacy between French Canadians, and the Orangemen of Upper Canada—the sworn foes of both Irish and French Canadian Catholics.

For, if on the one hand it is not to be expected that French Canadians should entertain very friendly feelings towards those whom they suspect—though we are sure, erroneously—of a design to ally themselves with the enemies of French Canadian nationality; and to lend their aid towards imposing upon Lower Canada a system of representation that shall deprive the latter of its autonomy—so on the other hand it is certain that Irish Catholics cannot but look with mistrust and aversion upon all those who evince

the slightest disposition to coalesce, or ally themselves, with an essentially "*anti-Papal organization*," upon the plea that is not so much a religious as a political society; and that its outrages are chiefly, if not solely, directed against Irish Catholics. No! a cordial union between French Canadian, and Irish Canadian, Catholics is impossible, so long as the one coquet with the democrats of the Upper Province; or as the other consent to maintain the slightest semblance even of an alliance with Orangeism or Orangemen. Never can Irish Catholics, so long as they are true to themselves, to their national origin, and their ancestral faith, enter into any treaty or compact with Orangeism; never will they consent to "*cat d'ère*" as the Turks say, by recognising as their allies in Canadian politics, a set of men who for generation after generation have approved themselves the treacherous, and inhuman persecutors of Ireland's people, and Ireland's Church. If Irish Catholics could forgive or forget the wrongs inflicted upon them and upon their fathers, upon the land of their birth, and the Church of their baptism, by the infamous secret society now unfortunately so politically powerful in Upper Canada, they would be more than angels, or less than men. The aversion of all Irish Catholics towards Orangeism is as natural as, and more reasonable than, the loathing which is provoked in most men by the presence of a snake, or any other dangerous and venomous reptile; and though as Christians they should entertain no personal feelings towards the individuals of which that society is composed, save those of Christian charity, and an earnest desire for their conversion, it is certainly not desirable, even were it possible, that their sentiments of detestation of the organization itself should be modified or diminished. A Catholic's attachment to his Church will always vary in intensity directly as his hatred of Orangeism in particular, and of all other secret and essentially "*anti-papal organizations*" in general; and it is certainly not to be desired that Irish Catholics should either love their Church, or hate Orangeism, and all other essentially "*anti-papal organizations*," less than they do at the present moment.

If these views of our actual political position, and of one of the chief causes that tend to keep French Canadian and Irish Catholics aloof from one another, be correct—it follows, that amongst the first measures to be adopted in order to bring about a solid union between the two parties, now so unfortunately estranged, the following should be enumerated. Firstly, the renunciation by the Irish Catholic party of all appearance even of dallying with the "*Clear Grits*" of Upper Canada, whose whole policy is inspired by a jealousy of Lower Canada, and a desire to treat its people as an inferior and subject race; and secondly, the abandonment by French Canadians of all semblance even of connection with the Orangemen; the enemies of Irish Catholics in particular, but whose entire policy is essentially "*anti-Papal*," and consists in the assertion of a hated "*Protestant Ascendancy*."

We desire in short to see Irish Catholics take an active interest in those questions—the question of "Representation by Population" for instance—with which French Canadians seem to be more immediately concerned; and in like manner we would wish to see the latter more prompt to sympathise with the peculiar grievances of their Catholic brethren of the U. Province—as for instance the Orange, and School grievances. Irish Catholics are interested, vitally interested, in maintaining the autonomy of the Lower section of the Province against Anglo-Saxon aggression; and in like manner, even though they may be too short-sighted to perceive it, are the Catholics of Lower Canada vitally interested in the issue of the arduous struggle in which their brethren of Upper Canada are engaged with the enemies of Catholicity, for "*Freedom of Education*," and religious liberty.—These truths are so self-evident, that we should be ashamed to repeat them, were it not that too many on both sides need to be reminded of them, and recalled to a sense of their interests, and of their duty.

Finally we contend that a mutual alliance, such as we advocate, is the only alliance which either French Canadians, or Irish Catholics can contract without danger, dishonor, and dereliction of principle; and that in that alliance, could it be effected, the *Courier du Canada* would find those guarantees for the stability of the peculiar institutions of Lower Canada of which he is in search. We Catholics number—we take our cotemporary's statistics—one half of the entire population of the two Canadas; what then, and whom have to fear, if we be but united and true to ourselves? Man for man, are we not as good as our Protestant fellow-citizens? and putting our trust in God, and in our cause, which is His cause, are we not able, if united, to defend our rights against them? We wage no war of aggression upon our separated brethren, with whom, on the contrary, it is our earnest desire to live, if they will but let us, on terms of good fellowship; are we then reduced so low, so destitute of resources in ourselves, and so morally inferior to our neighbors, that, though their equals in point of numbers, we must needs propitiate them; and seek to avert their hostility, by pros-