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A PROTESTANT GENTLEMAN'S VIEWS ON THE SCHOOL QUESTION.

A letter from Mr. A. R. Dougall which appeared in the Belleville Daily Sun of the 6th inst. in reference to the Manitoba school question and on Separate schools in general, is worthy of the careful consideration of Canadians of every Province, whether Catholic or Protestant.

Mr. Dougall is a Protestant lawyer of high standing in his profession, and he has evidently paid special attention to school matters, and he is well acquainted with the operation of the Federal and Provincial laws affecting schools, whether Public or Separate. He declares that he is no bigot, or that he tries, at least, not to be so, and after careful consideration of the Manitoba school question he draws the following conclusion:

"I am a Protestant, and I try not to be a bigot. I am only bigoted enough to adhere to my own belief, but, no matter how hard pressed by others, in the face of all the arguments I have heard and read, if guided by my own judgment on this most important question, I should think every member of the House of Commons would vote to have the privilege granted to the minority of Manitoba re-establishing Separate schools there similar to our Catholic Separate schools in Ontario, although he might think that at another election he would be rejected. Are educated men so anxious to be members of Parliament that they will vote against granting a just right, and that, too, claimed by themselves, of educating their children in schools of their own choosing? Such men may rely upon it, if they should vote to do justice—though the heavens fall, (metaphorically speaking), and are put out now, time will bring about events in their favor."

It is not by any misconception of the state of the case that Mr. Dougall says that the Protestants—and he is speaking here specially of the Protestants of Ontario—claim for themselves the right of establishing Separate Protestant schools under the identical circumstances under which Catholics are accustomed to establish Catholic schools.

He points out, what is generally overlooked in discussions on the school question, whether as affecting Manitoba or Ontario, that when Separate schools were granted to Catholics, "the Legislature then took good care to grant the same privilege to Protestants . . . for the establishment of Protestant Separate schools in any township, city, town, or incorporated village, where the trustees might employ a Catholic."

On this provision of the school laws Mr. Dougall remarks:

"You will observe that to-day it is the law of Ontario that any five heads of families being Protestants may apply in writing to have Protestant Separate schools established. Any five Methodists, any five Presbyterians, any five Free Church Presbyterians, any five Baptists, any five Episcopalians, or any five adherents of any other Protestant denomination, may apply for the establishment of a Protestant Separate school, and the proper authority for that purpose shall (imperative, mark you,) grant, or to use the words of the Act, establish a Protestant Separate school where the Trustees of any section shall have employed a Roman Catholic teacher."

"By the 17th section, the corporate name shall be the trustees of the Protestant Separate school of the (say) Methodist Church of the school section No.— of the Township of — in the County of —."

From the wording of this law, Mr. Dougall maintains that it is the intention of the Legislature that the Public schools of Ontario shall be distinctively Protestant schools in fact, if not in name, otherwise why should provision be made to "exclude a Roman Catholic teacher at the option of five Protestant heads of families in any school section."

We are aware, of course, that it is the contention of those who are opposed to Catholic Separate schools, that the Public schools are non-sectarian, and that they should be acceptable to all Canadians. To this we answer first that we know to the contrary that in many instances there is Protestant

teaching, and frequently misrepresentation of Catholic doctrine. In addition to this either the Protestant version of the bible or the book of Scripture selections therefrom is read in nearly all the schools, and in many of them commented on by the teachers in accordance with their peculiar tenets. Many of the Public schools are therefore Protestant in the strictest sense of the word, and when Catholics object to their being made sectarian in this way they obtain no redress in most cases, as the trustees regularly take the side which their instinct of religious propagandism dictates.

But this is not the sole reason why Catholics demand the liberty of establishing Separate schools. The chief reason is that we wish our children to be thoroughly educated in their religion, and we have the natural right not to be thwarted in our wishes in this regard.

