

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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THE TRUE WITNESS
AND
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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 1850.

TO OUR CATHOLIC FELLOW-CITIZENS OF CANADA.

It has often been the subject of wondering remark, to many of sincere regret, that, whilst our Protestant fellow-citizens, of almost every denomination, have each their avowed organ, through which they can express their wants and feelings, and advocate each their own peculiar views of what they consider truth, the Catholics alone, that is, that numerous portion of the community, who, professing the Catholic faith, speak the English language, should not possess, throughout the entire Province, a single publication, in the columns of which they can give utterance to their indignant protest, against the illiberal, and often libellous charges with which they stand accused. That, whilst every recurring week brings back the same stereotyped calumnies, and blasphemous mockery, of all that as Catholics we love, of all that as members of Christ's Church we esteem most sacred, not one voice should be raised in defence of the teaching of our holy religion.

As men, as citizens, we are insulted by the meditated invasion upon the sacred rights of property, by the cry raised against our religious establishments, and the property of the Clergy; by the cry raised for their destruction; not because it is even pretended that the funds created by the farseeing piety of former generations have been wasted, or misapplied; not because our religious establishments have been found, by experience, impotent for good, or productive of evil, but because of their very efficacy, but because of the living testimony that they bear to the unity of the true Church of Christ.

As intelligent beings, we are insulted by the taunts of mental blindness, of bigotry, and of superstition;—of mental blindness, because, in our researches after truth, we refuse to be guided by the new light of the conventicle;—of bigotry, because, believing in the unity of truth, we can recognise no Church of God save one;—of superstition, because we submit our reason to the teaching of that Church, and are content to adore, where we cannot comprehend.

As Christians, our feelings are continually outraged, by the foul charge of idolatry, whilst the most solemn offices of our holy religion, are made the subjects of the scorner's unhalloved mirth.

And, if ever mindful of the precepts of our Divine Master, "not to render railing for railing," we have long borne all this in silence, could we hope, by patience, and calm endurance, to disarm, or weary out the malice of our adversaries, we yet could bear. For we have no wish to enter upon a religious newspaper controversy, far less do we desire to heap abuse upon our separated brethren, because of the difference of our respective creeds, or to cast back upon them some portion of the dirt with which they have so long bespattered us. But even patience may be taxed beyond the power of endurance; a longer silence be mistaken for an inability to reply, and a continued refusal to plead to the indictment, might seem to authorise the finding of a verdict of guilty against us.

And, therefore, with the blessing of God, we will reply; not to offend others, but to defend ourselves.

We will endeavour to shew that we are not necessarily fools, because we are Catholics; that humble faith is no more the fruit of ignorance, than infidelity is the sign of wisdom; that we are not idolaters, because we worship, as of old, the martyrs worshipped; that we do not dishonour God, because we honour His saints; and that we are not wanting in love and adoration to Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, because we also offer the homage of our love and veneration to His blessed Mother.

We will endeavour to shew cause why it is not expedient to violate treaties, to infringe upon the sacred rights of property, to destroy the establishments for educational purposes, and to annihilate the only provision existing in this country for the relief of the poor and needy.

And, by the help of God, we will no longer tamely submit to have our religion reviled—our holy things profaned—our clergy insulted—and the meek inmates of our religious communities exposed to the ribald taunts, and cowardly insinuations of the infidel or the fanatic.

We will endeavour to shew, that it is owing to these much abused institutions, and to them alone, that this country is not, like Protestant England, burdened with a daily increasing mass of pauperism, and its hideous attendant crime;—that these establishments offer the only effectual provision for the suffering members of the community. And whilst gratefully acknowledging the benefits we derive from the equitable administration of the laws under which we have the happiness to live, we will still contend, that it is chiefly owing to the blessing of God upon the teaching of the Clergy, that peace and order, religion and morality, continue to flourish in this country, to a degree unknown in others, blessed perhaps, with a more fertile soil, a more genial climate, and more richly endowed with the elements of a material prosperity.

And, at the same time, we will always endeavour to avoid giving any just cause of offence to others. In

as far as in us lies, we will ever endeavour to maintain peace and charity with all men; and in any disputes, in which we may happen to be involved, if we cannot boast of the wisdom of the serpent, we will at least try to emulate the gentle meekness of the dove.

