

The True Witness

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1896

AN IRISH CATHOLIC DAILY.

Many of the Irish Catholics of this city have been for some time discussing the feasibility of having a daily newspaper devoted to their special interests. As to the need that exists for such an organ of public opinion there can be no doubt. All that is necessary to the accomplishment of so laudable a project is the adoption of the proper means.

There are two ways in which this can be done.

One is for those who are favorable to the enterprise to subscribe the sum of \$100,000, with the distinct understanding that \$50,000 of this is to be expended in the first year in simply establishing the paper on a solid and permanent basis.

The other is to make the *True Witness*, by swelling its subscription list to the requisite proportions, and by according to it a legitimate share of advertising patronage, such a success as an Irish Catholic weekly journal as to warrant its transformation into a daily journal.

This is the position in a nutshell.

ROAD COMMITTEE SECRETARY.

A good deal of discussion has been caused by the avowed intention of some of the French-Canadian aldermen to fill the position of Secretary to the Road Department, rendered vacant by the death of the late P. O'Reilly, by the appointment of a French-Canadian. The observations of our clever young contributor, "Our Rambler," which will be found in another column, are timely in this connection.

The attempt to take from the Irish Catholic body the secretaryship of the Road Department, which belongs to it by a custom observed in the City Hall up to the present, shows that the time has come when a determined effort should be put forth to make our influence felt by demanding the recognition of our rights. We seek no favor. All we ask is fair play. And we shall insist upon receiving it.

BROKEN PLEDGES.

Some Ontario writers have pretended that, as the majority in this Province to which the authors of the so called settlement owe their accession to power has shown no sign of dissatisfaction, there is nothing more to be said or done and that the question has found its solution. We dispute the premises.

On what ground is the conclusion that the majority is satisfied considered to be based? The vote of June last was due in some measure at least to a conviction that Mr. Laurier, in promising to secure for the dispossessed Manitoba minority even more than the Remedial Bill, was sincere, and that Mr. Tarte, in becoming a Liberal, had remained a Catholic and would see that justice was done to Catholics. The Catholic majority in this Province has awakened to the fact that its confidence was abused and that its reasonable hopes of a fair settlement of the school question have been disappointed.

If it be asserted that, so far, there has been no sign of that wide-spread agitation which is wont to mark resentment on the part of a deceived people, that the majority is on the contrary fairly tranquil and has indulged in no alarming protests against the conduct of its betrayers, our reply is that the fact is cause for congratulation to the whole of us. By a merciful provision of our nature, great masses of men are slow of comprehension and slow of movement. They have read history in vain who have not realized from its pages that it

is not always nor often at the moment of worst provocation, but sometimes long after—sometimes even after a tardy attempt to undo or redress the wrong has begun to be made—that an angry people rises in its might and asks no longer for justice but revenge. Those selfish politicians who, bent on the gratification of their own desires and aims, do not hesitate to irritate and offend the religious sentiment of more than a million of people, may be wide-awake and long-sighted enough so far as their own immediate personal interests are concerned, but they are cursed with a strange blindness, a terribly fatal myopia, when their course is viewed from the stand-point of patriotism and loyalty to their own professions.

They have surrendered to men who deliberately and for the sake of petty revenge and the satisfaction of mean spite, went out of their way to inflame the minds of Manitoba Protestants against their Catholic fellow-citizens.

Hitherto the province had been undisturbed by such firebrands and had enjoyed a peace that is now looked back upon with regret. One man, out of spite and envy, sowed distrust and discontent. The seed found a congenial soil in the breast of another man more ignorant, if more honest, a surly fanatic who, once enlisted for this evil warfare, fought for his bad cause with the stolid obstinacy of his narrow and uncultivated nature. And well he might use his single chance of gaining notoriety, when ministers and other prominent Protestants egged him on to his iniquitous goal. But that Catholics should condone an encroachment—started in this way for vindictive ends—on Catholic rights is simply incomprehensible.

All honor to the Protestants of Canada, in whatever political names they may rejoice, who protested and labored and fought on the side of justice and equity. But the most lamentable feature in a controversy of this kind is that, too often, when the sense of wrong has come home to the interested multitude, and the cry for retribution resounds, it is not the guilty alone but the innocent as well that have to pay the penalty.

As for the insinuation that the Catholics of Quebec are indifferent to the success or failure of their Manitoba brethren in obtaining their rights, it is a slander which, sooner or later, they will refute in a manner not to be misunderstood. Then was to the authors of that slander and those who have shared their seeds and their hopes!

