

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, APRIL 19, 1861.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The lull in the fury of the revolutionary storm in Italy is but the calm that often precedes the heaviest burst of the tempest. The demagogues and revolutionists are apparently but drawing their breath, and bracing their nerves for the final assault upon Rome. This assault is only delayed until the French troops shall have abandoned the city; and though no one can pretend to fathom the designs of the astute ruler of France, it would seem as if he were about to yield to the clamors of the democrats, and recall his army from Rome. He is now in a false position. He has done either too much, or too little; and so long as the iniquity which he inaugurated shall not have been consummated, his former associates, the Italian Carbonari, will not abandon that menacing attitude towards him, which was first revealed to the world by the dagger of Orsini. Louis Napoleon has done enough, and more than enough, to alienate the Conservative and Catholic party throughout Europe; but, like his prototype Pontius Pilate, until he shall have given over the Vicar of Christ to be crucified, the savage rabble raging for innocent blood, will not be thoroughly reconciled to him. Still to advance along the downward path which he has selected, seems the inevitable destiny of the Emperor: he cannot now retrace his steps, even if he would, or regain the upper air.

The Pope's Allocution has created a great sensation in France. By the anti-Catholic or Protestant section of the press, of which the *Siecle* may be looked upon as the representative, it is denounced as a declaration of war against the civilisation of the nineteenth century. By the Catholic organs it is more justly lauded as a firm but temperate vindication of the rights of the Holy See, and of the course pursued by Pius IX since his accession to the Pontifical throne. That the feeling of a large portion of the French people is with the latter, is evidenced by the success of the collection of Saint Peter's Pence, which is increasing daily. The *Times* correspondent reports the financial condition of the Roman Government as much improved. There is little of any consequence from Great Britain to chronicle; but it seems by no means unlikely that a *casus belli* will arise out of the dispute betwixt Prussia and Denmark on the Schleswig-Holstein question.

In the United States hostilities betwixt North and South have actually commenced, and Fort Sumter has been surrendered by its Governor, Major Anderson, to the Secessionists. Fortunately for the interests of humanity the conflict hitherto has been perfectly bloodless; no one has been hurt by the terrific bombardment; no one even seriously frightened. The Americans have a way of their own of waging war, of which the most prominent feature is respect for human life; and whether the bombardment was carried on with blank cartridge, or as some pretend, with pine balls painted black to look like iron, it is certain that its effects have been most innocent. We fear however that this will not last long, and that the blacks themselves may be aroused into a servile insurrection which will prove fatal alike to North and South. The President is at last determined to take active measures to coerce the seceding States; though we see not how even victory can restore the Union, or upon what theory the conquered rebellious States are thenceforward to be governed. The militia have been called out; Virginia refuses to respond to the call, and shows signs of a determination to take her place in the ranks of the Secessionists. The North will furnish readily the required quota of men, but Kentucky, it is said, will give no aid towards the subjugation of the South. All in short is confusion worse confounded, and poor Mr. Lincoln does not seem to be the right man in the right place in the present emergency.

THE GREAT FLOOD.—Since our last, Montreal has been the victim of a great and widespread calamity, unsurpassed by any that has occurred since the disastrous fire of '52. Nearly one-fourth of the City has been laid under water; an immense amount of valuable property has been destroyed or seriously damaged; and, worst of all, thousands of the poorest class of our fellow-

citizens have been the sufferers by the flood, which for extent and duration exceeds any similar occurrence in the memory of that respectable person known as "the oldest inhabitant."

On Friday and Saturday last, it rained heavily, and the thaw thence accruing sent an immense volume of water into the St. Lawrence and its tributaries. The ice on Lake St. Louis gave way, and came rushing down below the City, but unfortunately its downwards progress was arrested about Boucherville, and an immense ice dam was formed across the channel of the river. In consequence the waters began to rise on Sunday evening with great rapidity, and by ten o'clock at night had reached a perpendicular height of some twenty-five feet above their summer level. The flood spread all over the lower part of the town; Griffintown was under water; and all along Commissioner Street, and by the Custom House, all the stores and cellars in which were stored large piles of grain, flour, sugar and valuable merchandise of all descriptions, were completely flooded. In the South-western section of the City, boats, rafts, canoes, and catamarans rudely constructed from the planks of the side-walks imperfectly supplied the place of the ordinary vehicles; and in and on them were carried provisions to the poor shivering and famishing creatures whose homes had been ruthlessly taken possession of by the icy cold waters of the St. Lawrence. In the emergency, the Mayor and Corporation well fulfilled their duties.

About 2 P.M., on Monday afternoon, the cry of fire was raised, and soon it was soon discovered that the Potash Inspection Store was burning. The Fire Companies were quickly on the spot, and manfully did they exert themselves to check the progress of the flames. This, thanks to their courage and energy, was at last accomplished, but not before property, to a large amount, had been destroyed. The origin of the fire is uncertain. To add to the troubles of the day, the City was in darkness during the night, the offices of the Gas Company having been flooded.

But the chief sufferers are the poor people of Griffintown, and the adjacent suburbs. Much of their property has been destroyed, or seriously injured; their cattle, horses, and pigs have in many cases been drowned, so suddenly and unexpectedly did the waters rise on Sunday evening. As an instance, we may mention the case of the congregation of St. Stephens church (Methodist) in Griffintown. Here the usual evening Sunday services were being held, but before they were finished the waters had risen to such a height as to render egress very dangerous to strong men, and altogether impossible for women and children. In consequence, the majority had to remain inside the building all night, and were only delivered from their unpleasant position on Monday morning by means of canoes. During the entire course of the day the Grey Nunnery was flooded, and the only access to the establishment was by means of boats.

