

THE TRUE WITNESS
AND
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The True Witness.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, FEB. 19, 1858.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE news by the mail of the 30th ult., is of little importance, the English journals being for the most part taken up with long descriptions of the marriage of the Princess Royal. With regard to the question of the right of asylum in Great Britain for Continental political refugees there seems to be but one opinion, that the law should be so altered as to make a conspiracy to commit murder in a foreign country as criminal as a conspiracy to commit murder in London.—There are some who contend that this is not sufficient, and that a discretionary power should be vested in the Government against political refugees generally. The subject is a complicated one, and will no doubt give rise to animated discussion on the opening of Parliament. The *Leveson* has at length been pushed by sheer force to the point at which it was expected she would be floated by the first spring tides. The Court of Queen's Bench at Dublin has decided that the trial of the Reverend M. M. Conway and Ryan shall take place in that city instead of at Mayo. This will of course give the government a better chance of obtaining a verdict of "guilty" against the Reverend Fathers, through the instrumentality of a packed jury and perjured witnesses; but it will elicit the sympathies of every Catholic in their favor and against their persecutors. It was expected that the trial would take place about the 15th inst.

Congratulatory addresses to the French Emperor, upon his late providential escape from the infernal machines of Orsini, & Co., are the order of the day in France. The army especially is loud in its professions of attachment to the Imperial regime, and more than insinuates its opinion that Great Britain should be held responsible for the murderous attempt of the 14th ult. It is said that the French Government is in possession of information which when published will establish the fact that the assassination of the Emperor was but part of a gigantic plot for revolutionising Europe.

From India there is little of importance.—After his victory over the Gwalior mutineers, Sir Colin Campbell had concentrated his force at Cawnpore, and was preparing for another advance upon the Oude insurgents. Tidings were hourly expected of an attack upon, and the capture of Cawnpore.

GIRL-FLOGGING IN THE COMMON SCHOOLS OF UPPER CANADA.—The disgusting revelations of Dr. Philbrick of Toronto, which we laid before our readers in our last issue, have provoked a rejoinder from the Local Superintendent which we give below; together with the answer of Dr. Philbrick thereunto. It will be seen that the veracity of that gentleman's allegations as to the brutalising and demoralising influences of the Upper Canada School system is not impugned; and that the sole offence which can be laid to the charge of Dr. Philbrick is that of having made those allegations through the public press. The School Trustees of the Township of York are of opinion that it would have been more judicious on the part of the complainant to have addressed himself to them, and thus to have given them the opportunity of hushing the matter up, and of keeping all things sweet and pleasant;—as it is, the Common Schools of Upper Canada do emit a most unpleasant odor in the nostrils of all disinterested persons. The Rev. Mr. Ryerson of course like a discreet "Government hack," and the other local "Jacks-in-Office," clap their fingers to their respective noses, and protest upon their honor as bureaucrats that they can smell nothing. However here is the letter of Mr. Richard Jones, Local Superintendent for York:

To the Editor of the *Colonist*.

SIR.—As the attention of the Trustees of No. 1 School Section in the Township of York was directed to an article over the signature of "Cornelius J. Philbrick, Fellow Royal College of Surgeons of England," which appeared in your paper of the 4th inst., they considered the allegations contained in said article to be of sufficient importance for them to call a meeting of the inhabitants of the Section to investigate the same. At 2 o'clock this day a meeting agreeably to the notice given was convened. At this meeting the Dr. stated his reasons for publishing the article that had led the Trustees to call the inhabitants together; and the teacher also being present, was allowed to explain and defend himself against the charges that had been made so public. A majority of the meeting expressed their thanks to the Dr. for calling their attention to the subject, but at the same time it seemed to be the prevailing opinion of the meeting that the manner in which it was done was not the most judicious. The people seemed to think that it would have been better for the Dr. to have made the Trustees acquainted with the supposed effects of the Teacher's chastisements

before appealing to the public through the press; that as those who are responsible to the people for employing the teacher and for the general management of school matters in the section, they might have investigated the affair without giving it so much notoriety. However, in calling a meeting and thus giving all the parties interested an opportunity of making such statements as they were disposed to make, the Trustees have shown in the most satisfactory manner that they desire to manage the school interests of the section given to them in trust, according to the well understood wishes of the people by whom they have been put into office.