Mr. Dougall takes an impregnable stand on this point. He says:

"After all, what do Catholics claim? Merely the right of all Christian parents to give their children a Christian, coupled with a common school education, and to have the use of their own, and not their Protestant neighbor's taxes. . . . We all know, or ought to know, that to educate the head leaving the heart blank is to train clever men and women who, without fear of God or His judgments, are thus enabled by their sharpened intellects to perpetrate crimes for which all Christians should blush. We have an example of this in the criminal who now lies in Philadelphia jail, having confessed to defrauding of insurance companies of several thousands of dollars, who is accused of many murders—innocent lives sacrificed to the golden god. As a barrister of long standing I have many opportunities of knowing that the educated villain is the worst—the most to be dreaded villain."

Here also, to those who assert that Separate schools are inferior to the Public schools, there is no need of adding any comment to Mr. Dougall's answer, which is as follows:

"To my own personal knowledge here in the city of Belleville, a good common school education is given in the Separate schools, and I have but to refer to the last year's entrance examination to prove this. Two little Catholic girls from the nunnery schools obtained the highest marks at their examination. One led every school in the city and surrounding townships, and the other every other school in the townships within the inspectorial district."

In reference to the establishment of Protestant Separate schools, Mr. Dougall appears to be of the opinion that none exist under the law which provides for their establishment, for he says:

"The simple fact that Protestants in Ontario have not sought to establish Separate schools where the teacher was a Catholic is no answer to the right that should be granted to those of another faith choosing to exercise their right or privilege. There is nothing to-day to prevent any Protestant denomination from applying to have Separate schools where the teacher is a Roman Catholic."

"The irresistible inference is that Protestants claim the right and privilege whenever they choose to do so, to establish separate Protestant denominational schools in Ontario."

As to the law Mr. Dougall is correct, but as to the fact, he might have stated that Protestants do use their privilege, of which many of them are so anxious to deprive Catholics both in Manitoba and Ontario.

The latest report of the Minister of Education for Ontario informs us that there are at present ten Protestant Separate schools existing under the Protestant Separate School Act to which Mr. Dougall refers. They are in Anderson, Bromley, Cambridge, Marlboro, Osgoode, Plantagenet, Paslinch, Rama, L'Original, and Penetanguishene, and in 1892 there was an eleventh which has ceased to exist.

These schools employ twelve teachers, and their efficiency may be judged from the following facts. Only seven of the ten possess maps: of the teachers, one in Penetanguishene, and one in L'Original hold second class certificates. Of the other ten, five hold third class certificates, and five teach on Temporary permits.

In these ten schools there are 548 pupils, with an average attendance of 273, being slightly under 50 per cent., and, outside of Penetanguishene, where there are 17 children in the fifth Reader, there are only five pupils so far advanced, and these five are in the schools of Plantagenet and Paslinch. It is fair to remark, however, that there are 70 in the fourth reader in all the schools. In all these respects the 10 Protestant Separate schools are far below the mark attained by the Catholic and Public schools of the Province.

We cannot conclude our remarks on this subject better than by quoting

Mr. Dougall's words, that evidently, some

"Protestants intend to keep themselves in a position in Ontario to always have Protestant schools, and deny the same right or privilege to those of another faith in another Province, to establish such schools as they are willing to send their children to. That is not equal rights to all, irrespective of race and creed. It seems to me that it is the most malignant bigotry."

Mr. M. DOUGALL has written another letter to the Belleville Sun, in which he says:

"I invite all my professional brethren in this Dominion to read the letter published in your paper by me on Jan. 7; to take time enough to read the several statutes in which the Separate School Act exists and has existed since 1863, in which I quoted and gave chapter, section and pages to facilitate their research, and I challenge them, be they Grit or Tory, to successfully refute the quotations and arguments in that letter contained. It is all very well to make assertions to the contrary, the creature of bias, but the true issue must be decided by the reading of the law contained in these statutes, and I defy them to refute the position assumed and proved by that letter."

THE IRISH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.

The suggestion made by his Grace the Archbishop of Toronto, to the Hon. Edward Blake, that a general Conference of Irish Nationalists should be held in Dublin at an early date, with the object of restoring unity to the Irish party, has been favorably regarded, the leaders of the party having determined to act upon it at once.

