

THE TRUE WITNESS

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

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The True Witness.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, OCT. 8, 1858.

ST. PATRICK'S BAZAAR.—This Bazaar, in aid of the funds of the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, and which has therefore so many claims upon the citizens of Montreal, will remain open until Monday night next; and we trust that the result this year, as in all previous years, will be such as to do honor to our Irish friends, to the ladies who have generously devoted their time and labor to the success of the Bazaar, and to the Name of Him Who is the Father of the fatherless, and of those who have none to help them.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The Nova Scotia arrived at Quebec on Tuesday, but adds little to our stock of European intelligence. The condition of the Atlantic Telegraph—the shares in which undertaking were quoted at £300 to £330—and its ultimate prospects of success, were anxiously discussed by the British press. It is the prevalent opinion now, that the Cable has not parted, as faint signals, though unintelligible, were still being received from Newfoundland, thus indicating the continuity of the electric current; but Mr. Varley has published a report, wherein he speaks of some fault, at a point some considerable distance from land, but whose exact position he cannot ascertain without a visit to this side of the Atlantic. The political news is naught; harvest prospects good, and the prices of breadstuffs falling. The Bank had received large quantities of gold, and money is quoted "easy."

On the Continent all is quiet, with the exception of the Italian Peninsula, where the cut-throat agents of Mazzini seem to be at their old dirty work again. We hear in consequence of numerous arrests at Naples, but as yet there have been no serious disturbances.

The precautions taken by the TRUE WITNESS, since its appearance, never directly or indirectly, by implication or otherwise, to make the Clergy or ecclesiastical authorities responsible for its opinions, or to implicate their venerable names in any of the controversies into which it has occasionally been forced, should have sufficed to convince the *Minerve* of the injustice of the language in which, in its issue of the 30th ult., it sees fit to indulge towards this journal. But to remove all possibility of doubt upon this point, we repeat again, what we have often said before, that, unless when the contrary is explicitly asserted, the *lay* editor of the TRUE WITNESS, and he alone, is answerable for every word that appears in his columns; and that for the manner, as well as for the matter of all that therein appears, he, and he alone, is to be blamed or held accountable. After this explicit disclaimer, we trust that we shall have no more of the *Minerve's* offensive and utterly groundless invectives; and that he will for the future refrain from dragging, without necessity, and without authority, the names of our Prelates before the public. This premised, we will now proceed to discuss calmly the several articles of indictment which our Ministerial cotemporary exhibits against us.

In the first place, it would appear that we have spoken disrespectfully of persons in authority;—inasmuch as, in a late article, we commented upon the insolent language of Sheriff Corbett towards our Irish Clergy, as upon another specimen of that insolence in which Government officials indulge themselves with impunity, and at the expense of Romish priests. In the second place—that in speaking of the late Ministerial shuffle—by means of which the present Cabinet contrived to evade the spirit of the law for securing the independence of Parliament; and to defraud their several constituencies of the right of pronouncing their opinion on the political conduct of their representatives—as involving, because of the unnecessary oaths and unjust invocations of God's most Holy Name, an offence of the deepest dye against religion and morality, we have taken upon ourselves to speak in the name of the Church, and in a manner calculated to implicate the Episcopal authorities of Canada. To both of these accusations of the *Minerve*, we will endeavor to offer a reply.

It is true that the habitual insolence of our Canadian officials towards the Catholic Clergy has frequently elicited our reprobation; and we re-

gret that any one calling himself a Catholic should, as does the *Minerve*, manifest a disposition to put up, for a consideration no doubt, with the impertinence of these gentry. The *Minerve* evidently mistakes their position altogether. He forgets that if the office itself is to be respected, the holder of that office is our hired and paid servant; receiving from us his wages for the work done; and bound therefore to treat us, who pay him, cloth and feed him, with all due respect.—The Government official is a public servant; and as a servant, is bound upon pain of dismissal from his situation, to conduct himself civilly towards the public, his masters, who pay him his wages. It is not necessary that we should put up with impertinence from our hired flunkies, in order to manifest a proper respect for constituted authorities; nor is there any more certain method for bringing the office itself into contempt, than to connive at the offences and shortcomings of those who may chance to hold it.

