

# The True Witness

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY

The True Witness Printing & Publishing Co.,  
(LIMITED)

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

J. K. FORAN, LIT. D., LL.B., EDITOR.

## SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

City ..... \$1.50  
Country..... 1.00  
If not paid in advance, \$1.50 (Country)  
and \$2 (City) will be charged.  
Subscribers, Newfoundland, \$1.50 a  
year in advance.

All business communications to be  
addressed to

C. A. McDONNELL,  
Managing Director,  
THE TRUE WITNESS P. & F. Co.



MONTREAL, WEDNESDAY, AUG. 1, 1884.

## IT IS NOT RIGHT.

Before the closing of the recent session of the Federal Parliament the famous Dillon divorce case, to which we referred in a recent editorial, was carried through. Commenting thereon the Hamilton Herald says:

"The Dillon divorce case has worried its way through the House at last, despite the opposition to it on the ground of the religion of the parties, and Dillon is now free to hunt up another wife if he wants to. The whole affair forms a strong argument in favor of the establishment of a divorce court in Canada. Divorce is either right or wrong. If it is wrong it ought to be done away with altogether. If right, the granting of decrees should be through the proper legal channels."

We hold, as we have already clearly proven, that, religiously, morally and socially, divorce is not right. It would be too long to enter into all the arguments in support of our contention; but to any reasoning and Christian mind they are self-evident. As far as religion is concerned, if divorce were allowed, it would simply be the permitting of man to overrule the law of God; it would be the raising of a human power above that of the Divine Founder of Christianity. If Christ most emphatically laid down the law that no man should or could put asunder that which the Church joined together, that death alone can sever the marriage-tie, then upon what ground can we contend that a human tribunal, the offspring of human authority, the creature of human power, has the right to divide the two whom the Church united? The admission of divorce, in any form, is a direct attack upon the very fundamental principles of solid religion. The decree of divorce opens the door to the destruction of a holy sacrament, and from a religious standpoint, no Christian denomination can consistently argue in its favor. And yet of all the branches or fragments of Christianity, not one—save the Anglican to a certain degree—has ever opposed this iniquity. They preach morality and they foster the viper that stings it to death. The Catholic Church—and she alone—has been uncompromising upon this great question; and thanks to her for the sacredness of the marriage state even in our day.

Morally speaking divorce is a crying wrong. It is the fruitful mother of a thousand and one crimes against that grand morality which should be the standard of a Christian life. Admit the right of divorce and you tear away every security in married life. It is this course that caused the great orator, Charles Phillips, to cry out: "of all the

gifts we most reverence, and of all the bounties we most revere, none surpass the nuptial contract; it the gift of heaven, the charm of earth, the joy of the present, the promise of the future, the innocence of enjoyment, the sanctity of passion, the sacrament of love; the slender curtain that shades its sanctuary has for its purity the whiteness of the mountain snow and for its protection the texture of the mountain adamant." It is that sanctuary that is invaded by the phantom of divorce, and that grand deity is torn from its shrine by the polluted hands of the kindless, prayerless, remorseless libertinage of our age. Morally considered there is not, and there cannot be a single solid argument adduced to support the contentions of the man who votes for the granting of a divorce. He—no matter what his station—is flying in the face of God, and is trampling upon the most glorious safeguard of the domestic world.

Then taking it from the social standpoint, what a train of horrors unfold themselves before us, as they move in rapid procession in the wake of this monster. Children parentless, offspring condemned to an undeserved disgrace, homes shattered, firesides deserted, peace crushed, hopes frustrated, misery created, and eventually the spirit of a useless remorse conjured up to haunt an evening of life that God intended should be pure, cloudless and resplendent. What wrong have those innocent ones done that they and their descendants—simply for the satisfaction of a parent's whims, passions or unruly desires—should eke out an existence beneath the shadow of a *bar sinister*? The curse of social life is the want of fidelity to the marriage vow, the bane of the future is the laxity that we perceive in the advent of divorce. In our day that pure, honest, noble, sociable life seems to be sinking beneath the horizon of the past. The fire burns no longer on the domestic hearth-stone; the railway-carriage, the ocean steamer, the grand hotel, are substituted for the home, and the world rushes on with electric speed, while the rising generation is allowed to cling as best it can to the back of the last car—and if it cannot keep its hold it has only to fall upon the track and be crushed by the next train.

But the organ from which we first quoted seems to question whether divorce is right or wrong. We say it is wrong and we agree with our contemporary that it should be done away with altogether. "If it is right, the granting of divorces should be through the proper legal channels." Pray what are the proper legal channels? A law is made by a legislative body; that body alone has the legal right to change, amend or abolish that law. An agreement is made between two parties; the same two parties alone have the right to discontinue that agreement. A tribunal renders a judgement; only a superior tribunal of the same class has the power to alter that judgment. A magistrate has perfect jurisdiction over certain cases, but he cannot on that account take cognizance of those that belong to a superior court. A judge of the superior court enjoys all the powers, rights, status and privilege of a judge; but he is not thereby created a judge with jurisdiction in criminal matters. In what, and how do all these examples apply? It is very simple.

