

## The True Witness

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1896

## THE STUDY OF HISTORY.

In these days boys and girls have so much to learn at school that the considerate friend of education will hesitate to suggest any addition to the burden of the already heavy satchel. Not to mention the art of speaking and writing one's own language with propriety, which is essential in all schools and which, in or out of school, is no slight achievement, there are other tongues that have claims on the learner, and such branches of elementary science as may be deemed necessary for the ordinary uses of life. The third of the three R's stands for the minimum of scientific culture. The second of them stands for the elements of art. But it is to the first and only true R that we must resort, in final appeal, for all that can be gathered, assimilated and utilized in the mighty world of books. To be taught to read means more than a mere mastery of the alphabet and a comprehension, which in time becomes intuitive, of its myriad combinations. The value of direction as to reading is a theme on which we touched some time ago. We would now call attention to a single department of such direction—the study of history. Generally, we fear, too little stress is laid on the importance of history as a branch of knowledge and on the study of it as a discipline for the mind. Nor, as a rule, are the text-books that are put into the hands of pupils worthy of the purpose they are meant to serve. Of course, in this, as in every other branch of education, a great deal is left to the intelligence, tact and sympathy of the teacher. But the busy teacher cannot do everything, and yet some text-books of history leave him or her everything to do and sometimes not a little to undo. A question of interest is the age or stage of development at which the study of history should be begun. It is essential that the pupil should learn something about his or her own country. Here it will be obvious that history should not be divorced from geography, and the geography of such a country as Canada is no trifle even in the outline of its main features. But as the geography of any particular region implies some previous knowledge of the "great globe itself," so the annals of any country, and especially of a new world country, cannot be learned without some basis of general knowledge as to the history of mankind at large, and at least a compend or abstract of the history of Europe, and especially of Western Europe. The history of France, again, as well as that of Great Britain, begins as a branch of Roman history, and, as the Roman Empire, in the zenith of its power, comprised not only a great part of Europe, but large tracts of Asia and Africa, we are thus drawn, *in medias res*, into the very thick of the great conflict between civilization and barbarism. The story of Rome includes that of Greece, which, with its colonies and conquests, still further broadens the range of our survey. For the Greek language, after Alexander's expedition, was spoken from the Atlantic to the Indus. By Rome's conquest of Carthage our ideas of the world as known to the ancients are still further extended, for the Carthaginians and the Phoenicians, from whom they were descended, were the pioneers of navigation and commerce long before Rome was founded. The expedition of Hanno, the Carthaginian, marks perhaps the earliest attempt to dare the perils of the Atlantic, and it is noteworthy

that to Hanno we owe the first mention of the gorilla as found on the west coast of Africa in the 5th century B.C. To Phœnician vessels was assigned the circumnavigation of the Dark Continent by the orders of an Egyptian monarch, six centuries B.C., an enterprise that Humboldt deemed not improvable. About the same period the Phœnicians, venturing westward across the whole extent of the Mediterranean, founded the city of Marseilles, which in turn organized some centuries later the first expedition to the continent and islands of the North Atlantic. Thus we find a link between a far-off past and this land of ours on the St. Lawrence, for Pytheas, though he spoke Greek, was a native of a city that has long been French, and among the lands that he discovered were those islands to which many of us look back as to our ancestral homes. Nor must we forget that among the provinces of Rome in her day of heathen power was Palestine, the Holy Motherland of universal Christendom. It will thus be seen that it is not without reason that the history of Rome occupies so important a place in all schemes of education, comprising, as it does, so large a share of the history of mankind. A thorough study of Rome's history implies some knowledge of all the countries that at any time were included under its sway—Greece, Egypt, Carthage, the dominions of the ancient Celts and Teutons, Asia Minor, Palestine, the lands at any time conquered, traded with or visited by these, and the countless nations and tribes with which the historians of Greece and Rome and the sacred writers have made us more or less acquainted. We may even by implication include the New World in that survey, for, according to the geographer Strabo, a contemporary of the Massilian explorer already mentioned, had at least indicated the path of westward discovery when he said that, but for the immensity of the Atlantic, it would be possible to sail from Spain to India. Under the Christian dispensation we may still make Rome our central point of observation, as we mark the origin, conversion and development of new communities, till we come to the modern age of discovery and finally concentrate our attention on the settlement and growth of our own complex nationality.