It is true also that we have pointed out the fact, that official insolence and official injustice, of which Catholics alone are the victims are, as matters are now managed, and thanks to the venality and craven spirit of our Catholic office holders and Catholic aspirants after office, often allowed to pass unpunished or with "impunity." Of this we have a proof in the case of Mr. Sheriff Corbett. He is a Government official; he has been guilty of most blackguard insolence—(we will not mince expressions)—of most blackguard insolence towards the whole body of our Irish Catholic Clergy; and through them to the entire Catholic Clergy of Canada. He has had the impudence publicly to state that "Irish priests and Irish whiskey were the curse of Canada;" and for this deliberate and wanton attack upon a body whom it is our first duty, and our highest privilege, to protect from the slightest appearance even of assault or insolence, he has as yet received no adequate punishment from his superiors, who have the power and the right of dismissing him from his situation; and without claiming for ourselves the gift of prophecy, we hesitate not, from our careful study of the conduct of the Ministry under analogous circumstances, to pronounce our opinion that the Sheriff's insolence and blackguard language will still be allowed to remain unpunished by those who have the power to punish him; whose duty it is to punish him; and who by not punishing him, make themselves partners in his offence, and responsible for his insolence.

It is such conduct as this, and not the just strictures of the TRUE WITNESS, that tends to weaken respect for authority, and to bring the office itself, on account of the offences of the office-holder, into disrepute. What respect can the Catholics of the district for which this impertinent fellow Corbett is Sheriff, have for the important official situation in which he is most improperly maintained by his superiors? what confidence can Catholics have in the impartial administration of the law in matters involving disputes between Catholics and Protestants, by such a one as this Mr. Corbett? From the case of the Sheriff of Quebec in the trials arising out of the Gavazzi riots, we have had ample experience what treatment Catholics have to expect from Protestant officials; and how prompt the latter are to avail themselves of their influence to pervert the ends of justice, and to procure iniquitous verdicts by means of packed juries. From the same case we may learn how leniently such offences, when perpetrated by Protestant Sheriffs, are viewed by our Canadian office holders; and it is by the criminal indifference of the latter to the frauds and insolence of their subordinates, and not by the indignant comments of the Catholic press upon that indifference, that contempt for authority, and distrust in the equitable administration of the laws, are engendered amongst the Catholic public. It is because we, as Catholics, are eminently the friends of law and order; because we would fain see the dignity of the office upheld by the exemplary conduct of the office holder; and because we know that official insolence unpunished, is but too apt to lead to acts of reprisal, and physical violence from the insulted, that we cease not to insist upon the impropriety of allowing such insolence to go unpunished. The honor of our Clergy should be as dear to us as that of our sisters and daughters. Now we could not feel it in our hearts to condemn very strongly the conduct of him who, despairing of redress from the laws of the land, had inflicted severe personal chastisement upon the impugner of the reputation of a beloved female relative; neither should we be surprised, if some hot-headed Catholic, indignant at the cowardly insult offered to his Clergy by Mr. Sheriff Corbett, were to take summary vengeance on the blackguard official with a stout horse-whip. Now it is because we do not wish to see individuals taking it upon themselves to redress their own grievances, because we wish to see authority respected, that we insist upon those in authority being respectable—i.e. worthy of respect—in their conduct; and that we insist upon the duty of the Government to visit with the severest strictures any of its subordinates who may misbehave themselves in office. By neglecting or delaying to do their bounden duty, the higher authorities become

morally responsible before God and man for the offences of those in authority under them; and for the contempt and hatred into which authority itself is sure to fall from their culpable remissness and their neglect to do their duty. We therefore who respect it, have no respect for men, no matter what their offices, or the amount of their salaries, who retain in office under them, and therefore connive at the insolence of, one who has dared to proclaim publicly his opinion that "Irish priests and whiskey are the curse of Canada." We commend these words of Mr. Sheriff Corbett to the meditation of our Irish Catholic readers; trusting that they will treasure them up carefully in their hearts until a fitting and constitutional opportunity presents itself to them for manifesting in a strictly constitutional manner their opinion of the impertinent blackguard who uttered them, and of the Ministry that countenances his insolence.

With regard to the question of the oaths, and the hopping about of our Ministers from office to office, like a pack of circus mountebanks, solemnly invoking the Holy Name of God at every hop, we shall content ourselves with citing the teachings of the Church on the question leaving it to our readers to apply those teachings to the particular case before them. In the first place then we would premise that an oath is an act of *latría*, or supreme worship of Almighty God, and that it should never be taken, merely because it is profitable or lucrative to the taker; but only in matters of grave importance and absolute necessity. Thus St. Thomas—as good an authority on questions of moral theology as the editor of the *Minerve*—thus clearly expresses himself—

1. "An sit licitum Jurare? Sic, cum debitis circumstantiis, in re gravi, cum necessitate."

