

The True Witness

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,
IS PRINTED AND PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

At No. 223, Notre Dame Street, by

J. GILLIES.

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TERMS:

To all country subscribers, or subscribers receiving their papers through the post, or calling for them at the office, if paid in advance, Two Dollars; if not so paid, then Two Dollars and a-half.

To all subscribers whose papers are delivered by carriers, Two Dollars and a-half, if paid in advance, but if not paid in advance, then Three Dollars.

Single copies, price 3d, can be had at this Office; Puckup's News Depot, St. Francis Xavier Street; at T. Riddell's, (late from Mr. E. Puckup,) No. 22, Great St. James Street, opposite Messrs. Dawson & Son; and at W. Dalton's, corner of St. Lawrence and Craig Sts.

Also at Mr. Alexander's Bookstore, opposite the Post-Office, Quebec.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DEC. 5, 1862.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

By the arrival of the *China*, we are in possession of European dates to the 22nd ult. The Continental news presents nothing interesting; the affairs of this Continent seem to absorb the attention of the public on the other side of the Atlantic. The dismissal of General McClellan is commented upon, as a great mistake on the part of the Lincoln Government. The Saturday Review attributes to the ruler of France some deep designs with reference to intervention; his express application of the term *Confederates* to the Southerners would almost seem to imply that recognition is determined upon. The rumor of the election of Prince Alfred to the throne of Greece is again revived.

There has been no fighting since our last; and it would seem that General Burnside is hampered in his movements by the want of supplies and efficient means of transport. This is what his predecessor complained of, and assigned as his reason for not advancing, and is probably true with respect to the present commander of the army of the Potomac.

The Congress of Northern or Federal States was as usual signified by the delivery of the "President's Message." In this formidable document, the country is assured that its foreign relations are favorable, and a scheme for the general emancipation of the blacks is proposed. The several States are to be invited—that is to say obliged—to pass laws for emancipating all slaves on or before the 1st of January 1900, the loyal owners of the slaves so set free to receive compensation from the United States—but no slave owners who have taken part in the war against the Abe Lincoln Government shall be entitled to such compensation. Congress is also urged to appropriate money for colonising free colored persons who may desire to leave the States.

In the House of Representatives, several motions were offered strongly denouncing the cruel and arbitrary arrests of citizens; and the constant violations of the Constitution and of personal liberty perpetrated by the Northern Executive authorities. These resolutions were, however, opposed by large majorities. The time has passed when the voice of freedom could make itself heard in an American Congress.

THE "GLOBE" AND STATE-SCHOOLISM.—The *Globe* is determined, to so far as lies in its power, to dispel any doubts that may yet linger in the minds of some over-confiding Catholics, as to the intentions of the political party which it represents—that of the Liberals, or Protestant Reform party—with respect to the School Question. The *Globe* plainly tells us that, so far from having become converts to "Freedom of Education," it, and the party in whose name it speaks, are as hostile as ever to our claims, and are determined to perpetuate the tyranny under which the Catholics of Upper Canada so long have groaned. In this respect the *Globe* is honest, and deserves our thanks; but it is not honest, when it pretends to argue against our claims, for it is always most careful to evade the real question at issue—that question in short which underlies the whole controversy.

That one essential question in one word is—as we have often stated it—"To whom does the child belong? To the State, or to the Family?" This is the only question at issue, and that upon which the entire School controversy depends; and one therefore which, from an intuitive apprehension of the badness of their cause, the *Globe*, and all the advocates of State-Schoolism, prudently shrink. For if the child belongs to the Family, and not to the State, then it follows as the rigorous deduction, that to the Family, and not to the State, belongs also the education of the child, and all thereunto appertaining. On the other hand, if the State has the right to control the education of the child, it must be because to it, and not to the Family, the child belongs; in which case also, the State is in rigor bound to clothe, and feed the child, and to see to it that the youngster's bowels are kept open, and in good order.

