

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY BY J. GILLIES
FOR GEORGE E. CLERKE, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR,
At the Office, No. 4, Place d'Armes.

TERMS:
To all country subscribers, or subscribers receiving
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the office, if paid in advance, Two Dollars; if not
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;
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Single copies, three pence; can be had at this Office;
at Wynne's, McGill Street; and at Pickup's News
Depot.

All communications to be addressed to the Editor
of the TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE, post
paid.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 1859.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The announcement that Austria had consented to a Congress of the great European Powers, Russia, Prussia, Austria, France, and England, to take into consideration the state of Italy, had increased the prospects of an amicable settlement. Still it can hardly be looked upon as conclusive; and the proposal for a Congress may be only a trick to gain time, and to complete military preparations. Sardinia will it is said be represented in the Congress, but will have no vote.

The Reform Bill is the one subject of discussion in the British journals; but judging from the reports, the length of the debates thereupon in Parliament is no measure of the feelings of the great mass of the people outside, towards the Bill. There is no enthusiasm, nothing to remind one of the excitement of '31 and '32. The Derby Ministry have however staked their fortunes on the fate of their measure; and will in all probability be defeated upon the motion for its second reading.

An unexpected incident has occurred in the Phoenix trials in Ireland. One of the Crown witnesses had not it seems been sufficiently well trained; and has in consequence been committed to take his trial for perjury by the Ennis Bench of Magistrates.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

An animated and most important discussion upon a subject to which we have often been compelled to direct public attention, occurred in the Legislative Assembly on the evening of Wednesday the 6th inst. The immediate occasion of the debate was a motion by Mr. Dunkin that the House do go into Committee, on a Bill to incorporate the British and Canadian School Society. This having been carried, Mr. Dunkin again moved that the clause making invalid all gifts or bequests to the said incorporated Society, unless made six months before the death of the donor or testator, be expunged; and hereupon a warm contest ensued.

It will thus be seen that the questions at issue were, whether the system of legislation towards Religious, Charitable and Educational Societies, inaugurated by Mr. Drummond some three years ago; and supported then and since by the Ministry and the majority of the Ministerial party, as well as by the "Rouges" and the "Clear Grit" followers of George Brown, was to be abandoned or made permanent; and whether the Clergy and Religious of the Catholic Church in particular, were by Act of Parliament to be branded as death-bed robbers! To our great satisfaction these questions have been both settled. The House has retraced its steps; the Ministry and their supporters have for once acted like gentlemen and Catholics; they have by their votes frankly acknowledged their gross error in voting for the restrictive clauses of Mr. Drummond's infamous Bill, and made the best reparation in their power for their former offences; and have, therefore, by implication, fully ratified the condemnation passed upon them by the TRUE WITNESS for their anti-Catholic conduct upon previous occasions; and also, for having allowed the Acts of Incorporation for the Assumption College of Sandwich, and the Academy of St. Cesaire, to pass last session encumbered with those very restrictive and insulting clauses, which this session they have refused to admit in the case of the Bill for the Incorporation of the British and Canadian School Society, and of that for Incorporating the St. Bridget's Asylum of Quebec, as an insult to the ministers of their religion. It is, therefore, incumbent on the Hon. M. Cartier and his supporters who voted with him on the 6th inst., if they desire to obtain a reputation for consistency, and to make full satisfaction for their past transgressions, to expunge from the Acts of Incorporation passed last session, those clauses against which they profess so much honest and virtuous indignation in the session of 1859.—But to come back to the debate:—

The motion of Mr. Dunkin, mentioned above, was met by an amendment from the "Clear Grit" leader, Mr. George Brown, the person with whom it was proposed that Catholics should contract a political alliance. True to his antecedents, Mr. George Brown contended for retaining the offensive clauses; as the effect of their abolition would be to perpetuate those death-

bed solicitations which were so much to be deprecated.