2. "An juramentum sit appetendum, et frequentandum, tanquam utile et bonum? Non, sed tantum in necessitate."—*Ex. Sec. Sec. 89. De Juramento.*

We beg of the *Minerve* to note well the circumstances required by St. Thomas to justify the use of an oath; and to tell us candidly—was it necessary in the interests of Canada, that the present Ministry should have had recourse to what is now admitted on all hands to have been a disgraceful "shuffie," in order to evade the spirit, whilst apparently adhering to the letter, of the law? If it was not necessary, then their oath was illegal; and if illegal a sacrilege—because an oath is an act of supreme worship or *latría*. We still quote from the same chapter of the great Doctor:—

3. "An jurare vel actus religionis seu latría? Sic quia profiteretur Deum, infallibilem, et scientiam."—*Id.*

Let us now see what the Catechism of the Council of Trent, a work prepared under the auspices of that august body, and published by order of Pius V. says respecting oaths, and the circumstances which render them lawful to Christians.

"With regard to oaths, although in themselves lawful, they should seldom be used. The reason of this difference is, that oaths are constituted as remedies to human frailty, and a necessary means of establishing the truth of what we advance. As it is inexpedient to have recourse to medicine, unless when it becomes necessary, and as its frequent use is most pernicious; so with regard to oaths, we should never recur to them, unless when there is weighty and just cause; and a frequent recurrence to them, far from being advantageous, is on the contrary highly prejudicial."—*Cal. Conc. Trid.*

From this it is evident that all unnecessary oaths, are condemned by the Church as highly prejudicial. But no one will pretend that it was necessary for the interests of Canada, that the present Ministry should swear to perform certain duties which it was their intention not to perform; in order thereby to defraud their several constituencies, and to evade the spirit of the law for securing the independence of Parliament. But an oath must be not only "necessary" but just.

"To constitute a holy and just oath many other conditions are required:—truth, judgment, and justice."—*Id.*

Any of these conditions being absent, an oath is unholily and unjust; and therefore, a sacrilege or blasphemous mockery of the Name of the Holy One and the Just. Now the object, and the sole object, of the Ministerial oaths, was to enable the oath-takers to evade the spirit of a law, and thereby defraud their constituencies of a legal right. But it is never just to evade the spirit of a law, even by means of an apparent conformity to its letter; neither is it "just" to defraud one's neighbor of his legal and constitutional rights. Therefore we conclude from these premises, that the Ministerial oaths, as unjust, as well as unnecessary, were a sacrilegious invocation of God's Holy Name. That by their "shuffie"—as it has been appropriately and almost universally styled—the present Ministry did intend to evade the spirit of the law, and did, therefore, intend to deprive the Canadian constituencies of a constitutional right, will not, we think be disputed by any one acquainted with the circumstances under which the Act enabling members of the Ministry to exchange one office for another, was passed. The Canadian press, with scarce an exception—Ministerial and Anti-Ministerial, Catholic and Protestant—has admitted this. The press of the British Empire, which, as having no interest in our internal politics, may be supposed impartial and, therefore, a competent judge upon this point, is unanimous in condemning the process by which the Ministry

managed to avoid an appeal to their several constituencies; as an evasion of the spirit of the law; therefore, as unjust, and therefore as wanting in one of the conditions essential to warrant the invocation of the Name of Jehovah. Upon this point the *London Times*—a journal which, when its anti-Catholic passions and prejudices are hushed, is entitled to the highest consideration, and which in this instance does but give utterance to the opinions of the British public of all grades of politics—thus clearly and explicitly delivers its judgment; a judgment, in the justice of which the *Montreal Gazette*, an able and zealous Ministerial organ, expresses its full acquiescence:—