With these sentiments, and for the purpose of carrying into effect the above-mentioned objects, it is proposed, if the necessary encouragement can be obtained, to start a Weekly Paper, to be edited at Montreal, and entitled "THE TRUE WITNESS."

Although the "True Witness" will be essentially a religious publication, it is not intended that it should be so exclusively. Whilst no articles, inoffensive to true religion, sound morality, or to Christian charity, will be excluded from its columns, yet, as its primary object is avowedly religious, the greater part of its pages will be devoted to topics connected with religion.

Not indeed to the discussion of abstruse points of Catholic theology, or to treatises upon the incomprehensible mysteries of our faith,—the love and condescension of God towards man, as manifested in the Incarnation and Real Presence in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar,—His mysterious nature revealed to us, and by us worshipped in Unity of essence, and Trinity of persons, are topics too vast, too holy to be lightly treated of in the fleeting columns of a weekly periodical, too awful and sacred to be irreverently mixed up with accidents and offences, slipping intelligence and police reports.

But, to explain what are the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and what her teaching to her children,—to declare what as Catholics we hold, and what we reject,—to repel the charges of idolatry, and of superstition, brought against us—these will be our objects, these the end of all our efforts.

Religious intelligence from Rome, from France, Great Britain, Ireland and the United States, gladdening the heart of the reader with the prospect of the increase and continual triumph of our holy faith. Extracts from the writings of Catholic Divines—translations of interesting passages from the early Fathers—a full account of the toils and victories of those glorious Athletes of the Faith, who, for the love of Christ, devote themselves to the conversion of the heathen, a record of all the ecclesiastical changes, promotions, and conferments; together with a detail of the proceedings of the different branches of that generous society of temperance, will principally compose the religious matter which it is proposed to lay before the public.

Catholicity is of no nation, of no particular shade of politics. The "True Witness" therefore will not be a political paper, in the ordinary acceptance of the term. Confining ourselves to the discussion of those measures, the effects of which may be advantageous, or prejudicial to the moral and religious well-being of the community—the acts, and not the persons of the members of the Ministry, will alone form the subjects of our censures or of our praise. Ardently attached ourselves to the land which gave us birth, we cannot but admire the love of country in others, and the respect which we would demand for our own nationality, will be a pledge for the respect with which we will ever treat the laws and language of those whose religion is also our religion.

But if sparing of politics of our own, we will endeavour to make amends by giving copious extracts from other periodical publications, both of Europe and of the United States. These will appear transferred to our pages, without note or comment, without any expression of approval or of blame.

The condition of Ireland must ever be a subject of the deepest interest to all Catholics, especially to those who speak the English language. And as we look for support, in a great measure, to the generous efforts of our Irish brethren, it is but fair that a very considerable portion of the political intelligence thus extracted, should be of a nature to interest them; it is therefore proposed to borrow largely from the columns of the Irish papers.

Translations from, and notices of, foreign authors, together with extracts from the more amusing portions of the light literature of the day, will here also find their allotted place.

Arrangements will be made, so that a full report of the proceedings of the Provincial Parliament, together with the latest intelligence from Europe, the United States, and all parts of the Province, may be constantly laid before our readers.

The merchant, the man of business, will here also find a regular account of the state of the Markets, domestic and foreign; and we trust, that by means of a respectable circulation in the rural districts, we may merit and obtain some share of their advertising favours.

It is intended that the "True Witness" shall be published of the same size and form as the other weekly papers of this Country, or the United States. The terms will be Two Dollars and a Half per annum, payable in advance, to our country subscribers, and Three Dollars to those in town. Advertisements will be inserted upon the usual terms.

The "True Witness" will be conducted and edited by Laymen, who alone will be responsible for every line and word of every article that it may contain. Whilst on the one hand, no articles of a purely religious or dogmatic character will be submitted to the public, without having been previously subjected to an Ecclesiastical censorship, so that our readers may be effectually secured against the danger of having heretical propositions laid before them, and have a sure guarantee as to the orthodoxy of our matter. So, on the other hand, if in the manner of treating any subject, harsh or unseemly expressions should occur, as such through inadvertence or momentary irritation may occur; then, be it clearly understood, that the blame, whole, and undivided thereof, must rest upon the shoulders of the Laymen, by whom the paper will be avowedly conducted.

And now we trust we have sufficiently explained our objects, and the means by which we hope to obtain that support and encouragement which are necessary to ensure success; and, therefore, would we call upon the Catholics of Canada, whose religion is dear unto them, to assist us with their literary and pecuniary contributions.

