

THE TRUE WITNESS

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY

The True Witness Printing & Publishing Co.,

1 No. 761 Craig St., Montreal, Canada.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

City \$1.50
Country..... 1.00

If not paid in advance, \$1.50 (Country)
and \$2 (City) will be charged.
Subscribers, Newfoundland, \$1.50 a
year in advance.

All business communications to be
addressed to

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Managing Director,
THE TRUE WITNESS P. & P. Co.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 1894.

MAY THE FIRST.

We desire to remind our readers that before our next issue the first of May will have come and gone. Two months ago we announced that all subscribers whose amounts due are not paid up on the first of May, would have their names struck off the list. This we repeat, with the assurance that we would regret deeply to have to withdraw THE TRUE WITNESS from a single individual; but it stands to reason that the expenses of the paper cannot be met, unless those who benefit by it are willing to contribute to its fund the small amounts that they owe.

DEVIL VS. CHURCH.

We have seen that the Liberty offered by the secret societies is merely a snare, and the Equality that they present is a humbug. But they promise a third and still more attractive and deceptive boon, in the form of what they call Fraternity. There is nothing grander and more praiseworthy than brotherly love. They know full well that it appeals to the finest feelings in man, and is, in itself, sufficient to attract subjects to their organizations. The author of the inimitable "Imitation of Christ" cried out in an ecstasy of admiration and favor: "*Quam bonum et quam jucundum est habitare fratres in unum!*" Yes, it is a good and delightful spectacle to behold brothers living in the union of mutual Christian love and virtue. But such is not the ideal that the societies hold up before their intended members. The Fraternity which they offer is more in the nature of that bond of union described by a satirist in Paris during the days of the Revolution. A large placard appeared on the walls of the Bastille, and read: "*Fraternité, ou la Mort*"—"Fraternity, or Death." Some wag, with sense as well as wit, wrote under it: "*Sois mon Frere, ou je te tue*"—"Be my brother, or I will kill you." There is a text upon which the Grand Master of some secret Continental society could base a lecture on the merits and advantages of the organization.

We are told, and unhappily the experience of the world teaches, that no quarrels are more serious than those which occur between the members of the same family, especially between brothers. No enmity is so fierce and deadly as that which arises between oath-bound members of one organization. They are brothers simply because they belong to the same society; the members of a divided household are also brothers—but only in so far as they have the same parents. They will do for any stranger

what they would not do for those who should be nearest and dearest to them. In the sworn brotherhood, there is a bond that compels to fraternal intercourse; and shame, fear, or some other such unworthy motive alone, at times, prevents those brothers from doing each other incalculable injury.

The smaller the circle, and the more confined the actors, the stronger are the passions and the more bitter the strife. Take two lions and let them fight in the open forest, and if the weaker can escape, he will—before entirely beaten—make good his safety; but place them in a cage or cellar, out of which they cannot find a way, and they will tear and fight until death closes the contest in favor of one or the other. Take two men, who are entirely independent of each other, and let them fall out on some matter of business, or other affair; the world is wide, they can keep apart,—they are not bound by any chain to each other, they are not linked, like Siamese twins, in life and death; they can each go his way, and if they do come in conflict with one another, it is their own fault, not that of the position in which they are placed. But if those men are sworn brothers, members of a society in which they must exist together, they are closed up in a narrow sphere, they cannot escape from each other's presence, their passions grow warmer, their hatred fiercer, their desire for vengeance more intense, from the fact of being bound by oath to treat each other as brothers and to play the hypocrite before the eyes of the world. For them there is no escape on earth. They dare not, with impunity, break the fraternal oath; they must live as members of the same organization, and each is only watching for some flaw in the other's conduct in order to denounce him and work his ruin. The fraternity in that case is a sham!

Perchance we will be told that this is an extreme case; but we claim that it is the rule and not the exception. Apart from societies such as those of which we speak, even in our ordinary associations, where there is no oath binding members to each other, it is universally admitted that, at times, the hatred of divisions take place, and often the discussions, the actions of members, the contests that arise, give birth to enmities that never die out and create ill-feelings that are only extinguished when either the association is broken up, or else the conflicting parties abandon it—and too often even such a termination does not crush the venomous spirit of jealousy that has stung to death what might have been a life-long friendship. If it is so in the most free and open of societies, how much more so must it not be in those whose members are sworn to stand by each other against all the world? They talk of fraternity, and yet they inculcate enmity toward all outside their own circle. On the face of it we can behold the seal that indicates an anti-Catholic spirit.

Glance at the history and works of these societies. Around them political and social disorders, in their track moral and physical ruin. And yet the one grand aim is ever there—the wiping out of Catholicity. At the portals of the Church they thundered during the Reign of Terror, at the doors of the Vatican they struggled for an entrance, during the revolutions that convulsed Italy in the days of Pius IX; to day they carry the torch in one hand and the sword in the other, while striving to undermine that institution which they could not openly overthrow. At this very hour a sample of their Fraternity may be seen in King Humbert of Italy. There he is, a monarch, the head of the nation, an independent ruler in the eyes of the world; yet the Masonic bond holds him