Now we base our opposition to all Common School systems—and on these grounds alone can

opposition to a Common School system be logically based—on the grounds that the child belongs to the Family; and that therefore to the Family alone belongs the right of determining how it shall be clothed, wherewith it shall be fed, what apartments shall be administered to it, and how, and by whom, it shall be educated. These rights over the child, which we claim for the Family, are but another mode for expressing the duties of the Family towards God: and it is therefore our duties as towards God, which we plead, as an unanswerable argument why the Family should be left in the peaceable and exclusive enjoyment of its legitimate authority. The right of the Family, as represented by the father, is a "right divine," he holds from God immediately, and therefore every interference on the part of the State with that divine authority, is to be resisted as impious and tyrannical usurpation. By his misconduct, by his neglect of his duties, the father may indeed forfeit his parental rights; but not until this misconduct, this neglect or abuse shall have been duly proved against him, has any human authority the shadow of a right to interfere in any manner betwixt him and his child.

Stated in these terms—the terms in which alone the School Question should be stated—there can be no excuse for the introduction of what is called the "sectarian" element. As we state our case, the School Question is not one betwixt Church and State, but betwixt the Family and the State. It is the Father, not the Priest or the Bishop, who protests against the arrogant assumptions of the civil magistrate; and he bases his protest, not upon supernatural dogma, but solely upon his natural rights. In its last analysis the entire School Question resolves itself into the question of Communism versus Individualism. The supporters of a Common School system are Communists, and the supporters of Communism in its most odious form. They may be, and doubtless are inconsistent, in that they do not insist upon Common eating-houses, Common sleeping places, and Community of women, as well as upon Common Schools; but in so far as they go they are the apt disciples of the Communist prophets.

For these reasons we think that it is a fatal blunder to argue with our opponents in our character as Catholics, and to approach the Legislature in our religious capacity, or as members of any peculiar ecclesiastical denomination. The fact that we are Catholics should neither impose on us any peculiar obligations, nor exonerate us from the performance of any duties. If the State has the right to impose upon its subjects a "Common School system," all its subjects, no matter what their religious profession, are in duty bound to support it; and the State should pay no heed to the clamors of any, amongst them for exemption from the operation of its "Common School" laws. In fact, if we concede to our opponents that the State has the right to set up a "Common School" system at all, we concede everything; and we only stultify ourselves, and make ourselves ridiculous when we petition for Separate Schools. What reason can we, in our religious capacity, urge, that the State can condescend to notice, why we should be treated differently from our non-Catholic fellow-citizens?—As Catholics, we have no right to ask anything from the State; because the State cannot take cognizance of our religious status, cannot discriminate betwixt its Catholic and its non-Catholic subjects. It is therefore absurd, doubly absurd, for us to approach the Legislature as "*Roman Catholic* petitioners for separate schools;" absurd, because, in the first place, we assume a character which the State is not bound to recognise, and which gives us no claims to any particular consideration, or exceptional legislation; and doubly absurd in the second place, because by piteously whining for "separate schools" we, by implication, acknowledge the right of the State to establish a "Common School system."

Equally absurd is it for Catholics, in arguing with Protestants, to attempt to show that, in a mixed community, a "Common School system" is incompatible with the requirements of the Catholic Church, and is injurious to Catholic interests. That these propositions are true, no one can, or ever did doubt; but it is just this that, more than ought else, so endears the "Common School" system to Protestants. By insisting upon it, we Catholics do but furnish Protestants with reasons for refusing our claims; and the more clearly we show that "Common School" education is at variance with, and opposed to, the requirements of our religion, the more do we confirm Protestants in their good opinion of, and attachment to, a system so injurious to Romanism. No tyrant with his victim before him upon the rack ever was moved by the piteous protests of the latter against the pain which it caused him.—Why! he was put upon the rack for the very purpose that he might suffer pain. And so, as "Common Schools" were established by a tyrant Protestant majority, mainly, for the purpose of morally torturing Papists, the assurances of the latter that they are tortured, that they are wrong in conscience accordingly, are to Protestant ears only so many gratifying assurances of the excellence and efficacy of their torturing machine; and only furnish them with additional motives for not