IRISH CATHOLICS LOSING GROUND IN MONTREAL.

Constituting as they do between forty and fifty thousand of the population of Montreal, and occupying as many of them do positions of prominence in every local sphere of professional and mercantile activity, our Irish Catholic fellow-citizens do not exercise in civic and national affairs the influence to which their number, their wealth, their talents and their character entitle them. While they are continually increasing in number and progressing in every career they are retreating as a factor, in the public life of the city.

Attention to this grave fact was very opportunely directed by Mr. Tobias Butler, President of the Shamrock Amateur Athletic Association, in a speech which he delivered at a social entertainment held under the auspices of that organization last week. Take, for instance, the membership of the City Council. Only a few years ago there were five Irish Catholic members of it—William Cunningham, representing one of the divisions of St. Lawrence Ward; Patrick Kennedy and James McShane, representing St. Ann's Ward; Denis Tansey, St. Gabriel Ward; and William Farrell, Centre Ward. Now there are only two Irish Catholic members of the Council—Bernard Connaughton and Thomas Kinsella, who represent St. Ann's Ward. Thus, while Irish Catholics comprise nearly one-fourth of the whole population of the city, their representation in the City Council is but one-thirteenth of the whole membership.

There was a time also, when Irish Catholics held such important positions as the Chairmanship of the Water and Market Committees, even up to the date of the last election the latter was settled over by one of our race and creed, but now our representatives in the Council have to content themselves with playing second fiddle in every section of the administration, while the French Canadians and English Protestants hold the important offices.

Amongst the causes which have contributed to bring about these results, Mr. Butler pointed to one which has undoubtedly had a powerful effect. It is the tendency to divide the Irish Catholic element on parochial lines in secular affairs rather than to unite them in a central organization, with parochial branches, if so desired, but at all events in one comprehensive society. These parochial societies do a lot of good work in their way; but their influence would be far more effective and powerful if their efforts were united.

Another close observer of current events and tendencies has recently re-

marked that the Young Men's Christian Association, by attracting some of our young Irish Catholics to its ranks, and by interesting them in its movements affecting civic, provincial and national affairs, absorbs a good deal of their attention. Now, these movements are good, regarded in their general character; but it should not be forgotten that their principal aim is the promotion of Protestant interests, and that this is not a work to the furtherance of which the energies of our Catholic young men should be directed.

The time has come when the Irish Catholics of this city, especially those of them who are young men, should awake to the importance of uniting themselves in one strong association for the purpose of advancing their common interests. Already, as we have shown, considerable ground has been lost. If an effort is not soon made to recover it, the struggle to regain their rightful position may entail sacrifices which they now hardly realize.

MR. TARTE'S ABUSIVENESS.

Mr. Tarte, the stormy petrel of French-Canadian politics, is almost daily attacking Archbishop Langevin with abusive and vituperative personalities. A politician himself, first, last and all the time, he treats His Grace as if he were merely another politician and not a zealous and devoted Catholic prelate. Archbishop Langevin is not a politician, and his attitude on the Manitoba school question is not influenced in the least degree by political considerations. He has taken his stand on the school question as the consecrated pastor of the Catholic flock in Manitoba, whose solemn and sacred duty it is to do everything that lies in his power to safeguard their spiritual interests. If the question has not remained a religious and a constitutional one, but has become a political one, it is owing to the persistent efforts of Mr. Tarte to make it so. His scandalous attacks upon the Archbishop are repugnant to every loyal Catholic in Canada, and cannot fail to bring discredit upon the administration of which he is one of the leading members.

OUR QUEBEC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

In our last issue we published the admirable and timely speech or address delivered by the Hon. Gédéon Ouimet in the Legislative Council at Quebec. Those of our readers who have carefully followed the facts and arguments therein so ably marshaled, will henceforth be at no loss for an answer if ever it should be their lot to hear our dual system of education attacked by thoughtless or prejudiced opponents.

For those who take an interest in public affairs, as every one who wishes to know and to exercise his rights as a citizen and to discharge a citizen's duties is bound to do, it is, at the present crisis, above all things, essential that he should clearly understand the full significance of this school question. For the course of study necessary to attain a right appreciation of its meaning and merits we can think of no safer starting-point than the concise, yet comprehensive statement, for which we have to thank Mr. Ouimet.