Mr. Brown was supported by all the leading Orangemen of the House; thus showing that Orangemen are his natural allies; and proving the truth of what we have always asserted—that an alliance of Catholics with George Brown was neither possible nor desirable; and that such an alliance would inevitably be unspeakably disgraceful to all Catholics, parties thereunto. On the other hand, M. Cartier, for once, spoke out boldly, and like a man; standing up for the rights of his coreligionists, and the honor of his Clergy, like a gentleman and a Catholic. Had he always assumed—or if we had assurance that for the future he would always assume—such a dignified attitude, we would not have had, we should not again have, imposed upon us the disagreeable task of hostile criticism. Did he know his true interests; could he rise above the sordid considerations of place and emolument, or the paltry ambition of being a leading political partisan, he might yet be a credit to his country and his Church; he might have been, he might yet be, what the time-server, the place-hunter, and the inconsistent politician never can be—a truly great and respected Catholic Statesman. He has talents; he has energy and great aptitude for business; all he wants are firmness, integrity, and singleness of purpose. "*Si oculus tuus fuerit simplex, totum corpus tuum lucidum erit.*"—St. MATT. vi. 22.

As a specimen of the energy which M. Cartier can put forth when he pleases, we give the following extract from the Toronto correspondence of the Montreal Gazette:—

Mr. Brown was arguing that death-bed solicitations on the part of the priests were to be prevented, when—

Mr. Cartier interrupted him, saying he was insulting the members who professed the Roman Catholic religion.

Mr. Brown denied the imputation.

Mr. Cartier—Yes, yes, you do.

Mr. Brown—The Hon. Atty-General East, with studious discourtesy, interrupts hon. members on this side of the House, screeching at the top of his disagreeable voice as loudly as he can.

Mr. Cartier—If there is one member of this House whose conduct is marked by an absence of courtesy, of respect for the feelings of others especially Catholics, it is the hon. gentleman himself. When I saw him making a lecture and insulting my co-religionists, under the hypocritical pretence of depriving this institution of the power to receive bequests, what could I do but interrupt him? I am not a man to be insulted on the floor of this House. My voice is perhaps too loud to please the hon. gentleman—he can't put it down; and, though I am a smaller man, physically, than the hon. member, I might meet him either here or elsewhere. As for his taunts, I regard them not: he has a moral and physical defect; he can never keep within the truth.

Mr. Foley—That's courteous!

Mr. Cartier—I don't intend to be polite to the hon. gentleman; he doesn't deserve it.

Amongst the other speakers who took part in the debate upon the Catholic side, we must mention Mr. Dunkin, Mr. McGee, Mr. Alley, M. Laberge, and M. Thibaudeau; whilst on the other side, we must notice M. M. Brown, Gowan the Orangeman, Ferris, Mowatt, Dorion, and Dr. O'Connor. That M. Dorion should have spoken and voted against Catholic interests, and with Mr. G. Brown and the Orangemen, has indeed surprised and pained us; but the fact will we hope be carefully treasured up, and duly brought forth, when next again he shall present himself before the Catholic electors of Montreal as a candidate for their suffrages.

After a lengthy debate, the House divided; when there appeared—in favour of retaining the restrictive clauses, 35; against retaining them, 42. Thus the principle was settled; and on another debate on the 8th instant, the St. Bridget's Bill, free from the obnoxious and insulting clauses, was carried through its third reading. It now remains for us to secure against all future assaults the integrity of our Charitable Institutions; and to return our thanks to those to whom we owe the late victory. Amongst these, though M. M. Alley, Thibaudeau, and others deserve to be honorably mentioned, it would, we repeat, be unjust to refrain from assigning a prominent place to M. Cartier; and we rejoice heartily that, for once, he has put in our power, as a Catholic journalist, to speak of his political conduct in terms of unqualified approbation. For our opinion of that conduct, for our good will, or our hostility, he may care but little; but of the former we can assure him so long as he adheres to the honorable policy that he pursued on the 6th instant; whilst we believe that we may add that many Catholics who have long stood aloof from him, because of his unworthy concessions to Protestant fanaticism, and his adverse votes upon questions affecting Catholic interests, would promptly and cheerfully rally round his standard, and give him their best support; would he in return but give them assurance that, for the future, he would always, and against all opponents, approve himself the stern and uncompromising champion of our schools, of our charitable and our religious institutions. Upon these terms, but upon these terms only, we should be ready as Catholics to forgive and forget his past; and to give him for the future our best support, poor and humble though that support may be.

On Monday, 11th inst., an interesting discussion arose in the Legislative Assembly on the McLean "License to commit Adultery Bill."—Mr. Morrison moved that the Bill be put first on the order of the day for Wednesday following.