Also, it seemed to be the opinion of the meeting, that the Dr. had fallen into a very great mistake in charging our school system with educating "teachers in the exquisite art of torture and pain." The very opposite was shown to be the case. The rule is moral suasion, but as there are no general rules without some exceptions, the exception to this rule is corporal punishment. It is not allowed only in extreme cases. Thus after a rigid and thorough enquiry made by the Trustees in the presence of a respectable number of the inhabitants of the section who were urged to state all their grievances, it appeared that no other case could be referred to in which punishment of the severer kind had been inflicted, but those referred to in the published article. And it seemed somewhat singular that three blows with leather taws given across the shoulders on the outside of a dress should after four months produce such sad effects. However, so far from the Trustees desiring to pass the matter over lightly, they gave the teacher to understand that if a girl fourteen years of age, or any others, cannot be governed in the school without severe punishment, instead of inflicting he must report the case to the Trustees, and as the inflicting corporal punishment upon the young lady in question, even if no bad effects had followed, was inadmissible on the principle of having the school governed as an orderly family is governed, which is the principle laid down for the government of our schools, he should apologise to the parents of the young lady, and be more sparing of corporal punishment for the time to come. There have been made it apparent that they do not consider that the "aptitude of our youth is to be enhanced by a governmental system of flogging," for they do not believe nor can any person who has taken the pains to examine the system, believe that any such thing has an existence in Canada.

RICHARD JONES,

Local Superintendent for York.

Eglinton, 10th Feb., 1858.

To this Dr. Philbrick replies as follows, in the columns of the *Toronto Colonist*:

"COMMON SCHOOLS AND COMMON."

To the Editor of the *Colonist*.

Toronto, February 10, 1858.

SIR.—The letter of Mr. Robertson, dated Feb. 6, and published in your issue of the 9th, requires only a passing notice. What he characterizes as "outrageous corporal punishment" and "infamous act of cruelty" leaves everything advanced by me free from exaggeration. I must, however, confess myself at a loss to penetrate his method of argument, when in one and the same breath, he tells us that the teachings of the Normal School are utterly opposed to the flogging system, and that the regulation for the guidance of teachers is, "To practice such discipline in the school, as would be exercised by a judicious parent in his family, avoiding corporal punishment except in extreme cases." The order to flog is clear. "Lashing is legalized." Teachers are told, not taught to flog. Trustees are told, (the only wise and sensible thing in the order,) to turn their record of child beating, that future generations may not sicken at the history.

It is a notorious fact, that many, if not all of the teachers have never been married, and unless Mr. Robertson wishes it to appear, that these unmarried teachers luxuriate in every other relationship, save the wedded, how they never having been parents, can be conversant with parental feelings, I not being a Normal master, do not pretend to divine. So far as I can learn there are no specific offences, nor derelictions laid down in the regulations, as works of bodily beating, but the teacher may and does coincide according to his own whim.

Permitting raw hands thus to cowhide children is surely worse than teaching future masters how to chastise with mercy and discretion. So much for the system; what does it involve? The Schoolmaster, at the inquiry this afternoon, stated that the reason of the boy getting a black eye, was that his (the schoolmaster's) foot caught in the floor, and that he consequently misplaced the blow, and meted out more force than he intended. The boy says the real occasion of the thrashing was the omission of one item in his tables; the master said it was disobedience in not fetching his book to school. The girl of six years old "was bruised about the legs," as the mother said, "till there was not the natural color of flesh on them." She was accused of lying, upon the statement of another child about her own age, upon a mere quibble as to whether one child had told the other something or no. This girl gull asserts, that though thrashed she was right and the other in the wrong. On the other case, the schoolmaster informs us he was studying medicine, and therefore felt competent to question my opinion. He was anxious to make the girl's illness appear "Hysteria," and "feigned," not Cataplexy. I have only to remark that Dr. Hodder during the last fortnight visited her twice. As when before, I tapped a spot on the spine between the shoulders, she went off into a fit; so without any warning from Dr. Hodder to the girl, when he tapped the same spot similar manifestations followed. The girl continues as bad, if not worse than ever.

The occasion of the cowhiding of this girl was her laughing with the other scholars when the schoolmaster's desk broke down. Readers can easily reconcile three thrashings in one family of children in a short time, with the "exceptional" and "imperative necessity notions" of Normal conceit.

The School Trustees and Local Superintendent have conducted the inquiry impartially and well, and I hope the investigation will lead to the abolition of the corporal punishment of children by strong, full-grown men, who are often hardly aware of their own strength; anyway, it is well to know the dispensation under which we live.