There we see, as in a condensed panorama, the successive stages of the movement that led up to the grand settlement of fifty years ago. Before the conquest the institutions of the country were wholly Catholic. As early as the time of Mgr. Laval a system of education had been established in harmony with the needs of the young colony. The first comers, lay as well as clergy, were not only in a great measure persons of education, but also for the most part of superior intelligence and culture. As may be imagined, and as we know from ample records, the difficulties and drawbacks in the way of a general diffusion of the privileges of education when the population was sparsely scattered over a vast area, were almost insurmountable. Yet, as Mr. Ouimet informs us, in spite of those difficulties they never for one moment paused in their task, and the progress made was continuous till the old regime came to an end.

Then those who by choice or force majeure remained in Canada found themselves face to face with strangers who set at naught their most cherished convictions. To many of the new arrivals the overthrow of French rule meant also the overthrow of the Catholic Church, treaty provisions to the contrary notwithstanding. Many of the able and accomplished laymen to whom the inhabitants of the alienated colony had formerly looked for direction had abandoned their native for their ancestral homes.

In the noble devotion of the clergy the people thus deserted by their leaders found a tower of defence that never failed them. From the first they rejected every compromise which implied the surrender of the principle that the education of Catholics must be Catholic. Through their unwearied vigilance, all attempts to shake the faith of the people that God had intrusted to their care ignominiously failed.

The Hon. Mr. Ouimet deals with the long period of controversy which inter-

vened between the establishment of British authority and the final solution of the problem under the Union in an exemplary spirit of moderation and forbearance. He records acts but leaves the motives that prompted them to be judged by Him who searches the hearts of men. What he makes plain, however, is that, of all the educational experiments made from the crude proselytizing attempts of last century to the half measures that preceded the Rebellion, so long as the element of justice and good sense was wanting, dissatisfaction was sure to result. He does not deny that some good was effected and some progress achieved during the era of struggle and discontent. He even admits that when the troubles of 1837 broke out, the legislators of that time were engaged in endeavoring to improve the school system.

We need hardly say that, using the light that history and reflection have shed upon that stormy and sorrowful time, Mr. Ouimet is entirely on the side of the humane and patriotic prelates who raised their voices in warning against the evil counsel of rash leaders. The Rebellion was, he declares, "an unfortunate policy badly directed; and I can speak of it the more familiarly because a member of my family took part in that ill-considered movement." And, in his judgment, not the least injurious of its consequences was its having hindered and delayed the educational reforms that were then in progress.

But notwithstanding the ill-timed interruption, the good seed had been sown and had already begun to germinate, from which the beneficent harvest of educational freedom was in due season to be reaped and garnered.

As the Hon. Mr. Ouimet points out, the principle of the existing school law of this Province was acknowledged in the first year of the Union. It had taken a third of a century before and half a century after the establishment of Parliamentary institutions in their Province to effect a lodgment of that principle in the minds of the more enlightened Protestant public men.

The principle of separate schools as a right of dissentient minorities having been acknowledged, the question of taxation for school purposes had a correspondent solution, and all that remained to be settled were matters of detail. From that starting point a development proceeded from year to year until the amended law of 1875 was passed. The Council of Public Instruction, with its twofold division and dual control, has been pronounced a masterpiece of compromise by European educational experts. It has won admiration from some of the best minds in the United States. Its operation, as Mr. Ouimet so explicitly proves, has had a success which can be fully appreciated only by those who, like himself, have followed it step by step from its inauguration to its present state of prosperity. If there are any who doubt that prosperity, let them read what the Hon. Mr. Ouimet rightly calls the "consoling statistics" included in his address—an increase in less than 30 years of 2056 in the number of schools; of 90,782 in the number of pupils; of 5444 in that of teachers; of \$1,094,484 in the contributions of tax payers. These figures, which do not comprise the agricultural, technical and normal schools, not to speak of the universities, colleges, and other institutions, are eloquent testimony to the success of the system.

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT.

Modern research is fast giving the quietest to lies which have long passed current as historical facts. The Gunpowder Plot is one of these lies. Few schoolboys are unacquainted with the traditional parts assigned to Catesby, Percy, Tresham, and the "arch-fiend" himself, Guy Fawkes. Before the re-assembling of the British Parliament the Vaults of the House are still searched by the "beefeaters," so as to safeguard the lives of the legislators from similar "Popish" plots. In this matter, says a writer in Chambers' Encyclopedia, "the memory of this plot, invested by much fiction, has survived in England. It was in itself mysterious, and for purposes of State policy and Protestant zeal a further mystery was thrown over it."