This was opposed by M. Cartier; after whom Mr. J. S. McDonald called upon the Government to explain why they had not laid before the House a dispatch from the Imperial Government to the different Colonial Legislatures on the subject of Divorce. This dispatch which has already been laid before the Nova Scotian Legislature, urges upon the dependencies of Great Britain, the importance of establishing uniformity of Legislation upon the subject of the sexual unions of Her Majesty's subjects throughout all parts of Her dominions; and was accompanied with a copy of the filthy English "Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act," whose anti-Christian provisions, it was hoped, would shortly be adopted in Canada.

To Mr. J. S. McDonald's question, Attorney-General Macdonald replied that the Government had made up their minds to take no action upon the dispatch alluded to, and would not, therefore, bring it down unless it was moved for. After a somewhat desultory debate Mr. Morrison's motion was negatived by a Majority of 51 against 36. Then Mr. J. S. McDonald, seconded, of course, by Mr. George Brown, moved for the production of the dispatch before referred to; and this motion was ultimately agreed to.

On the same evening, some amusement was given to the House by an announcement from the Speaker that several members were grievously tormented with *dans*; and had actually been subjected to the outrage of having a process served upon them by bailiffs in the lobby of the House. He, the Speaker, had given instructions that Hon. members who could not pay their debts, or meet their trifling engagements with their respective washerwomen, should not be harassed again in a similar manner, and in the lobbies of the Legislature; and he, therefore, appealed to the House to support him in the course he had taken. Mr. Foley suggested that it would be better to give orders that Hon. members should not be waylaid by *dans* "in any other place either"—a suggestion which was received with much laughter. It is really too bad, considering the high wages that we are obliged to pay our representatives, that they cannot keep out of debt; and that their creditors are obliged to pursue them, with their "small accounts," even within the sacred precincts of the House of Assembly! Would it not be well to pass a Bill for the relief of insolvent Members of Parliament? with a special clause restricting them to a certain number of glasses of brandy and water, and "*gin-slings*" *per diem*, during the course of the Session!—We throw this out merely as a hint to the advocates of a "*Maine Law*;" for if there was less liquor consumed by our legislators, there would, we are sure, be also much less talk, and a great deal more work. What says the *Montreal Witness* to our suggestion?

M. CHINIQUY.—It is with sincere pain that we find ourselves compelled to notice the ravings and misrepresentations which, through the friendly columns of the Protestant press, the unhappy man, and degraded priest, M. Chiniquy, has given to the world, as the explanation of the causes of his deplorable fall, and apostacy from that Church to which, at his ordination, he had vowed obedience. Our present course is, however, forced upon us; and though we would gladly have left the fallen priest undisturbed; though as Catholics we would desire none to notice him, save in their prayers to God for his conversion, he himself has, by the unenviable notoriety which, after much labor and more falsehood, he has obtained, forced us to enter upon a discussion, which, for his own sake, for the sake of decency, morality, and Christian charity, we would, if possible, have still avoided. But as silence might be misconstrued; as M. Chiniquy seems determined not to profit by the indulgence and great tenderness that has been extended to him by his Ecclesiastical superiors; and as the *locus penitentiae* which in hopes of his conversion, they have still left open to him, has been obstinately refused, it is almost time that truth should be told, and the guilty unmasked.

Why has M. Chiniquy left the Church, and abjured the Catholic faith? is a question we often hear asked. He would fain have us believe that it was because of a pecuniary dispute with the Bishop of Chicago; arising out of some dealings with respect to Church property in the Diocese of that venerable Prelate. But this reason, prominently assigned by M. Chiniquy himself, is not only notoriously inadequate for a change of faith, but is also utterly false. We say it advisedly, and with full knowledge of the facts; that it was not because of any dispute about the disposal or ownership of Church property that M. Chiniquy was suspended from the exercise of his functions as Priest. He well knows the true reasons for his suspension; and though he is at full liberty to make those reasons public, he will, we know, take precious good care for his own sake to keep them secret.