I am Sir, your obt. servant,

CORNELIUS JAMES PHILBRICK,

F. R. O. S.

It will be seen, and no doubt properly appreciated by the Catholic reader of the above correspondence, that the most disgusting feature in the Upper Canada school system—that of the herding together in one "common" school, of boys and girls of the age of puberty, and under a male teacher though formally brought under the notice of the Superintendent and the Trustees, elicited from them not one word of disapprobation or of censure. From this we may conclude that this disgusting intermingling of the sexes is an integral part of the "Common School" system of Upper Canada, and that the "common" schools of that section of the Province are not the most eligible places for the morals of the rising generation. Indeed had we the misfortune of being a resident of Upper Canada, we would quite as willingly entrust the education of our children to an ordinary house of ill-fame, as

to one of the Rev. Mr. Ryerson's State-supported academies.

Here then is one reason why Catholics, as one man, should rise up against the "Common Schools" of Upper Canada—as against hot-beds of vice, and sinks of iniquity; in which the pupils are initiated into the mysteries of premature profligacy, and where their animal passions are carefully strengthened, and called into play, by the fostering hand of a *parental* Government. The Devil himself could not devise a more certain means for corrupting the morals of, and therefore for de-Catholicising, the rising generation, than that of "mixed" schools for the youth of both sexes indiscriminately, and under the control of *unmarried male* teachers.

This is no sectarian question—it is essentially a parent's question. Fathers and mothers, ye who read this, is there one amongst you—would we ask—who would allow his or her daughter of *fourteen years of age* to attend a school frequented by boys of the *same age*, under male control, and where for some trifling offence she is liable to the degrading punishment of a public flogging? No—for the honor of our common nature, we will not believe that amongst Catholics or Protestants, there is one father, one mother, who would not, if the question were proposed to him or her in the above terms, answer with an indignant—"No! No, by heavens; sooner would I follow my daughter to the grave, and hear the cold earth fall heavy upon her coffin, than send her to one of those hell-begotten "common" schools; sooner would I close her eyes in death, and commend her pure spirit to Him Who gave it, than expose a daughter of mine to the unspeakable degradation, and almost inevitable pollution that awaits the pupils of the "common" schools of Upper Canada."

It would be to insult our separated brethren to suppose that they would, if the question were put to them individually, return any other answer than the above; why then will they not give us poor Catholics credit for an equal regard for the physical and moral welfare of our children?—why will they persist in forcing, or in attempting to force, upon us a system of education from which as Catholics and as parents we shrink with loathing? Yes—Papists, though we be, we have natural affection for our little ones, even as other men have; and to the Romanist mother, it does seem hard that her child, her own child, for whom she has suffered so many things, should be appropriated by the State, claimed by School Trustees—who know neither a mother's pangs nor a mother's joys—and banded over to the tender mercies of one of these cowardly brutes in human form who tyrannise over a crowd of trembling boys and girls in an Upper Canadian "common" school. We ask—and surely the demand is not an unreasonable one—that we be allowed to educate our own children, to select their teachers and school companions, and that we be not compelled to pay for the support of a system of education which reason and revelation, which theory, and practise—as in the United States,—alike condemn as injurious to the moral and material interests of the young.

Here then we say is the entire "School Question" in a nutshell. It is a question as betwixt parents, and a bureaucracy hankering after the spoils of office, and with lips watering after the fat meats of a government situation. We contend that no man should be compelled to pay for a school to whose management he has conscientious objections. We assert that the "common" schools of Upper Canada are so conducted as fully to sustain those conscientious objections, and to justify our worst suspicions. We appeal in proof of this assertion to the undeniable fact that in those schools boys and girls of the age of puberty herd promiscuously together, under the control of male teachers, who claim and exercise, the privilege of flogging their pupils of either sex. We maintain that schools so conducted can morally be in no wise distinguishable from brothels, and that their pupils in after life will turn out little better than profligates and prostitutes. Therefore, we say, we will have none of them: we will not—so help us God—allow any of our children to pollute themselves by coming in contact with one of your "common" schools; and we demand therefore as a right, that we be no longer forced to pay for them.