But whatever system we adopt, some general knowledge of world-history is indispensable to an intelligent study of that of our own country. The history of France and of Great Britain and Ireland, with a glance at their colonies and conquests, and sufficient attention to their modes of Government to enable the pupil to understand the theory and working of our own constitution, should form the subject of a series of clear and concise lessons. Of course, such an outline ought to be divested of any cumbersome learning and be as simple as possible. The works of the late Dr. Todd, of the late Messrs. Dutt and Lears, of Dr. Bourinot, of Mr. Recorder DeMontigny, and other writers, might be used by the teacher, in combination with our leading historians, to supplement the ordinary text-books. Not to overload the pupil's memory, while at the same time conveying a clear conception of the constitution under which we live, would demand some skill on the part of the teacher. As to its development, in one sense, the British North America Act, being a creation of the Imperial power, cannot be said to have developed from any previous instrument, but the system of which it is an embodiment has had a growth which can be traced. The circumstances out of which the federal project arose can also be explained. The historical sequence of the regimes by which this province has been administered is indicated by a few dates—1841, 1791, 1774, 1763, 1760, 1703, 1663, 1627, being the principal. The change from French to British rule is indicated by the capitulation of Montreal in 1760. The dates previous to that year stand for the organization of the Hundred Associates, and the creation of the Sovereign and Superior Councils. They may be added to as the subject requires. If we take in the rest of Canada, 1670, 1697, 1713, 1749, 1784, and several others may be added to indicate the creation of the Hudsons Bay Company, the Treaties of Ryswick and Utrecht, etc. The Treaty of Paris, the Quebec Constitutional and Union Acts are already indicated by their dates. But the great date of all is July 1, 1867, when the British North America Act came into force and Canada (Lower and Upper) and the Maritime Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick became the Dominion of Canada, with power to add to their number.

The religious feature of the education of our children in this country is the last consideration with many of our public men. Here is an illustration, taken from an Ottawa paper:—

"It is said that half an hour each day is to be set apart for this purpose, so that the schools will close at 3.30 p.m. instead of 4 o'clock. All children who do not desire to remain can leave after 3.30."

What a farce for men of intelligence to even think of, much less put in force.

## SOME WELCOME CHANGES.

A recent expression of opinion in an Irish paper indicates, though indirectly, one of the causes of dissension between the two parties of Home Rulers. The writer in question urges that, although just at present there is no apparent ground for the hope that Home Rule will be at an early date an accomplished fact, nevertheless there is no reason why the people of Ireland should not in the meantime profit by any disposition on the part of the government to show the country fair play, short of that desired result. If, for instance, as its present majority seems to promise, the Salisbury government makes good its full parliamentary term, the Liberals will for so many years be debarré from keeping their pledges as to the renewal of the attempt to carry Home Rule. Is it irrational or unpatriotic during that lustrum or more to accept from the party in power such boons in the way of land reform, educational rights, railway construction, promotion of the fisheries, provision for technical training, ample privileges of local autonomy and other needed improvements, rather than to indulge in Ismaelite hostility to every offer at conciliation? In ordinary life, the proverbial truth that half a loaf is better than no bread is a rule of conduct believed to be based on common sense. Other political parties have, when in opposition, to make certain compromises with their official adversaries. If they declined to do so, their constituencies which look to government for attention, whatever political denomination is at the head of affairs, would withdraw their confidence and choose from their opponents representatives of their interests.

There are certain claims, general and local, in the satisfaction of which more interests than those of any single party are concerned. A policy that affects trade and commerce, agriculture and the urban industries, cannot be regarded from a purely party standpoint. The policy of one party may deal with those interests in such a way that some of them are more benefited than others, and this, not of deliberate purpose, but through the operation of a principle. If that policy can, by the exercise of timely influence and good understanding, be so modified as to make the benefits more evenly distributed or to save some threatened branches of industry wholly or partly from its injurious effects, it would surely be folly, and worse than folly, for the opposition, solely out of party spirit, to refuse such partial benefits and thus to doom their constituents to loss and embarrassment which they had in their power to secure them from. This, according to the writer in question, is the position of the Home Rulers with regard to such services as the Salisbury Government may be disposed to render to their urban or rural constituents in Ireland. Would they be acting wisely or fairly, simply because they disagree with the Tories on one subject—however important—to hold stiffly aloof from them on every other subject as well, instead of helping by their knowledge and advice whenever they find them well intentioned toward their countrymen in matters as to which they sorely need a powerful helping hand?