"There is it appears a Canadian Act by which a Minister resigning one office and accepting another is saved from the necessity of seeking a re-election from his constituents. This Act is obviously framed with the intention of facilitating mere internal changes in the Government, and was not intended to exempt a new Ministry from the necessity of a re-election. By means of this law, or rather, we are inclined to think, by a super-subtle interpretation of it, the incoming Ministry of Mr. Cartier, which was a mere readjustment of that of Mr. Macdonald, contrived to keep their seats, while the discarded Ministry of Mr. Brown lost theirs. The matter was managed this way:—Each Minister was appointed to an office different from that which he held before the dissolution of the Ministry; that office he held for a single day, and then resigned in order to be reappointed to his original office. We think there is much to regret in this proceeding. We do not presume to offer an opinion on the legality of the transaction, which is it appears, likely to be contested in a Court of Law, though it is difficult to understand how Mr. Macdonald and his friends could have so far vacated their offices as to oblige Mr. Brown and his friends to give up their seats in order to succeed them; and yet all the while have retained them so as to render them capable of accepting others within the meaning of the Act, which applies to transfers from one place to another. Be the law, however, what it may, there can be no doubt that such a transaction was directly contrary to the spirit of the Act, was an indirect means of depriving constituencies of their right to be consulted on the accession of their members to office. Whether the transaction was legal or not it certainly was not compulsory, and we should have been better pleased to see the Governor General refuse to take any part in it, than allow himself to be enlisted in a proceeding which has, not unnaturally, excited much ill-feeling in the colony. Nobody can deny the dexterity of the tactics by which the victory of Mr. Macdonald and his friends has been obtained and improved; but such successes, obtained by such means, are seldom durable, and the time is probably not far distant when it will be seen that the Ministry has lost both in popularity and power, and when it will have ample reason to regret that it did not follow that which in the affairs of State as in other matters, uniformly turns out to be the best policy."—*Times.*

Accepting then the verdict of the *Times*, who as a perfectly disinterested, is an impartial, and therefore competent judge in the premises, we conclude that the object of the oaths taken by the Ministry was, not the welfare of the country—(the only legitimate object which could justify the taking them)—but to evade the spirit of the law, and to defraud the constituencies of a legal right. But an oath to evade the spirit of a law, even though the letter thereof may be adhered to, is—as in the case of swearing to a fictitious property qualification in order to obtain a seat in Parliament—deficient in justice, the indispensable condition of a lawful oath. Deficient then in this, an oath is a sacrilege and a blasphemous invocation of God's Most Holy Name, which should never be lightly or unnecessarily invoked; and above all, which should never be invoked at all in order to cover wrong, or to perpetrate an act of fraud upon one's neighbor.

In thus expressing ourselves upon the morality—we do not touch upon the legality—of the transactions under consideration—we would beg the *Minerve* distinctly to understand that we are but giving utterance to our own opinions; formed indeed upon the texts and authorities above cited, but for which neither Bishop nor Priest is in any sense responsible. We have been actuated by no motives of hostility to one set of men, or of partiality for another; for to us "Ins" and "Ours" are alike indifferent. But we have humbly endeavored to the best of our abilities to repel a charge often urged against Catholics by Protestant calumniators, to the effect that the Catholic Church inculcates a lax morality on the subject of oaths; and that her children are in this respect but too faithful to the teachings of their Church. We contend on the contrary that Popery tolerates no trifling with oaths; that on this head as on all others its doctrines are clear, inflexible, and unimpeachable. For this reason we have treated the subject at some length, believing that the honor of our beloved Spiritual Mother should not be sacrificed in the interests either of Mr. Brown or of M. Cartier. If the *Minerve* contests our conclusions or the validity of our deductions from the premises furnished to us by the Catechism of the Council of Trent, we are prepared to discuss the matter with him calmly and dispassionately; provided only that he will discuss it without irreverently dragging the names of our Prelates into a newspaper controversy; who if they see any necessity for so doing will declare themselves authoritatively, when, and in such manner, as they in their wisdom shall deem best for the interests of the Church, and the honor and glory of the Holy name of Him, whose servants and Ministers they are upon earth. Mean time we beg the *Minerve* to understand that we speak as a simple layman, always open to correction, and without the slightest pretensions to authority from any Prelate whomsoever.

THE ORANGE OUTRAGES AT OMEMEE.—These disgraceful acts of violence perpetrated by the "Dear Brethren" of the Attorney General, C.W., upon the inoffensive Catholics in the employ of the Port Hope, Lindsay, and Beaverton Railway Company, and of which our correspondent "Lumenach" gave the details in our last week's issue—will, we hope, have the effect of calling the attention of good citizens of all denominations, to the dangers with which the country is manaced by the brutal and essentially

aggressive spirit of Orangeism; and convince them—to use the mildest form of expression—of the gross impropriety of giving any encouragement, or legal recognition, to an organization of ruffians who set all laws both of God and man at defiance. We are encouraged in this hope by the fact that even the rabid *Omeme Warder* finds itself compelled—as in the annexed paragraph—to condemn the wanton and cowardly ruffianism of the "Scarlet Brethren" —