Especially, would we call upon our Irish brethren for countenance and support—by the love they bear to their own Green Isle, and to their Ancestral Faith—by the memory of the trials and persecutions they so oft have borne in the cause of truth. We would implore them to come forward now, and prove, that here, in Canada, as in Ireland, and elsewhere, they are ever ready to do battle for their Church; always prepared to give every man a reason for the faith that is in them.

Respectfully, would we solicit the patronage and encouragement of our Ecclesiastical superiors—the

benediction of our Bishops—the prayers and good offices of all the Clergy—their approval when right, their reproof and correction when in error—the benefit of their paternal admonitions and ghostly counsels, at all times. And, above all, would we humbly ask the guidance and assistance of the Father of Lights; beseeching Him, from whom alone cometh every good counsel, and from whom every perfect work doth proceed; that He will deign to bless this our undertaking to the honour and glory of His name, and the good of His Church; so that from Him every work of ours may always begin, and in Him, and by Him, be happily ended. Still as Catholics, not ashamed of our religion, nor afraid of the sneers of our opponents, would be desirous to place ourselves under the powerful protection and patronage of the ever Blessed Virgin, Mother of God,—calling upon her for help, in the form of words, which the Church herself teaches:

Sancta Maria, Auxilium Christianorum, Ora pro Nobis.

Montreal, June 18, 1850.

We reproduce to-day, the Address we made a few weeks ago to our Catholic fellow-citizens; as a pledge that we intend faithfully to adhere to the principles therein laid down. Now, one of the objects for which we solicited public support, was to enable us to refute the vile calumnies so often made against our Church, our Clergy, and our Religious Establishments; calumnies we firmly believe, not more offensive to us Catholics than they are to many, very many of our Protestant brethren.

To Christianlike, to gentlemanly language and arguments, will we ever oppose the language of gentlemen, and endeavour, at least, to meet argument with argument. But when we encounter abuse and Billingsgate, the abuse and Billingsgate we will not return: we shall not, certainly, be very ceremonious in our choice of terms, for we are still accustomed to call things by their right names.

There are, who, like Scrub in the play, always fancy that every one must be talking of them because they laugh constantly. Misled by their own egregious vanity, they think that they are of as much importance in the eyes of the world, as they are in their own conceit. Thus it is, that the Editor of the *Montreal Witness*, flatters himself that a Catholic paper is to be established in Canada, solely for the purpose of opposing him. "Let him not lay this flattering unction to his soul." True, we may sometimes find it necessary to contradict some of his statements. True, also, that we may occasionally indulge ourselves with a little quiet laugh at the cant of the Tabernacle, and the evangelical (which means, being interpreted, strong nasal) twang which usually accompanies its delivery. This we may do when "i'the vein," or when its suits our convenience. We make these remarks, for fear our readers should think we were paying much too high a compliment to the *Witness*, in devoting a portion of our first number to the refutation of some of the absurdities which have been vented on us for some weeks past. That the Editor of the *Witness* should hate our religion, is by no means strange, for he is ignorant of her doctrines. That he should mock at the ceremonies of the Catholic Church, is natural.

We do not suspect him of a soul capable of appreciating their poetic truth, or of comprehending their deep and earnest symbolism. His hatred or his scorn are to us indifferent;—can excite neither our surprise nor our regret. But, when, for the sake of raising a prejudice against the peaceable exercise of our legal rights, he states that upon occasion of the Catholic processions passing along the streets, members of all other religious denominations are expected to stand "cap in hand," we have a right to contradict him. When he wrote this, he must have known that it was not true,—he must have known that all that is demanded of Protestants, is, that they do not molest, or obstruct, an act of devotion, the exercise of which is guaranteed by treaty, and in which they are not expected to take any part. And here we cheerfully admit, that, thanks to the liberal and gentlemanly feeling on the part of the vast majority of our Protestant fellow-citizens, no insult, no obstruction, worth mentioning, ever takes place,—which, we suppose, the Editor of the *Witness* regrets, as he does the "silent forbearance and criminal complaisance shewn by the press towards Romanism." And we have the right to complain of the disregard for truth, of the want of every manly feeling manifested by the writer, when he presumes to speak of the Grey Nuns, those meek Sisters of Charity in such terms as these:—

"Here, towards the water, we find the stately cloisters of the Grey Nunnery, an establishment whose operation is to diminish the difficulties of seduction, and weaken or supersede the heaven-imprinted instincts of maternal love and responsibility, by providing a place where any mother may throw her child as soon as born, to be nominally taken care of, but really, in a fearful majority of instances, to be consigned to an early—a very early, grave."

