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AND
CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, FEB. 29, 1856.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

Up to the present moment the Peace negotiations seem to be progressing favorably; and it was expected that the Conference would very shortly open at Paris, to which City the Plenipotentiaries of the Great Powers were hastening, and where the general opinion seems to be in favor of peace. The *Journal des Débats* has upon this matter a very significant article; in which the writer contends that, though hitherto both France and Great Britain have had a common interest in continuing the war, a further prolongation of hostilities would be for the interest of the latter only. This would seem to imply that, if Great Britain will not accede to the terms proposed, she must be prepared to carry on the war with Russia single handed. The latter Power demands an armistice for four months. This by some is looked upon as suspicious, and as indicative of a design on her part to amuse the Allies, whilst gaining time for herself to bring her resources into play.

The American difficulty, arising out of the Central America dispute, and the enlistment affair, is far from being settled; and to judge by the tone of the press on the other side of the Atlantic, hostilities between Great Britain and the United States are becoming exceedingly probable. The *Times* insists that the British Government can make no further concessions; and speaks openly of an appeal to the sword, as the only resource left.

In the British Parliament little has been done.—Lord Palmerston has openly avowed that it is not the intention of the Ministry to bring forward any measure of "Tenant Right" for Ireland; and in answer to a question from Mr. Maguire, about "ministers' money" in Ireland, Mr. Horsemann replied, that it was not the intention of Government to introduce any measure upon that subject. These declarations of Ministerial intentions will not have the effect of satisfying the public mind in Ireland.

From the Crimea, we have little news of any importance. A desultory fire was still kept up from some of the Russian batteries, throwing occasionally a shot or shell into the ruins of south Sebastopol.—The demolition of the docks had been successfully continued, and the last of these great works has now been blown up.

THE BUFFALO CONVENTION.

On our first page will be found a full report of the proceedings of this body; together with the Reports of the various Committees upon Finance, Land, and Organization; and, the Address to the Catholics of this Continent, based upon these Reports.

To say that this long-talked of Convention had fully realised, or was even destined, at some subsequent period, to realise all the expectations to which it may have given rise, would be to claim for it more than with truth can be claimed for any deliberative body that ever will assemble. But it is doing it but scant justice when we say that, from first to last, it fully gave the lie to all the anticipations of its enemies. It must be remembered that the Convention was, in one sense, an experiment; and the result of that experiment has been to prove, that, when actuated by a religious and Catholic spirit, Irishmen can meet together to discuss topics of the highest moment, and of the most exciting character, calmly, dispassionately, and in a statesmanlike manner. This it was necessary to shew to the world, after the unseemly displays lately made by the Filibusters of the United States, and the Protestant *canaille* of Toronto.

But the Convention has done more than this. It has, we believe, conceived a plan, and given birth to an organisation, destined to exercise an extensive and permanent influence over the fortunes of the Irish Catholic immigrant in America; and which, whilst giving the lie to the silly stories set on foot about a *stampede* to Canada, will, we hope, have the effect of gradually, but effectually, removing vast masses of our people from the noxious atmosphere of the Eastern cities of the Union, and of planting them, as proprietors of the soil, on the fertile, but unoccupied lands of North America.

The site of such settlements must of course, in every instance, be determined by the settler himself.—Both in the Canadas, and the United States, millions of acres of unproductive, but most fertile land await but the stirring of the plough, to yield their increase to the hardy and industrious laborer. Large sums of money—as will be seen by the Report on Finance—which now go but to enrich the Yankee speculator, are available for the purchase of these lands; and we trust will ere long be devoted to that object. Canada, no doubt, will come in for her share; and

whilst we should rejoice to see such an addition to our population as the location in Canada of large numbers of the unsettled Irish now in the United States would produce—though we are convinced that, both in a material and moral point of view, such settlements would be alike advantageous to Canada and to the settler himself—the object of the Convention will have been gained, whether Canada or the United States be ultimately fixed upon by the immigrant as his future home.

Where this home of the future shall be, it is beyond the power of the Convention, or of any one save the intending settler himself, to decide. The stream of immigration must always, under all circumstances, find its own channel, and cut its own course. All attempts to divert it from that natural channel must always result in failure. All that a Convention, or any other body can do, is to keep the channel clear, and to remove all obstructions which might otherwise impede the course of the stream. Many attempts have been made, in America, in Australia, and other countries to create an artificial or forced immigration. Land jobbers have schemed, and puffiers have puffed their hardest. But in spite of land sharks and newspaper sharks, puffs and jobbery, the stream of immigration has always broken through all artificial restraints and theoretic dams, to the intense disgust of philanthropists, and speculators of every description.