Now, to us in Canada there can be no question as to the sensible answer to make to such a question. Opposition may be a bounden duty when great principles are at stake. But when a party in power is of its own good will and regard for the public weal prepared to meet half way the wishes of its opponents' constituents, and to offer, in their behalf, all the advantages that their principles permit them to offer in a certain direction, it is the duty of the Opposition in turn to concur in such a policy, which is half its own, and not to indulge in mere factions or partizan antagonism, to the detriment of the public.

We need hardly say that it was a Parnellite paper in which the plea was made, and to the anti-Parnellite press it may be nothing but an ambushade, just as the Parnellites denounce the alleged subservience of the majority to the English Liberals. For our part, the right policy for every paper that wishes Ireland well—especially since the Convention—is to express its opinions, whether original or adopted, as if no division existed, and to accept suggestions that were good, rejecting those that are bad, without regard to their source and without reserve as to their honest and obvious meaning.

We are, therefore, inclined to look upon the proposal, above quoted, which was made without a word that savored of insincerity or of unkind feeling to any section of Irish opinion, as wise and patriotic and as justified by the experience of recent years. Those who have grown up under the auspices of the Home Rule movement—which, with all its drawbacks, has been one of the most successful movements of our time—may resent as slow and defective whatever falls short of full-fledged triumph. But those who have been longer in the world, and can recall a time when to dream of upsetting the union of 1801 smacked more of insanity than wisdom,

cannot help feeling that the change in public opinion in the three kingdoms is little less than a revolution.

Setting party names aside, it is not Liberal Britain only that Mr. Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule stands for, but a great deal that is best in Conservative Britain also. Not only so, but the ten years during which one of the great historic parties has advocated Home Rule—a majority of the Commons having declared for it—must have modified opinion materially even in Conservative strongholds. The result we see in the desire to know more of Ireland, its history, its people, their condition, their aspirations, their urgent needs. But that is not all. We find evidence of it in signs of improvement all over the country. The saying that no news is good news is peculiarly true of Ireland. The years when Ireland gave most satisfaction to the news-hunter were the years of coercion, of evictions, of bitter and murderous conflict. The building of short railway lines; the founding of new industries; the erection of hotels for tourists and health-seekers and lovers of scenery, where accommodation for man and beast there was none before; the opening of technical schools; the advancement of general education at a rate hitherto unprecedented—these and other indications of prosperity are among the evidences of a great change as well of fact as of sentiment.

That such a change has taken place ought to be an inducement to unit of effort, not to division, on the part of the Irish people's representatives in Parliament. It is a quæstion of grander triumphs sure to come, and the sooner the contending sections are reconciled, and the more vigorously they co-operate for the one cause that is dear to them both, the nearer will be the day of ultimate victory.

## CUBA'S DISTRESS.

The state of affairs in the island of Cuba is so anomalous and deplorable that our first thought, on contemplating its condition, is that of regret and commiseration for its hapless inhabitants. If ever there was a portion of the globe especially intended by Providence for the abode of a happy and prosperous population, it ought, one might suppose, to be just such an island. It was the admiring gratification of the early discoverers that gave Cuba the proud title of Queen of the Antilles. Like other earthly paradises, Cuba doubtless has its share of drawbacks, and perhaps, on the whole, if we had our choice, we should prefer a home in Canada under the best conditions for the promotion of happiness to a home in Cuba under like conditions. Nevertheless, we can understand why those who have been born and brought up in Cuba are so passionately devoted to their native land.

It is more than four centuries since Christopher Columbus first discovered the island during his earliest voyage, so that Cuba is associated with one of the greatest events of which history has kept the record. On the 28th of October, 1492, the discovery was made, and Columbus called the island Juana, in honor of Prince John, son of Ferdinand and Isabella. After King Ferdinand's death it received the name of Fernandina. Subsequently it was named Santiago, or Saint James, from the patron saint of Spain, and, later still, it was with affectionate devotion called Ave Maria, in honor of the Blessed Virgin. The name by which we have always known it in our day was the original name that it bore when Columbus first espied it—that name having been conferred by the aborigines. Twice in succeeding years the discoverer visited the island—in 1494, and again in 1502. In 1511 his son, Diego, fitted out an expedition for the sake of colonizing Cuba, and founded a settlement at Baracoa. Three years later he laid the foundation of Santiago, and also of Trinidad or Trinity. In July, 1515, the name of Havana, or rather San Cristobal de la Havana, was given to a locality afterwards called Batabano, while four years afterward the present city of Havana was founded. In less than twenty years the thriving town was burned to ashes by a French privateer, and by way of precaution against the repetition of such an outrage, the castle or fortress of La Fuerza was erected by Fernando de Soto, known in Canadian history as the rival of La Salle for the discovery of the Mississippi.