Next May has been fixed upon as the date when this conference will assemble, and the friends of Ireland in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and even South America, will be invited to send delegates to assist in the deliberations, whatever may be their views regarding the course which Irishmen ought to follow in the effort to secure the autonomy of Ireland.

All the warring factions of Nationalists in Ireland will be invited to participate in the conference, with the understanding that the participants shall bind themselves to accept the decisions reached by a majority of the delegates present. As we understand the matter, only those who will represent the British Isles will have a decisive vote as to the policy to be adopted, inasmuch as they are the parties directly concerned in the issue, the delegates from other countries and from the distant colonies being concerned only as friends who desire to see Ireland govern itself. It is proper, therefore, that only delegates from Ireland itself, and perhaps those from England and Scotland, should have a decisive voice. The claim of Irishmen from England and Scotland would rest upon the fact that there is at present a legislative union, and that therefore they will have an actual interest in the result, as their votes will have an influence in deciding the fate of the political parties which will uphold or oppose the granting of Home Rule.

Mr. Justin McCarthy in a recent address outlined the course to be pursued, and the work to be done by the conference, and declared that the effort now being made is a hopeful one, and that it may be expected to result in a united action, by which alone the Home Rule movement can have any successful issue. He declares that he is himself ready to submit to the decisions arrived at by such a convention, and that in his opinion unless all are ready to do the same the convention will be fruitless. He is ready to retire from the leadership, and to support as leader any one who may be selected by the conference, and he will advocate that if any would be leader should refuse to accept its decisions he should be regarded as not fit to be a member of the Irish National party.

Several names have been mentioned as among those one of whom the conference would be likely to select as leader, and it is said that Nationalists generally would be quite willing to acknowledge the leadership of either Mr. Thos. Sexton, or Mr. William Redmond, at present leader of the Parliament. There is fair hope that under such circumstances the much desired union may be brought about, the more especially as the education issue has already brought the Irish parties somewhat more closely together.

It is the wish of the Irish people that they should be allowed such a system of education as they conscientiously approve of, and it is natural they should desire to afford to the Catholics of England and Scotland the same educational rights which they desire to secure for themselves. On this

point the policy of the Nationalists is more in accord with that of the Tories than of the Liberals, notwithstanding that the Tories have been hitherto uncompromisingly hostile to Ireland's political aspirations.

Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour have declared themselves favorable to denominational education, and, judging from the general preference shown by the people of England for denominational schools, there is on this question a common ground for the Tories and the Irish Nationalists. The Church of England also has put forth its whole strength in favor of denominational schools, but the Liberal press opposes them strenuously, and the fact that the Irish Nationalists will support the Tory policy on this point has caused considerable dissatisfaction among the Liberals. Should the result be a serious split between the Nationalists and the Liberals, the fault will not lie upon the Irish party. The Irish Nationalists cannot be expected to sacrifice so important an interest as the education of their children for the sake of pleasing Liberal extremists. They could not do this, even if the Liberals had it in their power to fulfil all their pledges to concede Home Rule, in return for the Irish support of their educational policy. Still less have they the right to expect that the Irish party will adopt that policy when they have nothing to expect in return but promises which cannot be fulfilled.

There is little doubt that Home Rule will finally be secured, though years may elapse before this will be the case, and we do not for a moment believe that the Irish educational policy will be any real obstacle to its attainment. The thought of holding the general conference of Irishmen for the purpose of settling the dissensions of the Irish party was a happy one, and all friends of Ireland will be thankful to the patriotic Archbishop of Toronto for having suggested it. We trust that it may prove to be a complete success.

THE UNITED STATES RELIGIOUS CENSUS.

The religious census of the United States has been published in book form. It gives the membership of the Churches at 20,612,806. This is to be understood of communicants only, so that practically the number belonging to each denomination is much higher than the number given in the census. Catholic communicants are given at 6,250,000; Methodists, 4,600,000; Baptists 3,725,000; Presbyterians, 1,180,800; Lutherans, 1,230,000; Protestant Episcopal, 540,000.