Now, we augur well for the success of the Buffalo Convention, because, from the opening of its Session, this great truth was recognised; and because it was, from the first, the evident determination of every delegate present, to avoid all appearance, even, of dictating to the settler in the choice of a settlement. Such being the case, it is scarcely worth while to notice the absurdities of some of our cotemporaries—American as well as Canadian—about the object of the Convention being—according to the latter—to swamp the noble Protestants of Canada by a wholesale importation of Irish Papists;—according to the former—to strengthen on this Continent the cause of European Monarchy, by withdrawing from American Democracy large numbers of its adopted citizens. The fact is, that the Convention had no such objects in view at all; its sole design being to rescue, if possible, numbers of the Irish immigrants from that physical, social, and moral degradation to which they are as much condemned in the New, as in the Old World. The objects of the Convention were social, moral, Christian, and Catholic; but, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, they were not political.

It has also been objected to the Convention that it is "sectarian" in character—which, being interpreted, means that its action is designed for the benefit of Catholics exclusively. In this objection there is this much of truth, that, the design of the Convention is, in so far as is practicable, to form exclusively Catholic settlements; and, above all, to bring the Irish immigrants of whom such settlements shall be composed, within the sphere of the salutary influences of the Catholic church, and the Catholic school. Were it possible to exclude Protestantism altogether from these contemplated settlements, it would no doubt be the duty of the Convention to strain every nerve for the attainment of such a desirable object. But alas! it is very certain that such exclusion is altogether impracticable. Tares will still spring up with the wheat, no matter how careful the husbandman may be to select good seed for his field. Weeds will grow apace, in spite of all the efforts of the gardener to keep his garden clean. But what should we think of the farmer who should give himself the pains to sow bad seed, and to plant weeds? No, No; Protestantism will spring up of itself, readily enough, and without the help of the Convention. There will be no need to import it; and we shall only be too happy if, to some extent, we are able to keep it in check, and counteract its poisonous effects.

But whatever the Convention may have done, the real work remains yet to do; and it must be done by the friends to Catholic settlements throughout the Province. If they approve of the designs of the Convention, and of the machinery which it has recommended to carry these designs into execution, it will be for them to show their zeal, by forming themselves into working societies, to co-operate with the Convention, and to give effect to its plans. For this purpose meetings will be held, as speedily as possible; and we trust soon to have it in our power to show, that the Irish Catholics of Canada are fully determined to carry out the great objects for which the Convention was held—those objects being to ameliorate the moral and material condition of their fellow-countrymen, to develop the resources of this vast Continent, and above all, the greater honor and glory of God.

The Parliamentary Session that has just commenced at Toronto, menaces to be a stormy one; and, at all events, is pregnant with events of the highest importance to Catholic interests throughout the Province. The war cry has been sounded; and there can be no doubt that the battle of "Freedom of Education" vs. "State-Schoolism" has again to be fought upon the floors of the House of Assembly. Such being the case, it is well that we should thoroughly understand both our own strength, and that of our opponents; and that we should obtain a clear view of the position that we hold, and, please God, that we intend to maintain, against the advocates of "State-Schoolism."

"Freedom of Education" is the device upon our banners. And by "Freedom of Education" we mean to assert the right of every parent, as against the State, to educate his children as he will; we intend to protest against the tyrannical assumption of our opponents, that Education is a matter over which the State has any, the slightest, legitimate authority. Freedom for the School, as well as for the Church—for Education as well as for Religion—is the cause

for which all Catholics are now imperatively called upon to buckle on their harness, and to draw the sword. And with God's blessing upon our honest and united exertions, we will not sheathe that sword, nor hang up our armor on the wall, until such time as the battle shall have been fought and won; until the beast—"State-Schoolism"—shall have received its death wound; until for ourselves and for our posterity we shall have secured the inestimable blessing of Freedom, in Education as well as in Religion; nor until we shall have wrested from the hands of "Jack-in-Office" his usurped authority over Church and School.

