

TO THE ORANGEMEN.

I find it broadly and angrily asserted that I have "gone back upon my word" with regard to the Orangemen,—that I first incited them to walk, and then deserted them and their cause when the trial time had come upon them, by writing against Orangeism. That I did write against it is well enough known. I wrote calmly and with knowledge of the subject, and not one word do I wish to recall, or to express regret on account of.

But the accusation is that I have changed my front. Will my accusers who have delighted in calling me hard names tell me how and in what? At my first entrance upon public life in this country I did to the best of my ability speak against the presumptions and assumptions of the Roman Catholic Church the world over in general, and in the Province of Quebec in particular. I denounced its politics in no measured terms. Public and private threats came fast and furious; letters were rained upon me warning me to prepare for a speedy exit from this world. I got one lithographed and published, offering a small reward to any one who would discover the writer; the fools took fright and wrote in that way no more. Now, it is quite true that at that time the Orangemen befriended me by offering and affording protection to me in Montreal, and perhaps elsewhere. I was not at all afraid of the dogs that delight to bark, but are generally afraid to bite; still, I was grateful for the kindness of those who were kind. But all the time I never uttered a word about Orangeism. I spoke for the Protestant faith, and not for the Orange Order. Indeed, I knew but little of that Order. I made myself acquainted with the Ecclesiastical history of this country, but did not find that Orangeism held any prominent position therein. And my contention was *against* the Roman Catholic Church, as to its political position, and not against the Irish portion of it simply—and *for* Protestantism; not any portion of it which might by the promptings of vanity call itself that *par excellence*. I was not aware, and am not aware now, that the Orangemen are the natural champions of Protestantism. I had known a sturdy Protestantism before the period to which I refer, but it existed without the countenance and help of Orangeism. I had never been taught that the one was needful to the other. It is true that I declared on a public platform that the Orangemen had as much right to walk in procession through the street as the Catholics had on the *Fete Dieu* or any other *fete*. I said: If we are to have Free Trade, let us have it all round; if we are to have Protection, let us have it all round. Every procession is a nuisance, and should be put down; but all must be treated alike. To that I have adhered. I joined other clergymen in an attempt to stop the procession on the 12th of last month, feeling sure that trouble and no good would come of it; but when the day came I was on the streets prepared to protect the Orangemen in what I considered their rights. They were brutally treated, and I said so. I didn't go a-fishing that day, or keep out of harm's way, but said my say to anybody that cared to hear it. Many of those who had said quite as much as I had, found it convenient to spend that day in the country. They are still heroes—and have not "gone back upon their word."

True, I had written against Orangeism in the meantime, and I did so from a profound conviction that we were getting much harm and no good from it. I read the story of England's treatment to Ireland, as given by Lecky, in his recently published "History of England in the Eighteenth Century." I talked with Roman Catholic Irishmen on the subject—I had one say to me: "Look here—my grandmother was 'cropped' in Ireland—what do you think I feel when I hear 'Croppies lie down?'" I have forty thousand dollars' worth of real estate in Montreal—I would rather see it all reduced to ashes than see an Orange procession through the streets." I found many others sharing that opinion, and feeling just as strongly.

And then I diligently enquired what this Orangeism had done for Canada. I found it had been mixed up with politics more or less; yielding itself to adroit wire-pullers—having no particular party, and no particular politics—going with one party in one Province, and with the other party in another. I do not find that Orangeism has identified itself with any great scheme for national reform—it has not put forth an effort—as far as I know—to put the Roman Catholic Church in the Province of Quebec on a level with the Protestant Churches. When we have demanded a real education for the French *habitant*, Orangeism has not come forward with insistence, and when we have asked that the iniquity of clerical exemption from taxation be done away, from the Orangemen—as a body—we have had no help. So I was driven to ask for the object and aim of Orangeism. No definite and satisfactory answer have I found. I can understand a benevolent society—I can understand a Protestant Alliance—I can understand a Civil Rights Alliance—but the need for Orangeism, I cannot see. It is an old world institution—it is out of climate—out of date—and ought to be out of breath and buried. Anything that can be done by it may be accomplished in a much better way; because it persuades none—it convinces none—it converts none—it only irritates and works in the way of violence. It has no logic, and no prayer—only a stick or a

pistol; it flaunts a red flag in the face of a mad bull; I get that mad bull by the horns and he shoves his way into my china-shop. I shall conquer that bull by and by—but then—I wish that red flag had never been passed before his eyes; it has made the bull the fiercer and my work the harder.