That we may not be suspected of speaking too harshly of the "common" school system of Upper Canada, we would direct the attention of our Catholic readers to the subjoined paragraph, which appeared some time ago in the *Boston Times* under the caption "*Corruption of Pupils in Boston Public Schools*." Now if such things occur in schools in which the sexes are kept apart, and in which the female pupils are under the charge—not of male teachers as in the schools of Upper Canada, but—of persons of their own sex, have we not too good reasons to dread the results of the system which, to the disgrace of our country and the scandal of religion and morality, actually obtains in this country? We would beg our readers to pay attention to the age of the pupils of the Boston "common" schools; and to bear in mind that girls of the same age promiscuously herd with, and are publicly

whipt before the boys of the "common" schools of Upper Canada:—

CORRUPTION OF PUPILS IN BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS.—The *Boston Times* says: "About a week since one of the monitors of the first class in a Public School for Girls, at the North End, happened by chance to find a written note on the floor of the school, which she read, and was so astonished at the contents that she handed it to her female teacher. The note was written by one of the pupils to another in the same class, and revealed (in language too indecent for publication) the astonishing intelligence that the writer of the note and five of her schoolmates, girls between the ages of 12 and 15 years, had been seduced and were in the daily habit of visiting certain places and indulging in the lewdest conduct. The disclosure was most startling to the teacher, and she instantly sent for the mothers of the depraved girls. As soon as they arrived an examination was made, and the girls made full confession of everything, disclosing the particulars in regard to the manner in which they were first induced to corrupt themselves, and the motives for continuing. As the girls related the deeds which they had performed, the anguish of their mothers was most terrible.

How long—we ask—how long are the Catholics of Upper Canada to be taxed for the support of a system of which the above are the legitimate fruits?

SPIRITUALISM.—From the pleasant dream, that this strange delusion had already died, or was fast dying out, we have been roughly awakened by the appearance amongst us of a real living Pythoness, or Apostles of the new spiritual doctrine, which is to renovate the face of the earth, to convert the most inveterate of sceptics, and to inaugurate the long expected millennium. Miss Emma Hardinge is the name of our amiable Pythoness; and the interest which her lectures on modern "Spiritualism," delivered by the lady whilst "in a trance"—and not as the profane insinuate "in a state of beer"—have excited, is a melancholy proof of the readiness of a large portion of our fellow-creatures to believe anything and everything, except the truth of the Christian religion as revealed through the Catholic Church.

Miss Hardinge's lectures were an appropriate sequel to the buffooneries and blasphemies of the Evangelical Anniversaries Meetings; and in justice to that lady we must premise that both in good taste, and in general information, she approved herself immeasurably the superior of the Wilkes, and Taylors, the Schufflers and Scudlers, who figured upon the boards of the Great St. James' Street Theatre. Miss Hardinge may in short be described in the language applied by her admirers to the younger Miss Pecksniff—as being a "gushing thing." If not eloquent she has what our old friend the elder Mr. Weller would call "the gift of the gab very galloping," and a marvellous power of "highfaluting." Add to these endowments, a very respectable physique, a good delivery, and an unexceptional development of erudition, overlook a few grammatical solecisms and a great deal of bad logic, and it must be admitted that to the seekers after excitement there was in the lectures of Miss Hardinge metal more attractive, than in the more orthodox, but certainly not less blasphemous, performances of the rival evangelical Company which annually attract crowded audiences from amongst the sounder portion of our Montreal Protestant population. If the members of the one Company be held in honor, we see not why the fair Emma should be despised.

Her performances, like those at the Methodist Chapel commenced with reading of Scripture, and "devotional exercises." Like the Spurgeons and Taylors, she "engaged in prayer" in a somewhat truculent manner, and went to work roundly with the Deity, like a person who was determined not to be trifled with. Indeed, as a friend of ours remarked to us, her style of praying forcibly reminded him of the ranting of a Methodist minister at a protracted meeting. This part of the exhibition was, perhaps, slightly disgusting, and might we think as well be omitted both by Miss Hardinge, and the evangelical troupe. The muscular contortions, whether of an obese man of God, or of a female lecturer, on Spiritualism, when "wrestling in prayer," are by no means pleasant to behold; and naturally suggest the hypothesis either of demoniacal possession, or of ardent spirits. We give our advice to the players, as Hamlet did his, gratis, and indeed scarcely expect to be thanked for our friendly criticisms.

Miss Hardinge showed also it must be admitted considerable tact in avoiding, or rather in giving evasive replies to, any questions which her audiences according to invitation, proposed to her, and to which it would not have been agreeable to the spirits to give a straightforward answer. One instance of this tact, as a fair specimen of her skill, and of the value of the information imparted by the "spirits," we cannot refrain from noticing.

Being asked by one of the audience how it happened that at a "spirit circle" where the spirit of Plato declared itself present, the said spirit through speaking unexceptionable English, and answering all questions put to it through the medium in that language, could not reply if he were addressed in Greek?—the fair Pythoness replied that, in the spirit world thought addressed itself immediately to thought, and did not require the intervention of language to make itself intelligible. This reply, couched in a multitude of words, of course only intensified the force of

the objection against the reality of spiritual communications, and confirmed the opinion that the media as they style themselves are but arrant humbugs; for why could not the spirit of Plato understand the thought of its questioner when that thought was expressed in Greek, as well as when it was expressed in English? The reason is obvious. Because the medium did not understand Greek, and because it was the medium and not the spirit of Plato, that took part in the dialogue.