"PROTESTANTS & CATHOLICS.—On Monday night last one of the most dastardly outrages which has ever fallen to our lot to record, was perpetrated on a few inoffensive families, in the employ of the Port Hope, Lindsay and Beaverton Railway Company, by a number of persons, calling themselves men, who assembled about their houses and insisted on their clearing out, breaking every thing that came within their reach, and causing the unfortunate men to fly with some of their children into the woods at the hour of midnight, leaving their poor wives to try and protect the remainder, who by no means escaped the wrath of the ruthless mob. If those persons had excited the anger of the party who thus treated them, there might be an attempt made to palliate the brutal act; but we are told that they have never, by word or deed, offended any person belonging to this vicinity—their whole offence being that they were Roman Catholics!"—*Omeme Warder.*

It would be in vain, we fear, to expect that the Attorney-General, himself an Orangeman, and therefore morally the accomplice of the Orange scoundrels—should take any active steps to bring the actors in this most iniquitous outrage to justice. On the contrary, judging him by his antecedents, and by his official career since in an evil hour for the community, and for his own honor, he became a member of a secret politico-religious society, we have but too good reasons to fear that he will bring his official influence as public prosecutor so to bear, as to screen the guilty parties from pursuit and punishment. In the foul presence of Orangeism, the arm of justice is paralysed, the voice of conscience cannot make itself heard; and law itself, which should be the poor man's safeguard against wrong and oppression, becomes but an instrument of gigantic persecution.

Where will these things end?—what will be the result of this daily increasing arrogance of Orangeism, and the long continued apathy, or rather criminal indifference of our rulers? As citizens, as Catholics, we dread to think of what must inevitably ensue, if Orangeism be not discountenanced by those in power; and if our own rulers still persist in their determination to uphold and encourage the midnight assassin in his deeds of outrage upon Papists. Flesh and blood cannot bear it; nor would our people have been so long enabled to restrain their passions, and to postpone their ardent thirst for vengeance upon their ruffian persecutors, but for the teachings of the priest—of that reviled "priest" whom Mr. Sheriff Corbett sets down, together with "whiskey," as "the curse of the country." But for the salutary counsels of the "priest," and the influences of that holy religion of which he is the minister, flesh and blood would long ago have revolted against the Orange tyranny which rides rough shod over the liberties, the lives, and property of our Catholic fellow-subjects of Upper Canada; we should have had fearful acts of retaliation for cruel injuries inflicted, to record; and the Irish Catholics of the Upper Province would ere now have sought in Ribbonism, and other secret organisations, that protection from outrage to which, as loyal subjects of Queen Victoria, they are entitled; but which they cannot find in the laws of Canada, as at present administered by an Orange Governor and an Orange Attorney-General.

Marvellous indeed has been hitherto, the forbearance of our persecuted brethren: admirable its attestation to the firmness of their faith, their docility to the precepts of their divinely appointed teachers, and the efficacy of our holy religion in restraining the angry passions of its professors. Yet, we confess it, we do at times fear that, if the present state of things, of which the Port Hope outrages are but a specimen, are allowed to continue—if Orangeism persists in persecuting, and the law still refuses to protect the victims of that persecution—the patience of our brethren will be at length exhausted; and that maddened by their wrongs, and the consciousness that for those wrongs there is no redress to be obtained by legal and peaceable means, they will at length be driven in self-defence to have recourse to those illegal and violent measures which the laws of the Church condemn, and which every well-disposed citizen, whether Catholic or Protestant, will deplore. The rampant and aggressive Orangeism of Upper Canada will we fear if unchecked, provoke to the organisation of Ribbon Lodges, and other means of self-defence; and thus the curse of secret politico-religious societies will be transmitted by us to our children, and our children's children; who will have but too good cause to execrate the criminal apathy of their fathers, and the memory of those statesmen and legislators, under whose auspices Orangeism was fostered to its actual formidable dimensions.

WHAT PROTESTANTS THINK OF BAPTISM.—A case has lately occurred at Rome, which has created much excitement in the Protestant world; and has elicited from the Protestant press of Great Britain some very characteristic comments upon the value of the Sacrament of Baptism. The facts as given in the said press are as follows:—

The child of a wealthy Jew, living in Rome, had for its nurse a Catholic woman who, some two years ago, the child's life being in danger, administered to it the Sacrament of regeneration without the knowledge of its parents. Herup-on the Manchester *Guardian* breaks out in the following strain, admirably illustrative of Protestant notions upon the efficacy of infant baptism, and its necessity for salvation:—

"In this country"—England—"the offender would be discharged without a character; and any one to whom she might complain would probably tell her she was rightly served."

That is to say, in Protestant England, a servant who, seeing the parents neglect their duty towards their child, should, with a view to the