

Correspondence.

Church Privileges and Annexation.

Editor ARCTURUS:

It has been suggested that, if it be true that the system which the Roman Catholic Church has forced upon Quebec, and the influence it wields in the Councils of the Dominion and of the other Provinces, is a serious detriment to the progress and good-government of Canada, a remedy would be found in the annexation of this portion of the British Empire to the great American Republic. It has even been hinted that the powerful *Mail* hopes for a disruption of the Confederation and annexation, in order that the ecclesiastical hand that lies so heavily on the young Dominion may be paralyzed.

It is extremely doubtful, however, that annexation to the United States would have the effect desired by the opponents of ecclesiastical interference in politics. If annexation did take place, Ontario and Quebec would either be one state or separate states in the Republican federation. If they were combined in one state, the troubles which the *Mail* and those who think with it fancy they see would not be removed, for the French of Quebec, the "black militia" and the "solid column" of voters, would then have an opportunity of interfering more directly, and with consolidated forces, in the affairs of Ontario. If Ontario and Quebec were separate states, this Province would not be freed from clerical influence in elections, and the minority in Quebec would still be burdened with any grievances that they now have.

It has been said that the United States would not allow a state church to exist on its territory, nor allow a foreign language to be taught in national schools. It has evidently been forgotten, however, that even after annexation had been accomplished, the State would control education, and the clergy would still be a powerful factor in the political contests in the State. The church would have the same politicians to deal with, and the same "solid column" to enforce its desires at the polls; and it is not probable that the politicians who have obeyed its commands (if they have obeyed them) in British Canada or Quebec, would revolt, or be in a better position to revolt, in American Quebec. Nor is it certain that the Republican Congress would deprive the Roman Catholic Church of its privileges in Quebec. Annexation cannot take place without the consent of the people, and the people of that Province would not give their consent unless the church's privileges were guaranteed. If Britain was willing to guarantee those privileges in order to secure Canada, would not the United States be equally willing if by so doing it could obtain possession of this magnificent territory? Besides, the United States has had within its borders for many years a Territory of Utah and the most rabid Ulster-Tory, as the *Globe* would say, would scarcely claim that the gathering of cereal contributions to the church by legal authorities, or the assistance of denominational charities by the State, was as serious a political crime or as monstrous a social evil as polygamy. Yet the United States has not shown a wonderful degree of energy in stamping out the crime of polygamy. When it has been so tardy and easy in its dealings with that great social crime, it is not so certain that United States statesmen would be eager to enter into a conflict with the Roman Catholic Church in order to curtail its privileges, or that United States politicians would not be as ready as the political leaders of Canada to advance their own interests by yielding to clerical influence. If Congress and the Church in Quebec or Canada should become embroiled in a quarrel, would all the Irish, French and other Roman Catholics throughout the United States close their ears to the appeals for assistance that would go to them from the hierarchy of the North? And would Washington, any more than Ottawa, face the storm that would arise—a storm that politicians would endeavour to manipulate to carry them into coveted offices? Annexation would cause the conflict, if there is to be one, to extend over a much larger area, and would draw into the opposing forces larger numbers, but a settlement, peaceful or otherwise, would not be brought nearer or be made easier.

If any persons have been, by inferences drawn by the *Mail* from the practice of the United States, or by the insinuations of

others, led to look upon annexation as a means to avoid a conflict or to bring about a settlement of the disputes in a manner unfavourable to the Roman Catholic Church, a consideration of the matter, or an application of the principles upon which they now argue to the changed circumstances, will, I think, convince them that they are cherishing a delusive hope. Yours, etc.,

FRANK WALL.

Poetry.

THE QUAKER'S GOLDEN WEDDING.

THE snow looks in at the window
In a bold and frolicsome way,
No lighter the new-born snow-drift
Than Ichabod's locks of gray;
Not purer the new-born snow-drift
From worldly taint and sin
Than the life of Margaret Taylor,
Ichabod's wife, hath been.

"Hither, Margaret, hie thee,
I have a thought to tell:
Nay, never mind the shutters,
The night doth please me well.
Margaret, can thee tell me
How many years it is
Since thee and I were married
On a winter's night like this?"

"Think once again, my good wife;
I knew thee would never guess—
The days go by so swiftly
That only are born to bless;
Thy mother's heart will tell thee
'Tis eight and forty years
Since our first-born came to thrill us
With tender hopes and fears.

"Yes, Margaret, thee has guessed it—
Full fifty years have sped
So silently and so softly
We scarce have felt their tread;
But, watching the gliding snow-flakes,
The hickory coals, and thee,
The memory of that evening
Comes wandering back to me.

"True, Margaret, we were happy,
Trustful, and very glad,
And prouder was I, I fear me,
Than becometh a Quaker lad.
Yet, not for the good years vanished,
If the right of choice were given,
Would I change this place, my darling,
For the pleasures of that even.

"We have had our trials, good wife,
We have shed some bitter tears,
But a sure dear Hand hath led us
Through all these precious years.
He has kept us long together,
And I've been bold to pray
That our meeting in the new land
Be a golden wedding day."

The snow looks in at the window,
And what do the snow-flakes see
But Quaker Ichabod Taylor
With Margaret on his knee?
The hickory coals in the fire-place
Sleep in their jackets white,
But the love of tried and true hearts
Steadily burns to-night.

LITERARY NOTES.

MESSRS. CHAPMAN & HALL will publish shortly a memoir of the late Charles Reade, compiled chiefly from his literary remains by his relatives, Mr. Charles L. Reade and the Rev. Compton Reade. Charles Reade's constituency is perhaps not quite so wide in America as it was a few years ago, but there are not a few who will be glad to know more of the most rugged personality who figures in the English literature of this generation.

It often happens that when a publisher is engaged upon the production of a great work occupying some years in its completion,