A learned English Jesuit, Father Gerard, has been at considerable pains to shed some welcome light on this mystery. In a very interesting volume which has just been published, entitled, "What Was the Gunpowder Plot?" Father Gerard skillfully unravels the tissue of falsehoods which constitute the official account of the affair, together with the so-called "confessions of the prisoners." As is well-known, Fawkes and his fellow-prisoners were tortured into admissions. Father Gerard shows conclusively that even the statements so obtained were garbled by official hands. His valuable book convicts Cecil as the author of the plot. The Catholics of that day believed that this was the truth of the case; and French historians of repute have always maintained the same view. It remained

for Father Gerard to bring forward a body of evidence so convincing as to preclude the entertainment of any doubt on the subject. Percy and Catesby were, it is now clear, but the tools of Cecil. During the inception of the plot Percy was seen, it is proved, leaving Cecil's house at night. It would obviously be to Cecil's interest to silence Catesby and Percy when they had played their part; and accordingly both were shot, sword in hand, at Holbeck's, early in November. The death of the two leaders, who could easily have been taken alive, was not unnaturally regarded as suspicious at the time. Their evidence, taken on the rack or elsewhere, would have been, one would have thought, very damaging to the Catholic cause. Again, Father Gerard deals distinctively with the Montague letter incident. As the histories have hitherto had it, Lord Montague was at supper at Hoxton, his country house, shortly before the consummation of the plot, when a letter was handed to him asking him "to devise some means to shift off your attitude at this Parliament, for God and man hath concurred to punish the wickedness of this time." It is now clear that Lord Montague was expecting this letter "from a stranger"; and that it was Tresham, his brother-in-law, who sent it. Tresham died opportunely in the Tower.

Space does not admit of further reference to other points in the mass of his torical evidence which the learned writer brings forward to support his contentions. The book itself must be read through. It is a remarkable work; and it will perform a remarkable service in ridding the minds of a very large number of English-speaking people of a monstrous myth.

WHAT GOD HAS NOT JOINED TOGETHER.

There are two questions in relation to the school controversy that have been strangely confounded by certain writers who have more prejudice and *partis pres* than knowledge and good sense. They have made the discovery that some of the country schools are in a backward condition, and at the same time they have learned or been informed that in these backward schools religious instruction is not neglected. The pupils may know comparatively little of grammar or geography or arithmetic, but they are not ignorant of their catechism. Therefore, they conclude that it is because those pupils have been brought to a fair average standard in their religious education that they are so far behind in the other branches.

It is only the Catholic schools of which this complaint is made. But those who make it overlook the fact that there are many excellent schools in which the pupils have learned their catechism with equal diligence and have at the same time made satisfactory progress in all the secular branches of education. They will also find, if they take the trouble to inquire, that there are backward schools that are not Catholic and in which no catechism is taught. They cannot, in such cases, which are just as real as the others, put the blame of the backwardness on the religious instruction. The fact is that this talk about the catechism is prompted by pure bigotry.

If there are Catholic schools that fall short of what they ought to be, we may be sure that the fault does not lie in *catechizandis rudibus*. It is the Church's commission to teach all nations and every member of every nation, without regard to rank or means or occupation, and it is the glorious privilege of the Catholic poor to be taught the same creed, the same prayers, the same duties and observances as the Catholic rich. This harping on the catechism is absurdly beside the question.

There is doubtless room for improvement in all our schools, and we are all equally concerned in having them improved. But how is it, as the Hon. Gédéon Ouimet asks, that "only the Catholic schools have been attacked? Is bigotry at the bottom of it? I do not know; but, while paying homage to the condition of the schools controlled by the Protestant Committee, I must say that our Catholic schools are equally prosperous and that the same drawbacks that exist in the latter exist also in the former." The rebuke is gentle but no less effectual because it is marked by fairness and good taste, for the simple reason that Mr. Ouimet knows what he is speaking about. If he chose, he could no doubt call attention to Protestant schools that would astonish some of the optimists of A.P.A.-ism. But he is too just, too charitable, to expose the shortcomings of communities that rather deserve our sympathy and help.

Who knows better than he, so long Superintendent of Education, that, as he kindly says, "in our province there are poor districts where the parents find it difficult to procure for themselves the bare necessities of life?"