I am sure the simile is good. The Orangemen have roused all the fury of the Irish Catholics—they have driven them to unreason and riot; they have succeeded in uniting—for the time being—the Irish and the French-Canadian in a common cause—and they have restored a power to the priests which was fast slipping from their hands. For the Irish Catholics have small sympathy toward the French-Canadians, just because the latter hold every acre of ecclesiastical real estate in Montreal. But Herod and Pilate have shaken hands over the illstarred proposal of the Orangemen to have a procession on the 12th of July; it has paralyzed trade—held the city up to scorn and ridicule—turned Mayor Beaudry from an ape into a hero—and, worst calamity of all—started, and keeps alive the Montreal *Evening Post*. I am a practical man, accustomed to look at things and societies from a utilitarian point of view, and I ask Orangemen to reckon up the gain and loss to the country accruing from the organization. I make the loss to be more than the gain.

Believing as I do, and as I have said, why should the Orangemen blame me for speaking out my thoughts. We have the same objects in view, and the same ends to attain, but they are trying to attain them by a way that seems to me not simply perilous, but wrong. I have not modified my Protestant articles of belief. I have not toadied to the priests, or in any way sought the good word of the Catholic press. I have said, and do firmly believe, that the British have been too generous to the Roman Catholics of this Province—that they enjoy privileges which are not rights, and, in the interests of peace and national prosperity, should be taken from them. I agree with Mr. Stevenson that we cannot tolerate intolerance—that while the Roman Catholic Church holds its present political creed it should be regarded as an enemy to national peace and prosperity. I am asked if I am "prepared to abandon everything that is a source of annoyance to the Irish Catholics?" No—I am not. For I am sure that they can be annoyed and irritated by almost anything. I only ask: Is this the best method of attaining our purpose? I know how they can shift their ground, and am not much given to a policy of conciliation; but stick against stick is poor play after all. If it must be, I am prepared to take a full share of responsibility and risk—but meantime, I would prefer more reasonable methods.

And I am sure that we have more reasonable methods at command. The great work of laying the foundations of this country firm in equity and in truth will not be accomplished by the mere insistence upon the legal right to bear a particular name—or wear a certain badge—or walk in procession through the streets. It seems to me that the name, and the badge, and the procession, are folly—and the anger against them is madness. How will you get rid of the madness? By putting away the cause of it. But the Orangemen hold it as a political and religious principle that they shall wear the orange regalia and walk in procession? Yes; and the Irish Catholics hold it as a principle that they must fight against it. And the truth is, that there is no *principle* at stake on either side. What is to be gained by processions? Nothing at all, and they should be put down at once, one and all of them. As matters now stand, we are drifting into a great and organized *Vendetta*; anger and revenge will be handed on from generation to generation, and the whole must be a prolonged disaster. We cannot afford that—it is asking the country to pay too great a price for the luxury of allowing processions. And the mass of the people feel this—they are looking for the just; all this vast machinery we call the State is our attempt to organize justice; we have theories of right which we would reduce to general practice. We know that our Legislature now is but an organized selfishness; we must make an effort to cure that evil. That will not be done by every man or every body of men mistaking their crotchet for their conscience—or exalting a fancy into a right. We all have *rights*, which, if insisted upon, would keep the world in a ferment with universal revolution. We are called upon constantly to sacrifice the lower to the higher—the particular to the general—in order that the common good may be attained, and law, embodied in justice, administered without passion.

If the Orangemen of Canada are true Protestants, as they say they are—if they have the best interests of this nation at heart, as they protest they have—if they are seeking the advancement of piety,—then I have to say: Gentlemen,—You are seeking a most desirable end in, what appears to me, a most undesirable way. You are creating difficulties for yourselves and those who desire to achieve the same result—and thinking this, it is my duty to tell you so. If I had lent any countenance to your opponents you would have a right to be angry; but I have not done so. I have simply exercised my right of reason and free speech—you applauded that when it told against the Roman Catholics; if you are veritable champions of general and individual freedom of judgment and speech, you will at least tolerate