relaxing its strain upon the nerves of the sufferers. It is evident therefore that, if we seriously meditate any amelioration of our position, by and through political action, we must adopt an entirely new and totally different system of tactics. We must first of all abandon the useless, the worse than useless practice of approaching the Legislature as "*Roman Catholics*," and we must make ourselves heard simply in our characters as Fathers, and heads of Families. We must insist, not upon our conscientious scruples as Papists, but upon our natural rights as parents—rights which the Protestant parent has in common with the Catholic parent; and which alone therefore we can logically plead before a tribunal that "has no semblance even of connection with the Church;" and on which cannot therefore, without stultifying itself, and giving the lie to its own Statute Book, entertain seriously any request, preferred to it by any ecclesiastical body, society, or organisation. "We must assert the claims of the Family, not those of the Church. We must speak out boldly as freemen, demanding our unjustly withheld rights, and not like whining beggars, humbly praying for a special favor; and instead of troubling ourselves about setting up, with the aid of the State, a "Separate School" system, we must first devote our energies, entire and undivided, to the pulling down of a "Common School" system. We must, in fine, adopt the tactics of the enemies of State-Churchism; and as the latter have for principle that the State has no right to tax any man for the support of a Church, or religious system to which he, in the exercise of his right of private judgment, objects—so we also should preface all our petitions to the Legislature with the assertion of this fundamental principle—That the State has no right to tax any man for the support of a School, or educational system, of which he, in the exercise of his parental rights, and of his private judgment, does not approve. Our first efforts must be limited to this—to wrest education, entirely and for ever, from the hands of the State, and to restore it to the hands of those to whom alone it of right belongs—that is to say—to the Father and to the Family. We owe no man any account of what use we shall make of the sacred deposit, when recovered, or to whose hands we intend to confide it, when we shall have won the victory—for as parents and as freemen, we are responsible to God, and to God alone, for the education of our children. But in the meantime, let it be our first care to wrest education from the hands of the State, and upon the grounds that neither religion nor education is a legitimate function of the Civil Magistrate.

A NEW LIGHT.—The *Boston Pilot* is coming round fast, indeed we may say has already come round, to the stand-point of the TRUE WITNESS. It expresses sentiments with reference to the war, its objects, and probable results, identical with those which some twelve months ago were expressed in this journal with reference to the same subject, and which then exposed us to the severe—we may say uncharitable criticism of our contemporary. The *Boston Pilot* however now sees things by a new light, and thus forcibly describes what it now sees:—

"Can the spirit of the South be subdued by the sword? We regret, for the glory of the nation, that this demand must be answered in the negative. Carnage has continued too long for the temper of the Confederates ever to acknowledge itself defeated by the North. Fighting only increases bitterness between the two sections of the country. We have great power. It may be allowed that we couple the South in military resources; and that by the application of our means, we are certain to make the enemy lay down his arms. But this would not be breaking down the spirit of the South. Have Russia and Austria subdued the Poles? They have not, and they never will be able to break the spirit of that noble people. Has England subdued Ireland? It has been trying to effect that fell purpose for seven centuries; but the Irish of to-day are rebels. Ireland, Hungary, Poland, are in the military possession of the enemy; but such a state is not the state of peace but of war. So it will be with us—if things continue as they are."

Any body, not a fool, or whose eyes had not been blinded by prejudice, must have clearly seen this from the very first out break of hostilities betwixt North and South; and because the press outside of the United States not only clearly saw this, but fearlessly stated what it saw—it has been taxed with hostility to the Union. That the restoration of the "Union, as it was," by force of arms, was impossible, and involved a contradiction in terms, was palpable from the very outset of the conflict to the most stolid intelligence; for the simple reason, that the old Union, the "Union as it was," was essentially the *voluntary* Union of free, independent and Sovereign States—and that a Union imposed by force upon any of those States could not be *voluntary*. The triumph of the Northern Army, and the military subjugation of the South, would therefore render the "Union as it was" a moral impossibility; as impossible in the moral order as it would be in the physical order, for two straight lines to enclose a space. The only chance for a restoration of the "Union as it was," consists in the triumph of the South, and in its successful assertion of its right to secede. The Southern States being then once more free, independent and Sovereign States might, if they so pleased, reconstruct the Union with the North; and a Union so reconstructed