Catholics are not going to cease having their children taught the catechism, we may be sure, whatever else they leave them without. When they reach a state of mind in which they are ready,

for any advantage to do so, they have already forfeited their claims to be Catholics. But when Catholics demand separate schools, it is not merely that their children should have the right of learning what they believe to be God's truth, from competent instructors, at certain fixed hours and for certain periods regularly from day to day. They might have that privilege, as has just been discovered, even in the common or mixed schools, though it would certainly, for reasons to us obvious, be more in keeping with their ideas of the becoming, to attend such religious class under the roof of a Catholic school. But that is not enough for the Catholic's conscience. He wants a school where the atmosphere is Catholic, where his faith is secured from insult, from slight, from injurious comparison; where his child's feelings will not be hurt by insinuations which he only half understands, but knows to be unkind, or by silences no less significant, due to obtrusive forbearance; by the withholding of comment or its utterance, or, in fine, by countless conscious or unconscious occasions for offence.

What sort of history can by any possibility be made to serve for a mixed class of Protestant and Catholic boys or girls? How is the 16th century to be dealt with? What of the Tudor period or the close of the Valois and the early reigns of the Bourbon dynasty? It may be said, perhaps, that all Protestants do not agree and that there are periods which it would be difficult to teach without hurting the feelings of Presbyterians, or Episcopalians or Independents or Quakers or Methodists. Some Protestants may for that reason advocate denominational schools on an enlarged basis. But, as every Protestant knows, and as the Catholic knows still better, the difference between one Protestant communion and another is of trivial moment compared with the essential distinction between the Protestants and the Catholics.

On every ground—religious, patriotic, social, political—the separate school system is a necessity for Catholics. A Catholic has a right to Catholic education: not otherwise can he have it than in Separate schools. And to rob him of these schools in Manitoba and the North-West, whatever lukewarm or interested Catholics may bring themselves to say, is a crying crime, an outrage on justice.

ONTARIO'S SEPARATE SCHOOLS NEXT.

Having destroyed the Catholic schools in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, the enemies of Catholic schools are now pleading that public attention should be directed towards the business interests of the country, their secret object being, as the following extract from a recent editorial in the Toronto Globe plainly shows, to gain time to concert their evil designs upon the Catholic separate schools of Ontario:— "The question which Ontario people must ask themselves is not whether their settlement of the question of religious instruction is ideally perfect, or in what respect it differs from that of Manitoba, but whether it is substantially satisfactory to themselves. * * * Not to go beyond this very question of education, how much better it would be to bend our energies towards the improvement of the condition of the half million children, Protestant and Catholic together, than to devote our whole attention to the 39,782 that are attending the Separate Schools? Let us go in for better instruction all round, better school houses, better salaries for teachers, better methods."

HENRY AUSTIN ADAMS, M.A., who first made his reputation as a brilliant pulpit orator in Old Trinity, Buffalo Cathedral and the Church of the Redeemer, where he successively ministered, is coming to lecture in Montreal. Since, at immense sacrifice to himself, he gave up the Rectorship of the Church of the Redeemer in New York city, to embrace the Catholic Faith, he has had lecturing his profession. His success has been phenomenal. Those outside the Church listen to him with the same interest as when of old he was one of their number. His name is always a drawing card, he has so many and such rare gifts—humor, pathos, sincerity, strength, wide acquaintance with a host of subjects and people. He has always something new to say and his natural wit sparkles over every discourse. His personality is most attractive. There is a complete freedom from affectation or artificiality. He is heart and soul a Catholic, enthusiastic in the cause of Mother Church, yet he still commands an audience from without and wins both interest and esteem. It is a great privilege to Montreal to hear him, and the Free Library is conferring another favor upon our city in inaugurating a series of lectures, of which Mr. Adams' is the first. All are to be by the most eminent speakers, brought from a distance and at much expense, not from hope of gain, but to supply a needed want, to give Montreal Catholics an opportunity of hearing the best men upon questions of the day. The lecture will be on Thursday, December 10th, in St. Mary's hall, 146 Bleury street.

Mrs. Wantano—When Mr. Raysee said he had a good story to tell you, why did he make such curious motions with his fingers?

Mr. Wantano—He was telling it to me in deaf and dumb language.

Mrs. Wantano—Why couldn't he tell it out loud?

Mr. Wantano—Oh, it was too funny for words.—New York Press.