Again, we often hear it asked: How came it, that this same M. Chiniquy, who in Canada had earned such a reputation as a preacher of temperance, and who apparently had done so much good amongst his fellow-countrymen, was so quietly allowed by his Canadian Ecclesiastical

superiors to abandon the field of his labors? and that not an effort was made to induce him to remain in Canada, where the need of a zealous Apostle of Temperance was so strongly felt?—There were, we can assure our readers, many and good reasons, why his Ecclesiastical superiors in Canada were glad to get rid of him quietly; in the hopes that, change of scene, removal from the immediate occasion of fall, and the prayers of the Church, might yet avail to produce in him repentance, an amendment of life, and moral reformation. Alas! in this pious wish they have been bitterly disappointed; their tenderness towards him has but encouraged him to pursue his bad career, and to malign those who had mercifully refrained from exposing him to the world. Whilst the same reasons that caused his unregretted departure from Canada, at length compelled the Bishop of Chicago to proceed to the strong measures against him, which have been so falsely commented upon in the columns of the Canadian Protestant press. This we say, not in anger, nor in bitterness of spirit against M. Chiniquy.—We remember that, fallen and degraded as he now is, upon him has been imprinted the indelible character of Priest of the Most High God; of the Minister of Him Who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live; and remembering this, it is in sorrow, rather than in anger, that we record his fall; and with the sole object of disabusing the public mind of those prejudices with which, through his lectures and published letters, he has sought to abuse it. Our object in *fine*, in treating of the subject is strictly defensive, and not offensive.

Two main reasons are assigned by M. Chiniquy for his quarrel with the Bishop of Chicago; which quarrel again M. Chiniquy wishes us to believe was the cause of his suspension; whilst that suspension from the exercise of his spiritual functions, was he pretends, the immediate cause of his renunciation of the Catholic faith, and his profession of Protestantism. In all this we need hardly add there is scarcely one word of truth.

It is true, indeed, that the Bishop of Chicago did transfer the property in a certain church from the hands of a French Canadian, to those of an Irish Catholic congregation; but M. Chiniquy forgets, or finds it more convenient to suppress, the fact that the property in question was deeply indebted, and mortgaged; that the Bishop offered every opportunity to the French Canadians to raise amongst themselves the sum necessary to redeem it from its encumbrances; that the latter did not, or would not, avail themselves of those opportunities; that in consequence the Bishop was at last reluctantly compelled to interfere; and that it was under these circumstances that the transfer of property complained of as an act of injustice on the part of the Bishop of Chicago, took place.

Again: M. Chiniquy complains that the same Bishop commanded him to give up his—M. Chiniquy's—right to certain property at St. Anne's; that upon his refusal the Bishop sent for, and suspended him; and that upon his refusal to yield to the sentence of suspension, the Bishop proceeded to excommunicate him. Here again there is a complicated tissue of falsehoods.

In the first place, the entire property in question was the exclusive property of the Bishop of Chicago; having been formally conveyed by deed, in trust for the use and interests of the congregation, to the predecessor of the Prelate with whom M. Chiniquy pretends to have had the dispute. Indeed, had there been any valid grounds, or semblance even of grounds, for impugning the Bishop's title, is it probable that M. Chiniquy would not have enforced, or attempted to enforce, his claims to the property in question before the legal tribunals of a country whose people and rulers are certainly not obnoxious to the charge of encouraging the pretensions, or of straining the law in favor of the authority, of Romish Bishops? We beg of our Protestant readers to give this consideration its due weight.

In the second place, and we say it advisedly, it was not because of any quarrel arising out of the Church property at St. Anne's, that M. Chiniquy was suspended from the exercise, in that mission, of his priestly functions. He was suspended for entirely different reasons; for reasons seriously affecting M. Chiniquy's moral character; for reasons which were fully stated to him by the Bishop, and which had not the *slightest* reference to Church property. The Bishop wished to remove him from St. Anne's for reasons analogous to those which induced the Bishops of Canada to part with him. The intentions of that Prelate being—to deliver M. Chiniquy from the immediate temptation to which at St. Anne's the latter was exposed—and to give him an opportunity during a "*Spiritual Retreat*" with the Jesuit Fathers at St. Louis, to repent, through the great mercies of God, of his former sins, and to commence a new life; in which case, it was further the intention of the said Bishop to raise his suspension, and to place M. Chiniquy in a new Mission; where under fresh auspices, removed from old associates, and the immediate causes of his fall remote—he might yet, by a life of holiness and sincere penitence, atone in some measure for his conduct at St. Anne's.—

These his intentions, the Bishop imparted to M. Chiniquy himself; giving the latter full permission to make public the real grounds of his suspension. Of that permission, from that day to this, M. Chiniquy has not seen fit to avail himself.