would indeed be the "Union as it was." If, therefore, we were desirous of rendering that Union impossible, we should pray for the success of Northern arms; and our aspirations for the same end would be devoutly offered up, were we anxious to see the material or war power of the American States seriously and permanently impaired. The success of Secession would no doubt for a time inflict loss of moral prestige on the Northern States, even as the loss of the Thirteen Colonies for a time impaired, or seemed to impair the moral prestige of the British Empire; but the material force or war-power of the Northern States, its means of resistance to foreign aggression, would be but slightly, if at all diminished, by the triumph of the Confederates. On the other hand, the subjugation of the South would be a permanent source of weakness to the victor States—even as Ireland is a constant source of weakness to the British Empire, because it is, and must be, held and ruled as a conquered country. So too the Southern States would have to be held and treated for centuries, should Northern arms triumph in the field. A permanent garrison of three hundred thousand men at the very least, would scarce suffice to keep the conquered Southerners in subjection; and at the first outbreak of hostilities with any European Power, the latter would be ready to rise *en masse* against their hated tyrants. To maintain the "state of siege" in the South would soon exhaust even the vast resources of the North; and the greatest enemy of the latter can desire no greater evil to befall it, than the triumph of its arms in the field. Then, and then only, should that event ever occur, will the real difficulties of the Northerners commence; for hard as it may appear to subdue the South, the task of holding it in subjection when subdued, would be so much harder, as to render the former a mere matter of child's play, in comparison.

The triumph of the North would also be fatal to the liberties, and to the political institutions of the Northern conquerors. A standing army would be necessary; and not a standing army like that of Great Britain, of which a great part is constantly employed on foreign service,—but a "home" army—an army employed for domestic political purposes. Now all history shows that such an army is incompatible with free institutions. There, where the hereditary principle is not firmly established, the head of such an army must inevitably become the head also of the State; and thus it is that all communities, in ancient or in modern times, have lost their liberties by grasping after military greatness. The Northern States, if victorious in the present struggle, will offer no exception to the general rule; for there is no social or political organism which so readily and so naturally adapts itself to Cæsarism or military despotism, as a democracy. The hereditary principle, as developed in European monarchies, and above all in an influential territorial aristocracy, are the only safeguards against Cæsarism; and as these safeguards, society on this Continent unfortunately does not possess, it offers no obstacles to the designs of the successful and popular General of a large and well organised military force. The distance betwixt pure democracy and military despotism is no greater than that betwixt the sublime and the ridiculous, and that distance, trifling as it is, has already in many parts of the neighboring Republic been totally obliterated; and our American friends may be assured of it that with a state of siege at New Orleans, and military law *en permanence* throughout the South, free institutions cannot long continue to flourish at New York, or political liberty maintain its supremacy in the Northern States. When one member of the body politic is afflicted with the disease of despotism, it must be lopped off, or general dissolution is inevitable.

WANTED A SCHOOL SYSTEM.—Poor dear Dr. Ryerson, Chief Superintendent of State-Schoolism, C. W., is in what our neighbors call a "fix." He is forced to admit that the School system of Upper Canada over which he presides, and which we believe is in a great measure the work of his hands, has signally failed in the very object for which it was, ostensibly, created. It may have furnished some wealthy members of society with the means of educating their children at the public expence; but in so far as it was designed to extend the advantages of education to the poor, to those classes of society which alone stand in need of gratuitous schooling, it has failed, and failed utterly and hopelessly.

This truth forced upon him at last, the Rev. Superintendent advertises for tenders of suggestions for a new School system. He mentions three of his own which he has already laid before the Government; but of these, two "have not been entertained," and the third has not "been taken into consideration," by the said Government; and consequently he prudently determines to expose himself to no more rebuffs, but calls upon the country at large, through the medium of a printed circular, to express its opinions upon the subject, and to send in plans for making the Upper Canada School system more efficient, or rather of rendering it capable of performing some

of the functions expected of it. This is a sad plight for an official to be reduced to no doubt—yet here is the advertisement or circular alluded to:—

CIRCULAR TO THE BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES IN THE CITIES AND TOWNS OF UPPER CANADA.

Department of Public Instruction for Upper Canada. Education Office, Toronto, Nov. 22, 1862.

Gentlemen,—I beg to call your serious and earnest attention to the condition of those children in cities and towns who do not attend any school, public or private.