Hitherto we have fought only for details; and by so doing have appeared to concede to our adversaries that Education is a legitimate function of the State. This has been the weak point in our lines; and the "State-Schoolists" have known how to avail themselves of our mistake. We have been like men fighting with one hand tied; and—if not defeated—the issue of the contest has not been favorable to us. If, however, we would obtain any great, any satisfactory results, we must change our tactics. We must do battle for a principle, and not for paltry details; we must put forth our strength—not merely to win a clause here, or cut off a clause there—but against the stronghold of our adversary; against the fundamental principle of "State-Schoolism"—that Education is a legitimate function of the State.—This is the Malakoff of our enemies; and it is against this alone that the whole fire of our batteries should now be directed.

The "Common School Question!" Why should there be a "Common School Question," any more than a "Common Church Question" in Canada?—or what more right has the Provincial Legislature to interfere with Education, than with Religion? Is the former of more vital importance to the well being of the community than the other? Most assuredly not. Can one be safely left to the action of the "Voluntary Principle?" Then also must it be safe to leave the other in the same safe keeping. Why, again do we ask, should the State presume to exercise control over, and to legislate for the "School," when its incompetence to legislate for, and its unfitness to exercise control over, the "Church" are facts which no one will dare to contest? These are questions to which we defy any one to give a rational and consistent answer.

It is time that the axe be laid to the root of the tree; lopping off a branch here and there will no longer suit our turn. Our present system of State Schoolism is rotten, rotten to the core; false in principle; absurd in its details; oppressive in action; most mischievous in its results. Away with it! Too long already has it cumbered the ground. It has been stated on authority, by a member of the Legislature, that—"Fifty-six per cent. of the Grammar Schools of Upper Canada received pupils unable to write; and thirty-two per cent. received pupils unable to read!" And is it to uphold such a disgraceful system, that the rights of parents over their children are to be ignored, and our civil and religious liberties to be trampled under foot?

Our present School system for Upper Canada is, we say, thoroughly and irremediably defective. It cannot be amended, if we would amend it; it would not be worth amending, if we could. It has been so patched, and darned, that every one is disgusted with it. It is a mass of incongruities and contradictions; of which the details are at variance with the principle, the principle at variance with the details. The fundamental principle of our present system is that of the despotic and Godless Massachusetts School Law; according to which, not only should every one be forced to pay for State Schools, but every one should be forced to send his children to them as well—no matter what his religious belief—no matter how strong his conscientious convictions of the dangers to which the faith and morals of the pupils are therein exposed—no matter how honest and enlightened his detestation of the whole principle of "State-Schoolism." But upon this Yankee, slavish, and essentially anti-Christian stock, it has been attempted to engraft the opposite, or Denominational system; a system which not only asserts religion as an indispensable element of education, but which recognises the right of the individual, as before the State, to frame or adopt his own religion. These two systems, based upon incompatible principles, are therefore themselves incompatible, and therefore cannot work harmoniously together. If the fundamental principle of the Common School System of Canada—that which we have borrowed from Boston—be good, then must the "Separate School" system engrafted thereon be evil.—On the other hand—if religion be so indispensable to every School system, that, without it, all education is worthless; and if the State has no right to impose religious tests, no authority to lay down the law in things spiritual, and no jurisdiction in the domain of conscience—then must the principle upon which the Upper Canada Common School Law is based be false, and its immediate repeal be imperatively called for.

It is evident then, that the "Denominational" or "Separate School" system can never, under any circumstances, be combined harmoniously with the infidel State System of Massachusetts. This was apparent from the first. But for the sake of showing our opponents how desirous we were of peace on any terms that did not involve a dereliction of principle—of convincing them that we were prepared to make great sacrifices rather than provoke strife—we have hitherto consented to deal with their School Law as with a law defective, rather in its details, than in its fundamental principle—as some thing which we were more desirous to amend than to abolish altogether. The consequence has been, that, Session after Session has witnessed fresh attempts to adapt the infidel importation from Boston, to the wants of a Christian community; and that every succeeding Session of

Parliament has had to pronounce the labors of its predecessors a miserable failure. The plain fact of the matter is, that no modifications, no amendments, of which a Yankee School system is susceptible, can convert it into a Christian system. It is thoroughly and essentially Pagan; and cannot therefore become Christian, or cease to be Pagan, without altogether ceasing to be. Therefore, again we say it—we must agitate, not for its amendment, for it cannot be amended—but for its total repeal, as the first step towards the establishment of "Freedom of Education."