The subsequent proceedings against M. Chiniquy were rendered inevitable by his contemptuous disregard of his Bishop's sentence of suspension; by his open and ostentatious violation of all Church discipline; and by the sacrilegious obstinacy in which he persisted, in spite of his well-merited suspension, in celebrating the sacred mysteries.

With this plain statement of facts, which M. Chiniquy knows to be true, we take our leave of a very painful subject; in the hopes that M. Chiniquy will see that *silence* is his wisest policy; and that he will spare us and himself, the necessity of raising still higher the curtain which conceals his true character from the world.

THE MONTREAL "PILOT" AND CHRISTIAN MATRIMONY.—We have, we hope, convinced our cotemporary that Protestant marriages are at present looked upon by the Catholic Church and all her children, as holy and honorable, because Christian and indissoluble unions. When however, the *Pilot* shall have established his thesis—that the sexual unions of Protestants are mere civil contracts, "*and nothing more*;" when he shall have proved that into those unions a religious and Christian, as distinguished from a mere civil or secular, element does not enter, he will have succeeded in convincing us that there is nothing more "holy" about a Protestant marriage, than there is in a contract for the delivery of a specified quantity of pork; and when he shall have succeeded in establishing his other thesis, that the marriages of Protestants may, upon any pretence whatsoever, be dissolved by any tribunal upon earth—then we shall of course cease to look upon the sexual unions of Protestants as a whit more "honorable" than concubinage. Until then, however, our cotemporary must excuse us if we treat the marriages of our Protestant brethren as both "holy" and "honorable"—as Christian, and therefore as something more than mere civil contracts; and as indissoluble by man, because made by God.

In point of fact the questions—Are the sexual unions of baptized persons civil contracts, "*and nothing more*?" as the *Pilot* asserts; or are they also religious, as distinguished from mere civil contracts? as the Catholic Church has always taught—embrace all the points at issue betwixt Catholics and Protestants as to the nature, effects and force of the matrimonial contract itself. For, if those unions be but civil contracts "*and nothing more*;" and as it is of the essence of all mere civil contracts, that their terms may be modified, or even annulled by the mutual consent of the contracting parties; it is a self-evident proposition that, if marriage be no more than what the *Pilot* pretends it is, the parties to that contract have the right, without the intervention of any third party, to dissolve at pleasure their unions, and to enter into new contracts. But, on the other hand, if, as the Church teaches, marriage is a religious as well as a civil contract; if it be a Divine Ordinance—in a higher sense than a contract for Pork is a Divine Ordinance—it is equally evident that the Civil Magistrate has no absolute jurisdiction therein; and that his authority, though it may be sufficient to invalidate a mere civil, can have no effect whatever upon a religious, or spiritual, contract. The main question at issue therefore resolves itself into this—Is marriage a Divine Ordinance, and therefore beyond the reach of the mere civil magistrate? or is it a mere civil contract, "*and nothing more*," over which he has legitimate jurisdiction?

And here we would pause to ask the *Pilot* how to reconcile his thesis that marriage is "*nothing more*" than a civil contract, with the fact which we suppose he will admit, that God Himself has denounced its violation as a special crime? If, we say, marriage be "*nothing more*" than a civil contract, then adultery is but a breach of a mere civil contract; and is, *morally*, indistinguishable from a breach of a contract for the delivery, at a stated period, of a certain amount of dry goods; or from the breach of a contract entered into by a railway contractor for completing a specified amount of road within a specified time. He, however, Who from the thunders of Sinai proclaimed the Divine Law—"Thou shalt not kill"—in like manner, and at the same time, issued His command—"Thou shalt not commit adultery." How then, upon the *Pilot's* hypothesis that marriage is a civil contract, "*and nothing more*," are we to account for the fact that God Himself singled out the breach of this mere civil contract, as the subject of special denunciation?

And again would we request our cotemporary to explain wherein, upon his hypothesis, concubinage differs *morally* from marriage; or wherein a mistress *morally* differs from a wife. For if in marriage there be "*nothing more*" than a civil contract; and since the arrangement in virtue of which and for a pecuniary consideration, a woman contracts to live for a specified time as a man's mistress is also a "*civil*" or more secular con-