No, thank God, the Editor of the *Witness* will not find many Protestants to endorse his opinions.—What matter, though we differ in our religion, sure are we, that their hearts are too honest, too generous, not to detest the spirit which dictated such a mean attack upon a few harmless women, and, as

such, entitled, if not to respect, at least to immunity from insult.—But women, whose time, whose energies, whose lives, are devoted to the relief of misery where ever found, whose

"God-like crime is to be kind."

Whose sole mission upon earth is, as far as in them lies—

"To render less, The sum of human wretchedness."

And therefore well entitled to the respect of every one who has the feelings, we do not say of a gentleman, but of a man.—And it is against these poor Nuns that the Editor of the *Witness* is not ashamed to insinuate gross negligence, if not something worse, in the management of the children committed to their charge. What shall we say to such a one as this? Let him go, himself, to the Grey Nunnery. It is open to all. Let him go and examine—convince himself of the falsity of his insinuations, and then, if there be aught of grace within him left, let him humbly ask forgiveness, not of them, for they, poor souls, cease not to pray daily for their slanderers—but of Him whose commandments he has violated, by bearing false witness against his neighbour.—And then let him thank God too, as well he may, that his slander is as impotent as it is malicious—as powerless for evil, as his approbation is worthless for good.

"Of the children left at the Grey Nunnery, the great majority come to an untimely grave." Such is the meaning of this Evangelical witness. Mark now how plain a tale will put him down. Within the last eighteen months, a period to which we have confined ourselves because unusually sickly, during a portion of which—cholera, diarrhoea, and other bowel complaints were very prevalent—there have been left at the Grey Nunnery, 171 newly born children. During the same period of time the total number of deaths amounted to 83. These children are put out at nurse, where they are left until of age to be received amongst these who are boarded in the Convent. During which time their expenses are defrayed by the Nuns. The Government has very liberally granted the sum of £250 per annum for the last four years, to assist the Nuns in their charitable enterprise. Now, for the mortality amongst the children, actually within the walls of the Convent, and let us see how far that will bear out the very Evangelical statement, that in a fearful majority of cases these children come to an early, a very early, grave. Within the last eighteen months there have been received within the Convent 82 children, from eighteen months to two years old. Amongst them, there have been 27 deaths; the remainder, 55, are alive and in good health. So much for the fearful majority of cases. We have now given the amount of mortality amongst the children under four years, the most critical period of life, and when, of course, the mortality is greatest.

We know of no statistical tables which can be relied on, as shewing the proportion of births and deaths for the city of Montreal. But we have good medical authority for stating, that amongst young children the proportion of deaths is *excessively high*. Referring to Buffon we find that during the last century the mortality amongst children under two years of age for the whole of France, was as 88 to 239. Malthus on Pop., 1st vol., p. 463, states—"one half of the infants born into the world died, in London, under three years of age; in Manchester, under five years of age; and in Stockholm and Vienna, under two years of age." Now, this was the mortality amongst the children of all classes of the community; of the rich as well as of the poor; of the healthy and chaste, as well as of the sickly and impure; the average mortality for a number of years, and not for one short period of pestilence, such as we have purposely chosen. Let us now consider who, and what the children are, which are thrown upon the hands of the Grey Nuns. Sickly fruits of debauchery are they,—often tainted with those loathsome maladies, with which an all-just God punishes, even in this world, in their own persons, and in that of their children, those who despise His holy law of Chastity.

Heirs of disease are they. Abandoned, ere well they have seen the light of day, by those from whose breasts they should draw their first and most wholesome nourishment. They are sometimes exposed for hours to the inclemency of the weather, before they are discovered, and it often happens that there is barely time to confer upon them the Sacrament of Regeneration, whereby they are made inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, ere they are summoned into the presence of Him, whose face, we trust, their angels do continually behold.

We could easily adduce good reasons to shew why the mortality amongst these infants must necessarily be greater than amongst those of the rest of the community. But the subject is rather a delicate one to discuss in the columns of a newspaper. We must content ourselves with pointing out one or two of the