That we are not singular in these views—that they are entertained by Protestants in Upper Canada, as well as by Catholics—that men of various denominations, men greatly differing from one another in politics as well as in religion, openly avow them—we shall show in a subsequent number. We do not stand alone in our warfare against "State Schoolism;" and in struggling for our civil and religious rights as Catholics, and whilst contending for the emancipation of School and Church from the trammels of the State, we have reason to hope that we shall find amongst our ranks many of the most influential and enlightened of our Protestant fellow-citizens.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

Since Wednesday the 20th inst., the time of the House has been occupied with debates on the Address, in reply to the speech from the Throne. This Address was moved by Mr. Evanturel, a new French Canadian member, and was seconded by Mr. Conger. To this Address, amendments were proposed by Messrs Dorion—Brown—Daoust—and Macdonald. An immense amount of talk has taken place in consequence; which lasted until the night of the 27th inst. Hitherto Ministers have been able to divide the House with large majorities in their favor.

At the conclusion of the debate a very warm personal altercation took place between Mr. Brown, Attorney-General McDonald, the Postmaster General, and Solicitor General Smith, in reference to Mr. Brown's conduct as a Penitentiary Commissioner.

The Attorney General stated that he was prepared to prove that he had been guilty of falsification of evidence.

Mr. Brown announced that he should move for a Committee to enquire into the matter.

Petitions against Separate Schools for Catholics have been presented, and received with much applause by the enemies of "Freedom of Education." Perhaps, after all, the abolition of these Schools would do us no very great harm; because such a high-handed violation of our rights as citizens, would necessarily elicit such a united and determined opposition from the whole Catholic body, as would eventually lead to the entire breaking up of the present infernal system of "State-Schoolism." Petitions have also been presented in considerable numbers in favor of the absurdity known as the "Maine Law." Upon the whole, it would seem as if our Canadian "Praise-God-Barebones" were determined to make a session of it.

The Rev. Dr. McCaul is a Protestant clergyman of Toronto and Professor of the University of that city. The Rev. Mr. Dick is another Protestant minister, of the Baptist persuasion, much given to evangelicalism and slander, who has lately acquired for himself an unenviable degree of notoriety, by promoting a suit against Dr. McCaul, in which the last named gentleman was accused of various acts of disgusting immorality; and in which the names of several respectable ladies were also introduced, as partners in the Doctor's guilt. After a long, and very painful investigation, the Rev. Dr. McCaul's innocence has been fully established, and the malice of his accusers brought to light. It remains now to be seen what steps will be taken by the former, and the friends of the grossly insulted ladies, to bring their reverend traducer—the evangelical Minister Dick—to justice. To originate slanders against a Catholic priest, is so common a failing amongst evangelical ministers, that no one looks upon it as an offence either against God or man. On the contrary, a Leahy, an Achilli, or a Gavazzi, the more he vents his mendacious obscenities against Popish priests or Popish nuns, the more is he applauded by his brave, generous Protestant audience, the more is he doted on by the pure-minded, delicate young creatures of the Conventicle. But to traduce a Protestant clergyman! but to treat him with as little regard to truth and decency as if he were a mere Catholic ecclesiastic! This is an offence which we feel convinced will not be allowed to go unpunished; and, we must confess, we sincerely hope that such an example may yet be made of the Rev. Mister Dick and his rascally colleagues, as shall have the effect of teaching these gentry a salutary lesson for the future.

The *Montreal Witness* wishes to know if the Jesuits are the men "to educate our children"? This is a question which the parents of the children are alone competent to decide. If we, Catholics, chose to employ Jesuits as educators of our children, we will do so; without asking permission from any one, without condescending to give any one an explanation of our motives for so doing. But the liberty we claim for ourselves, we are fully prepared to concede to others; and we have therefore no design, no desire even, to compel Protestants who object to Jesuit training, to send their children to a Jesuit College. We trust that this may satisfy our evangelical cotemporary; but whether or no, we take this opportunity of assuring him that, so long as we think fit to commit our children to "Jesuit training," we will continue to do so in spite of man and devil.

As our City Collector is at present going the rounds, we hope our City subscribers will be prepared for him. He is authorised to collect all monies due to this office, and give receipts for same.