I had hoped that when the public schools should be made free in our cities and towns, no persons in them would be found to refuse or neglect availing themselves of such a privilege, facility, and inducement to educate their children. I confess the results of the trial have come short of my expectations. Very considerable numbers of children in these centres of population are growing up with no other education than a training in idleness, vagrancy, and crime. The existence of such a class in any community, is a public loss and danger, and ominous of future evil.

It is perfectly clear, that making good schools free to all does not secure the education of all.

I have, at different times, submitted three propositions or plans for the accomplishment of the object of free schools in cities and towns. First,—That as the property of all is taxed for the common school education of all, all should be compelled to allow their children the means of such education, at either public or private schools. Or, secondly, that each municipality should be empowered to deal with the vagrancy of children of school age, or the neglect of their education, as a crime, subject to such penalties and such measures for its prevention, as each municipality, in its own discretion, might from time to time adopt. Or, thirdly, that the aid of religious benevolence should be invoked and encouraged to supplement the agency of our present school system.

Neither of the two former propositions having been entertained by the Government, to whom they were submitted, I proposed the last in a draft of bill, accompanied by an explanatory letter, last year. The members of the Government before whom this measure was laid, retired from office before taking it into consideration, and I have not renewed it by submitting it to the present Government. There is, therefore, now no proposition under the consideration of Government, in respect to children whose school education is wholly neglected.

I beg, therefore, to solicit your practical attention to the subject; and shall be happy to receive and consider any suggestions you may think proper to offer, before bringing the subject again under the consideration of the Government.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your obedient Servant,

E. RYERSON,
Chief Superintendent.

Of the Rev. Dr. Ryerson's three propositions to the Government, two are conceived in the spirit of State-Schoolism; the third and last in a spirit totally opposed to it. The first two plans are in perfect harmony with the *Common School* principle; the third or last is irreconcilable with that principle, and would, if adopted, give us the *Denominational*, or as the *Globe* calls it, the "*Sectarian*" system in education. For this reason we do not think that it will ever find much favor in the eyes of an essentially democratic community such as is that of Upper Canada; whilst again we trust that the debasing tendencies of democracy have not as yet so far stifled all aspirations after personal liberty, even amongst the partially Yankeeified people of the Western section of the Province, as to render it all probable that they will seriously entertain either of the other two propositions.

The problem to be solved is, not merely how to place the advantage of education within the reach of the poorest and humblest classes of society; but—how to induce those classes to avail themselves of those advantages when placed within their reach. A child may lead a horse to the water, as the proverb says—but a hundred men cannot force it to drink, unless it be so inclined. So by legal enactments, and at the expence of the rich, we may open in every suburb, and in every blind alley, schools for the vagrants; but so long as the latter refuse to enter in, and partake of the intellectual fare provided for them, nothing towards the end proposed will have been accomplished. We shall have expended much money, but we shall have expended it most unprofitably.

Now as the Rev. Dr. Ryerson himself tells us, "it is perfectly clear that making good schools free to all does not secure the education of all."

The wealthy, and those who are well able to pay for the schooling of their children, for whose benefit therefore Free Schools were not established, reap all the benefits of them; whilst the children of the poor and destitute, for whose especial use these Schools were designed, refuse to avail themselves of them. The system is therefore not only useless, but wastefully extravagant. Under its operation the rich are filled with good things, but the poor and hungry are sent empty away.

That this is so can surprise no one. If the Free Schools were frequented by pauper or vagrant children, the wealthy and respectable rate payers would not allow their children to attend those schools; and deriving no benefit from, would soon clamor against being compelled to pay for them. On the other hand, the very presence in those Free Schools of well washed, well combed, well dressed pupils—the children of well-to-do and gig driving citizens—effectually prevents the attendance upon them of the poor, ragged starving outcasts who alone have claims for gratuitous education. The pride of the poor—and the pride of the rich—alike agree in rendering the *Common Free School* a moral impossibility. If the rich attend the school, the poor won't; and if the poor flock to it, the rich will absent themselves. "Tis human nature," as Mr. Weller would say, and there an end of it.

And how is this to be remedied? it will be asked. Only, we reply, by frankly recognising