down, his hair has grown prematurely gray under the humiliation of his position, the efforts to stem the undercurrents that are imperceptibly carrying off the earth that holds his tottering throne erect. He, with all his authority, his royal prerogatives, his army and navy, his cabinet and officials, is an abject slave at the feet of an ex-convict; he is a mere puppet in the hands of Adriano Lemmi. Humbert may be King, but Lemmi is Grand Master of that Masonic body to which Humbert belongs. He is bound by oath to follow the orders of the Grand Master; he is a brother—in Masonry—of the brigand who dictates to him the course he must take. It is true he has reached the thirty-third degree in the society; but away above him looms the successor of Mazzini. It matters not that the poor Queen trembles in her palace and has visions of the sad fate of Marie Antoinette; it matters not that she craves to kneel at the foot of the outraged Vicar of Christ, and avert the storm that is gathering; it matters not that he feels the end approaching and beholds the writing upon the wall—he is not free to act, he is bound by an oath of fraternity, he is a brother, sworn to remain so, to Lemmi, and Lemmi is monarch in as much as he is the head of the society. Let Humbert dare to follow the dictates of conscience, to listen to the appeals of his terror-stricken wife, to do justice to the one whom God has placed over the Church—let him make one step in that direction, and the hand of Lemmi is raised and he hears the words: "Fraternity or Death"—"remain my brother, or I kill you."

P. P. A. ORGANS.

The Hamilton Times contains the following very significant paragraph:

"We have," says a P.P.A. organ, "circulated thousands of copies weekly throughout the county free, and without the hearty response which should have followed. We are in our fourth month of publication, and should have had a thousand or twelve hundred bona fide subscribers at this writing." Another of the society's papers announces: "There was no paper last week. This will be our last issue until further arrangements are made." Evidently there is no great amount of burning enthusiasm among the intelligent reading public to boom the subscription lists of the organs founded by scheming partisans to utilize religious bigotry in the cause of their candidates.

Now these statements of the P. P. A. organs, and the remarks of our Hamilton contemporary, are exactly what we have long anticipated. We would be greatly surprised if these papers could flourish in Canada. There are only two great elements of our population from which they could reasonably expect a sufficient support to keep them afloat—the Catholic and the Protestant.

As far as the Catholic portion of the community is concerned it stands to reason that from its ranks no support could possibly be expected. And yet the Catholics are two-fifths—in round numbers—of the inhabitants of our Dominion. Cutting off completely and entirely the Catholics from their subscription and advertising lists, they would have the other three-fifths upon whom to depend. Now from these latter let us subtract the Jews—who decidedly take no interest in these fanatics and their works of discord—the Germans, Norwegians, Swedes, and members of other nationalities, who may be Protestants, but who do not read about nor care for P. P. Aism or Organism—and we have only about half the Canadian population left—the purely English-speaking Protestant section of the community. Consequently the promoters of the P. P. A. organs have to depend for support

upon only the half of our people. The question then arises: how many individuals of that Protestant half are inclined to support these rabid, anti-Catholic and un-Christian papers?

We are not afraid to say that four-fifths of our Protestant fellow-citizens, of different denominations, are opposed to them. In fact, outside a small circle of their own members and immediate relatives or friends, there is not a single enlightened and self-respecting Protestant in all Canada who would countenance these firebrand publications. As a rule Catholics and Protestants differ most radically upon questions of religion; they differ on points of dogma; they differ on matters of discipline. But the different sects of Protestantism also differ from each other—not in the same essential manner—but on many important questions of faith. But because a man is a Protestant does not give us any ground for presupposing that he is insincere. The atmosphere in which he was educated, the principles which he drank in from childhood, his surroundings, his teachers, his literature—all combine to mould his opinions, and he should not be considered insincere in his belief, merely because he does not see the truth with the eyes of our Faith, or through the supernatural lens of that grace which God bestows upon the child of the Church. He may disbelieve in the doctrines of Catholicity, and still be most thoroughly honest in his convictions and conscientious in his belief. Whether he does or he does not agree with us, he, at least, has a Christian spirit; he has read that sacred volume which emphatically tells him to "love his neighbor;" to "do unto others as he would have others do unto him;" to "practise charity;" to "bear no false witness against his neighbor;" and to respect the feelings, sentiments and even principles of those who agree not with him. These, and a hundred other like lessons, he learns from the Holy Writ. Being sincere, and acting upon a broad Christian basis, he cannot and he will not assist in slandering, abusing, injuring and persecuting his Catholic fellow-citizens.

We believe the great majority of our Protestant friends to be animated by this spirit; and the inevitable consequence is that they would not and could not be brought to support such an organization as the P.P.A., much less to encourage a literature that is highly immoral. By immoral we do not mean obscene—although on that score they are generally questionable—but calculated to lower the standard of taste, replace the refined by the vulgar, and substitute a vindictive for a Christian sentiment. If then the great bulk of the Protestant population is opposed to them, is it any wonder that they should find their circulation limited and their leases of life curtailed?

Once more we repeat, and we cannot repeat it too often, we want to live in peace and harmony with our Protestant neighbors. We don't want to have the good understanding between us broken for the sake of a few mad bigots, men and women without any proportionate stake in the country and without any standing socially, politically, nationally, or religiously. If we desire that others should respect our opinions, we must commence by respecting theirs; we don't want an element, like this of the P. P. A., to tamper with the respect we have for our non-Catholic friends. God never intended that man should live in perpetual strife. We have no desire to play in that kind of drama described by O'Connell when he said that they were "fighting like devils for conciliation and damning each other for the love of God."