From these figures it is impossible to arrive at a correct estimate of the actual population belonging to each Church, as in each church the communicants are estimated in a different way. Among Catholics, the communicants are a well-defined class consisting of all those who being well instructed in their religion receive Holy Communion at least once a year during Easter time. These are nearly always over ten or eleven years of age, and comprise between thirteen and fourteen twentieths of the Catholic population in settled parishes.

Calculating on this basis, the total Catholic population would be certainly over 9,615,500, but owing to the scattered character of the population in many localities, the actual number must be placed considerably higher than this. Besides, we are aware that in localities where religion is little thought of, it is customary wrongfully to set down those whose religion is unknown, as belonging to some one of the Protestant sects, or to no religion in particular. This method of computation is grossly erroneous, and it is usually concerning Catholics that the error is made.

The actual number of Catholics is very variously estimated, but the estimate which comes nearest the truth is probably that which places the total number of Catholics at about ten and a half millions now; for we must make allowance for increase since the census was taken in 1890, and also for numbers whose religion was unknown. This estimate is not far from the careful estimates made by the parish priests in their respective parishes.

The Methodists and some other denominations are accustomed to say that to know the number of their adherents, the number of communicants must be multiplied by three. We consider this a palpable exaggeration, but if it be the truth, these denominations must greatly lack Christian vitality. Are we to believe that among 3,000 real Methodists there are only 1,000 communicants, whereas we know that there must be about 2,250 who have

reached an age when they should have been well instructed in Christian doctrine? Certainly if there were a Catholic parish in the whole country in such a condition as this it would be regarded as being in a state of utter demoralization.

We are inclined to think, and we could give proofs that we are right in so thinking, that our friends of other denominations in so representing the case, merely wish to make an impression that they are more numerous than the actual figures show them to be, and that they wield great political power.

We have no desire to belittle the numbers who profess a belief in Christianity of some kind in the United States. We would be glad to know that the bulk of the people of the country profess Christianity in some form, but the fact stares us in the face that if we take out the Catholics, numbering about ten and a half million, there will remain fifty-five million non-Catholics, among whom there are only 11,362,000 communicants. That is to say, only a small fraction over one-fourth of the non-Catholics of the union are practical Christians under any form of Christianity.

Some years ago, when the population of the United States was almost exactly one-half of what it was when the last census was taken, Mr. Marey published a work entitled "Christianity and its Conflicts," in which he enumerated those who are unbelievers in Christianity, and he found 10,376,000 unbelievers in the divinity of Christ. These included 6,330,000 Spiritualists, 1,543,000 Unitarians and Universalists, 500,000 Jews and 2,000,000 professed Infidels. We have not the latest statistics on this point, but there is little doubt that since that time the number has doubled with the population.

If we exclude the Jews, who have at least some form of religion, and add the 200,000 Mormons, we shall still have at least 19,952,000 who should be Christians, and are really of no religion at all. This is the state of affairs to which Protestantism has brought a country which was not long ago Christian.

Another curious fact is disclosed by the above figures, namely, the Protestant Episcopalians have only a few more than 500,000 communicants, yet it was seriously contemplated by the recent General Convention of this Church to assume the name of "the American Church," or the "Church of America," instead of the name by which it is at present designated, as if it were the Church to which a majority of the American people adhere. It is absurd enough for the "United States" people to be specially called "Americans," as if their country included all America, yet there is this much of an excuse for this, that it is the principal sovereign State of the two American continents, but that a Church which has only half a million of practical adherents in the United States, and scarcely a single member in any other part of America, should style itself the American Church would be the very height of absurdity.

This absurdity is surpassed by only the more brazen proposal which was also before the Minneapolis Convention, to call the Protestant Episcopal Church the "Holy Catholic Church." It shows good sense in the delegates generally, that neither of these suggestions was adopted as yet, though we cannot predict what is likely to happen should the matter come up again.

A WILY TRICK.