Passing from the manner, to the matter of Miss Hardinge's lectures, we would notice the valuable evidence therein afforded as to the intellectual tendencies, and spiritual cravings of modern Protestantism. For be it remembered—"Spiritualism," with its external phenomena of "Rapping" and "Table-Tipping" is a legitimate and natural development of the religious revolution of the sixteenth century, as Methodism, or Quakerism, or any of the other forms assumed by nineteenth century Protestantism. The premises in short, or first principles of the "Spiritualist," are held by him in common with the great majority of the Non-Catholic world. He is a "World Reformer" and a "seeker after truth," as almost all Protestants profess themselves to be, thereby admitting they are not yet in possession of that truth. Now the truth, the truth *par excellence* which it is the mission of Spiritualism to teach is the immortality of the soul, a truth in which the great majority of the Non-Catholic world of the present day do not believe. To correct this intellectual aberration of Protestantism, and to satisfy its cravings after that truth for which it is vainly groping, are the exciting causes of these strange commotions amongst our chairs, stools and sofas which heralded the advent of Spiritualism, and ushered in the latest development of Protestantism, of which Miss Emma Hardinge is the Apostles.

It will thus be seen that this new religion does not address, or pretend even to address, itself to Catholics; because they, never having lost their faith in the immortality of the soul, stand in no need of its revelations; because, like afflicted Job, they know that their Redeemer liveth, and that on the last day they shall rise out of the earth. With the Catholic, the immortality of the soul, and a life beyond the grave, is not, and can never be, a matter for doubtful speculation—for he knows, and with the certainty of faith, that he shall be clothed again with his skin, and in his flesh shall see God. This is his hope which is laid up in his bosom; a hope which the sophistries of scepticism cannot dim, and which needs neither the crazy antics of a three-legged stool, nor the incoherent utterances of middle aged females in a trance, for its confirmation. Even were we to concede the objective reality of the Spiritualistic phenomena, we should, as Catholics, pay no attention to them, for to us they have no object, and no meaning; and because to us the mediums, or media, have no lesson to reveal.—Let them preach then to the Protestant, or Non-Catholic world, which stands in need of their teachings. Thank God! we have the Church for our unerring guide, and can therefore dispense with that wisdom which cometh out of deal tables, and manifests itself by upsetting our crockery and household furniture.

Another truth of which "Spiritualism" boasts the possession, and which its professors undertake to teach, is that the spirits of the departed still take an interest in the affairs of this life, and hold intercourse with their friends upon earth. But what is this but a corruption, or parody, of the old Catholic doctrine of the "Communion of Saints?" We, listening to the voice of the Church, and without invoking the aid of deal boards, already believe that we can, and do, hold communion, and most profitable communion, with the spirits of the Saints; that not only can we be assisted by their prayers, but that we also in return can by our prayers give assistance and relief to the spirits of those whom we once loved in the flesh. Betwixt the members of the Church Militant upon earth, suffering in Purgatory, and triumphant in Heaven, there is according to our creed, a constant "communion" or reciprocal interchange of good offices; and though this truth may have been lost sight of, amongst Protestants, we, as Catholics, need no further evidence of its truth.

We should not notice the silly, indeed we may say the blasphemous ravings of Miss Emma Hardinge, but for our fears lest some weak minded Catholics might thereby be led astray, and indeed to make fools of themselves by taking part in the dangerous and unlawful excitement of the "Spirit-circle." We would remind these, if any such there be, they cannot do so without violating the positive and reiterated injunctions of the Church. We would remind them of the Pastoral issued some time ago by our venerated Bishop, against the impious mummeries of spiritualism, and of his solemn warnings against all tampering with the spirits of darkness. If its pretensions be true, Spiritualism is but another name for the accursed art of necromancy which every true Christian must hold in horror; if they be false, it is a superstition morally and intellectually degrading, which the wise man will despise—an imposture, from which the honest man will shrink with disgust. In either case it is unworthy of the countenance of the Catholic; and its progress amongst Protestants affords a melancholy proof of the absurdities into which man inevitably falls when he discards the guidance of the Church, and sets up his puny "private judgment" in opposition to the inflexible decrees of her, who has been appointed to teach all nations, and to whom has been committed the *deposition* of revealed truth.