God—Christ—the Founder of Christianity, has given all power in matters affecting the principles and morals of religion to His Church; under the heading of a Divine law comes the question of the inviolability of marriage. No matter how powerful the human legislative body may be, no matter how exalted

the judge, no matter how great his jurisdiction, yet by the very nature of things divine and human, there is no power, no legal counsels, by which or through which divorces can be legitimately granted. This we say without fear of reasonable contradiction; and this we are prepared to maintain against all comers.

## ON THE SCHOOL QUESTION.

The question of the Catholic School Commissioners appointments by the Provincial Government, has reached such a stage that it is absolutely necessary that we should once more define our position. Probably when, some weeks ago, we warned the authorities in Quebec of what was coming, they concluded that either we did not mean what we said or else that the whole matter would be a mere flash in the pan. Had they been aware of the effect our protest was going to create perhaps—supposing them to have some respect for their positions—they would have taken the question up in a more serious, a more patriotic and a more popular manner. But having considered it their duty to act otherwise, we felt it our imperative duty to check them. We purpose now defining clearly and exactly our attitude, and we intend to preserve that stand through all dangers and against all opposition.

In glancing over the articles of La Minerve and the Gazette, one would be led to suppose that we were making a deliberate attack upon the hierarchy. To read the comments in the different sections of the press such a confusion of views must arise that even the most expert politician would be tangled in a maze of contradictions. There are three different ways in which the question may be viewed—that is to say when studied from the different standpoints of the various exponents of public opinion—and yet not one of the three is correct.

We do not blame the Government organs—like La Minerve and the Gazette—for taking up the cudgels for their masters. It is their bread and butter that they have in view: they get the bread from Ottawa and the butter from Quebec—with now and again a little maple sugar added on to sweeten the repast. It is not to their criticisms that we object, rather is it to their misapprehensions of the case. As we said the question may be taken from three different standpoints. Firstly, as a personal question, between the ex-Commissioner Mr. Hart and the newly appointed Commissioner Dr. Brennan; secondly, as a political attempt to do injury to a certain party that chances to be in power; thirdly, as an effort to stir up inter-racial animosities that should never exist in our land. All of these three we repudiate most emphatically and we purpose giving our reasons.

Firstly, it is by the mere accident of circumstances that Mr. Hart's and Dr. Brennan's names are before the public in connection with this matter. No matter who the individuals might be who occupied the respective positions of ex-commissioner and actual commissioner, under the same circumstances we would have taken the exact same stand. On Mr. Hart's side he is individually sorry to have his name used, but he accepts the situation and is not a man to flinch from duty; on Dr. Brennan's side we know that no person is more desirous that harmony should exist and that his name should not be connected with any disagreeableness, than the same gentleman. It is not a personal matter in any sense.

Secondly, it is so far from being a

political move that we have the strongest of Conservatives and the most staunch of Liberals approving, in emphatic terms, of the course we have taken. We have no quarrel with the political policies of one party or the other; we are dealing with a special action on the part of the men who happen to be actually in power.

Thirdly, it is not an attempt to create ill-feelings between one section of the community and another. If it were such a spirit that animated us we would never have penned the articles that appeared in our columns, in recent issues of our paper, on the grand subject of the French Canadian rights and privileges. Let us dismiss these three false ideas and at the same time dismiss the meaningless and aimless articles of our friends, La Minerve and the Gazette. We wish to come down to the real question at issue. We desire to rise above any petty sentimentality, political aspirations, or individual ambitions. Here is a battle that must be fought, and fought on the broad field of a Canadian nationality; had it been settled a quarter of a century ago we of this generation would not be obliged to take it up and carry it on. This is a land into which different races have poured, and still pour, their streams of life; here they must ultimately blend in the grand ocean of a Canadian nationhood. But before these different elements can harmoniously and forever combine, it is absolutely necessary that each one should know and feel what are the privileges and rights reserved for its enjoyment. We don't wish to go on, from one decade to another, from one generation to the next, eternally crying out, "this is the right of a French Canadian," "that is the claim of a Protestant," "the other is the privilege of an Irishman." As long as we thus continue we will simply be, playing at nation-building and while brandishing the fragments of a Canadian nationality against each other we will be bringing ruin upon the prospects of our future. Let it once and for all be defined what the status of each race and each creed exactly is, and then we can go on—cutting our cloth accordingly—without a single discordant note in the chorus of our prosperity. Our time will be spent in aiding instead of struggling to shoulder each other out of the way; it will no longer be a scramble for the scattered apples, it will be a joint and sensible labor in the grand orchard of our fruitful prospects. High above all personal, all individual, all political aims do we seek to rise; high above the din and clash of contending parties do we wish to soar. Let the men who are the mere representatives of a narrow political sentiment or ideal wrestle for power; if they are good men, it matters little which succeeds, if they are not good men, the difference is still less. What we aim at is the laying broad, solid and immutable of the foundation stones of our Canadian nationhood. Let the superstructure be of whatever design or architecture that may please the age that will enjoy it. And unless each great corner stone of a nationality is set in its proper place there will ever be a danger of the whole edifice crumbling.

In other words, we have taken advantage of this act of injustice to a great and important factor in our population to bring the powers that be to time, to call upon them to recognize the consecrated rights of a section of the community, and to demand that they define for all time what are the rights and just claims of that body of people. If we—as Irish Catholics—have no special rights, the sooner we are told so the better; if we have any, we want to know what they are; and knowing what they are we