The course recently taken by the City Council of Belfast, which is entirely Protestant and Orange, illustrates well what Orangemen mean when they proclaim that their principles require them to grant "equal rights to all and privileges to none." Of course, our readers are well aware that this pretence is thrown out merely as dust to obscure the vision of those who are disposed to fair dealing, and to lead them to believe that the persistent hostility of Orangemen in general to everything Catholic is simply a matter of defence of the public against Catholic aggression, while they themselves are most innocent of any aggressive designs.

One-fourth of the population of Belfast is Catholic, but Orange hostility to Catholics has always been such that care was taken while establishing the wards of the city to arrange them so that there should be no representation whatsoever for Catholics.

If the city were fairly divided into wards there would be some Catholic aldermen, as there are Catholic localities which would, as a rule, be repre-

ented by Catholics, but the wards are so gerrymandered that there is absolutely not a Catholic in the council, and the present rulers of the city declare that they will not have any reform whereby the composition of the council will be changed, though they are at the present moment asking Parliament to pass a new Corporation Bill.

The Catholic Representative Committee of the city have taken occasion from the fact that a new Corporation Bill is proposed, to ask for a redistribution of wards, or for a system of cumulative voting by which justice will be done to them, but this fair demand has been refused by the council, whose desire it is to make Orange rule more sure than ever. The council, however, may find that it has overreached itself by its doggedness, for there is little doubt that the proposed Corporation Bill will be strenuously opposed in Parliament by the Irish Nationalist members and the Liberal party, and with a cause so evidently just it may well be hoped that an appeal to public opinion will prevent even the present large Tory majority from allowing this new iniquity to become law.

RITUALISM AND MONASTICISM.

The report which was recently published to the effect that the Protestant Episcopal monastery of the order St. Benedict, which has been in existence only for a year at Mount Jericho, Pennsylvania, has been already disbanded, has given some annoyance to the members of the order, two in number, who still cling to the monastic life, and they assert that the order is not to be broken up, but their work is merely to be transferred to another locality.

The founder of this order is the Rev. Mr. Russell Whitcomb, formerly a business man of Boston, but who became deeply interested in Church work, and has been known as Father Hugh since the establishment of his monastery.

Notwithstanding the great hostility exhibited toward religious orders by the first leaders of Protestantism, and in fact by Protestants universally until recent years, Mr. Whitcomb, being a close student of ecclesiastical history, had become convinced that the monastic life is and has been a great aid to religion, and his opinion is shared by thousands of Protestants now, especially those who are ritually inclined. It was for this reason that he determined to start the monastery at Mount Jericho, and he found Brother Cuthbert and several novices who entered the work with him, but he admits that all found the monastic life unsuited to them, except Brother Cuthbert and himself, and so left the order. Mr. Whitcomb maintains that the order is not disbanded, as the only two who were professed members, himself and Brother Cuthbert, remain in it. The establishment at Mount Jericho, Mr. Whitcomb says, was only temporary, but now it is intended to establish a new and more permanent monastery at Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, as arrangements have been made with Bishop Grafton for them to make that parish their headquarters; and several young men have promised to become novices.

The object of the establishment at Fond du Lac will be to bring over to the Episcopal Church the Belgian settlers, who have a considerable colony there.

It will be seen from Mr. Whitcomb's account of the matter that the original report of the breaking up of the Mount Jericho monastery was substantially correct, for, outside of the Catholic Church, young men are not frequently to be found ready to make the sacrifices necessary for the leading of a monastic life. It is a gratifying fact, however, that there are some religiously inclined souls who yearn to re-adopt the Catholic practices which were rejected as a superstition by Protestantism at the Reformation, but which have been since found to be in strict accord with the true spirit of Christianity. It is this reflection, and the discovery that the Catholic Church teaches the same doctrines which were taught to the early Christians, which have led to their restoration by a strong and zealously religious party in the Church of England and the Episcopal Church of America.

To these causes must be attributed the present use of prayers and Masses for the dead, which have of late become common among Protestants—and we must add to these practices, the restoration of ritualistic confession and the monastic life, all of which are now no matter of surprise either in

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