The history of Cuba during the last three centuries and a half has been marked by successive disturbances. With the introduction of tobacco and sugar culture is connected the first use of negro slaves for field labor. The first slaves were landed about twenty years before the close of the 16th century. A little later two other forts were erected for the defence of Havana. Down to the middle of the last century the planters and their households were in frequent if not constant dread of invasion by French, Dutch or English foes. Pirates also were for many generations the terror of the Gulf of Mexico and the adjoining waters of the Atlantic. It was not, however, until 1665 that it was thought necessary to surround Havana with walls,

A hundred years later the city was taken by Lord Albemarle, and a naval and military force under his command, after a most obstinate defence. The Moro Castle first surrendered, a fortnight afterwards the city capitulated. The spoil divided among the captors amounted to nearly three quarters of a million of pounds—a fact that shows the wealth of the inhabitants at that time. The treaty of Paris of 1763 restored Cuba to Spain, and, notwithstanding the damage and loss sustained by the siege, the island was never more prosperous than during the remainder of the century. During the Napoleonic wars the Cubans remained loyal to the royal family of Spain, and during the long and troubled period of revolt and ultimately of war for liberation, on the mainland of Mexico, Central and South America, Cuba was faithful to the Motherland.

The circumstances out of which the actual situation has arisen were due partly to slavery and the unrest caused by the movement for emancipation, partly to sympathy with the aims of those who on the continent threw off the yoke of Spain, partly to the machinations of foreigners and partly to the honest efforts of a number of Cubans to obtain certain needed reforms. In 1820 and in 1844 there were conspiracies and insurrection among the blacks which were not repressed without bloodshed. In 1848 we first hear of the designs of American filibusters, and in 1850 a party of them made good their landing. But, though the insurgent leader, Narciso Lopez, thus aided, was able to hold out for a time against the Spanish garrison on the island, he and his guerillas were ultimately cut to pieces and the authorities had everything their own way. A party of the more intelligent and patriotic Cubans then inaugurated a movement for the peaceful acquisition of the rights and reforms which had in vain been sought by violence. But the designs of the United States on the island, favored, as they were, by a considerable number of Cubans who preferred American to Spanish rule, always interfered with such domestic agitations. In 1848 President Polk openly offered to purchase the island for a million dollars. Ten years later the proposal was repeated, the sum offered being many times increased. Twenty years after the first offer was made by the American Government the outbreak of the revolution in Spain, and the banishment of Queen Isabella, led to a like movement in the island, which lasted long after tranquillity had been restored in Spain. It was not, indeed, until General Campos undertook the task of putting down the revolt, and accompanied judgment with mercy and the promise of redress, that the insurgents finally laid down their arms. Altogether the revolt extended over the ten years, 1868-1878, and it took even Campos, then in the height of his fame, and with *carte blanche* to carry out his plans and make his own terms, no less than two years to bring the insurrection to an end. For some years afterwards—so long, indeed, as the Government kept faith with the colonists and the agitators in the United States let them a one—the Cubans were fairly contented. What was known as the Autonomist party began about a dozen years ago to organize an agitation for self-government on the basis of the system that we enjoy in Canada. This plea was ably urged in a review published in Havana, but two influences impeded this moderate movement. One was that of the uncompromising Tories of the peninsula; the other was the filibustering movement in the United States, which gave the opponents of autonomy a plausible justification. Between the two the voice of moderate reform was stifled, and at last open rebellion was the result. The conflict has now reached a point when common humanity demands a cessation of hostilities that are ruining the island. The only hope for peace, with honor to both combatants, lies in granting Campos entire freedom of action. If he cannot succeed in restoring tranquillity, while retaining Cuba for Spain, no other general is likely to do so. As for the rumors of all kinds that have been current lately, we know not what grain of truth any of them may have. Meanwhile we can only await the issue.

There is a feverish enthusiasm among young people in this city to wear emblem buttons. There are many cases where they represent membership in religious and national societies. Of these we have nothing to say. What we wish to draw attention to is the button bearing some ridiculous and oftentimes immoral words. The latter style seem to be becoming popular.

Mr. JOHN DALY, speaking at a recent meeting of the Amnesty Association in England, after having referred to the period of his incarceration in prison, said: "Just let me say these few words to you, and that is, standing in this window to return you thanks from the bottom of my heart for this grand demonstration, all the more because your presence here to-night is your answer to the efforts that have been made to stigmatize me as a dynamitar. I think

the Irishmen of our day are too noble, and too brave, and too generous, and too worthy of the right to legislate for themselves, to advocate a principle that would inflict misery and pain upon people who are not responsible for the misery of Ireland."

These are sentiments which every true Irishman will experience a feeling of pride in reading. They will also serve another purpose, and that is to teach the Irish people, if it is possible, to esteem the man all the more who has expressed them and who has suffered so nobly for the cause.

At midnight on Saturdays, when the inmates of the saloons, which make an effort to observe the law, are turned loose, what sad spectacles are presented to the gaze. Young men, many of whom have scarcely crossed the threshold of their majority, are seen staggering on in an aimless fashion, after spending the night in drink. There are any number of low places in this city where the blinds are drawn, and young men are permitted to quaff off the deadly poison until the early hours of Sunday morning. Saturday night in this city will soon compare favorably with that of any other city on this continent for its disgusting scenes of drunkenness and its fearful examples of the terrible lives which the rising generation are leading. What are the police doing? They must be aware of the existing state of affairs.

The following statement is taken from a report of a meeting of the Young Capitals, which appeared in the *Free Press*.

"So far as President Davidson is concerned the Young Capitals are ready to meet the Nationals at any time or place for the championship. Had any other place than Montreal been selected it is certain he would have been only too willing to give them another match. The fact that Montreal was chosen was too plain to him and everyone connected with the club that the Nationals wanted too much."

There is not a city, town or village on this continent where lacrosse clubs receive more fair play than in Montreal. The Senior Capitals are well aware of this fact, as they have the experience both in the field and in the league circles.

The following appeared in the last issue of the *Metropolitan*, signed "Fugue":—

I beg to call your attention to the fact that Mr. Couture, who has practically left Montreal, still holds the position as one of the honorary examiners for the Montreal scholarship of the Royal College of Music, which, in justice to the profession, he should have resigned when leaving the city. Another position he holds in the city should be enquired into, and that is the High School musical department. It is high time that this appointment was held by a Protestant. This is plain speaking, but it is nevertheless the case. There are many qualified men who could fill the position and speak plain English to the pupils, and that is more than the present teacher can do. Let this matter be taken up and debated, as there are many who feel very strongly upon the point.

There are a great number of people of the calibre of "Fugue" in this city, who do not possess the ability to succeed on their merits, and as a last resort endeavor to appeal to religious prejudice. Mr. Couture, unlike the man who now attacks him under the guise of a *nom de plume*, always possessed the courage of his convictions. If he had anything to say in any matter of personal or public nature, he always said it courageously either in person or wrote it over his own signature. That it would be superfluous to revert in these columns to Mr. Couture's talents as a musician, and the many sacrifices he has made in the endeavor to create a love for the noble art, goes without saying.

An evening paper says in its Ottawa correspondence, in yesterday's issue, that the Manitoba delegates had a final interview with the Premier on Monday, and somewhat unexpectedly left for home. It also adds, "The delegates will report to Mr. Greenway and the Minister of Education, and there the matter rests for the present." The same paper announced a week ago that a basis of settlement would be made known in a few days.

There is the right ring in the reply of Mr. Gladstone to the well known Dr. Kane, which we take from an exchange:—

Gladstone, replying to a recent letter from Dr. Kane, grand master of the Belfast Orangemen, says: "As life ebbs away I hope I become inclined to a milder and more hopeful view of our differences that prevail among us and concurrence in yet greater and far greater matters. This has the further advantage of inspiring a lively hope that at home, too, we may discover a method of agreement. Let us now join in saying 'God save Armenia,' yet not at the proper time forget 'God save Ireland.'"

A little more general indulgence in such sentiment, on the part of some of the legislators, would make Ireland and the rest of the world more happy and prosperous.

Mr. Sifton has evidently all the power of a dictator in Manitoba, judging by the despatches received this morning in connection with the Liberal Convention held yesterday.