Towards dark on Monday evening, the waters commenced to subside, and continued slowly but steadily falling throughout the following day.—No efforts were spared either by the Corporation, or by private individuals, to carry food, fuel, and other succor to the residents of the flooded districts; and it is but a bare act of justice to say that upon this, as on every other occasion of great calamity with which our City has been afflicted, our Protestant fellow-citizens are prominently forward in every good work, that their charity has no limits except their means, and is distributed without distinction of race or creed.

Still much remains to be done. The misery inflicted by the flood on the poorer classes of our fellow-citizens is enormous, and calls out loudly for our most active sympathies. These, we are sure, will not be withheld; but as all isolated, or individual efforts must be unavailing, it is to be hoped that some organised system will be adopted in which all citizens can combine, and work together for one common end. Food, fuel, clothing—these are the things of which the flooded districts stand most in need, and these must be at once provided.

Beyond the City, and on the opposite side of the St. Lawrence, the inundation has inflicted great damage. Cattle have been swept away and drowned; the roads have been submerged; railway bridges have been carried off, and a great part of the level country betwixt Montreal and the Richelieu is under water. To offer any calculation of the money value of the property destroyed would be premature; we have seen it however variously estimated at from One Million to Two Millions of dollars.

REPRESENTATION BY POPULATION.—We have been asked whether we consider the "School Question," or the maintenance of Equality of Representation betwixt Upper and Lower Canada, as of primary importance to Catholics? This question seems to us ill-considered; it is like asking whether the ends, or the means to those ends, were the more important.

We look upon the settlement of the School Question of Upper Canada as an end to be obtained, and upon the maintenance of Equality

of Representation as the means necessary, or essential to the attainment of that end, because we have a moral certainty that that desirable end can be obtained only through the influence of the Catholic vote in the legislature. The whole weight of the Protestant vote, and the vote of Upper Canada is almost exclusively Protestant, will be cast in the scale against it; to increase therefore the preponderance of that vote is a sure means to render the end itself unattainable. No matter what he may say, or swear, the man who encourages the agitation for Representation by Population, that is, for increasing the relative weight of the Protestant vote in the Legislature, is opposed, or at all events indifferent, to the cause of Freedom of Education."

For whatsoever of Freedom of Education or religious liberty the Catholic minority of Upper Canada enjoy, they are indebted exclusively to the political influence of Lower Canada. We do not pretend that the Catholics of the latter have done more than their duty, or that they even done all their duty towards their persecuted brethren of the West; but the latter must also remember that, but for the Lower Canadian Catholic vote—so intense is the hostility of the "Protestant Reformers" to separate schools—those Schools would be as impossible in the Western section of the Province as they actually are in the most fanatically Protestant districts of the United States. Indeed, the one great complaint of the Protestant Reformers against us of Lower Canada is based upon the assistance by us given to the Catholic minority in their struggles against the vile yoke of State-Schoolism which George Brown and the "Protestant Reformers" have ever labored to impose upon them. Viewed simply with regard to the bearings of the question upon Catholic interests, there can be no two opinions on the respective merits of "Representation by Population" and Equality of Representation. No one can pretend that Catholic interests have anything to hope from increasing the political influence of the Protestant section of the Province; or that "Representation by Population" will prove anything but an obstacle towards effecting any real and permanent reform in the system of Protestant "State-Schoolism." If the lot of Catholics in Upper Canada be to-day in any respect superior to that of Catholics in the United States, it is due, not to the greater honesty or liberality of Upper Canadian Protestantism, but to the political influence of Catholic Lower Canada in the Legislature. By diminishing the weight of this influence, or by increasing the political influence of Protestant Upper Canada, Catholics are certain to lose much, and have no prospect of gaining anything. The fate of Catholic Separate Schools is doomed, the instant that Representation by Population becomes *in fait accompli*.

But is it right? Is it a change which the Catholics of Canada have no moral right to refuse? For if it is, no matter what its consequences, it is a change that should be made, and made immediately. "Do right, happen what may," is a rule which admits of no conceivable exception, which should never be held for one instant in abeyance.

Now we contend that, however just the principle of "Representation by Population" may be, it is a principle to which the people of Upper Canada have no right to appeal. It is a fundamental axiom in ethics, one which underlies all moral reasoning, and which cannot even be called in question without a thorough confusion of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood, of justice and injustice—that no man, that no community, can plead in his or its behalf, a principle which he or it has violated, or allowed to be violated, in his or its behalf. But the people of Upper Canada through a long course of years actively violated, and in spite of the protests of the Lower Canadians against the gross injustice thereby perpetrated, insisted through their representatives in Parliament upon the violation of, the principle of "Representation by Population," when the effect of the application of that principle would have been to give to Lower Canada, because of its far greater population and wealth, a political preponderance in the Legislature. Therefore, if truth, and justice, and right be objective and constant realities, independent of human passions and prejudices, the people of Upper Canada have not, and never can have, the right to demand the application of the principle of "Representation by Population" in their own behalf. Let us take a case precisely in point.

There can be no doubt as to the justice of the principle that, amongst partners in business, the profits of the business should be distributed in proportion to the amount of capital and labor embarked therein by the several partners, respectively. But if A and B were to enter into partnership, A furnishing two-thirds of the entire necessary capital; and if B availing himself of force or fraud, were successfully, by himself or others, to insist upon receiving one-half the profits, it is clear that the latter would have no right at any subsequent period of the partnership, and when he should have greatly enriched himself by means of his peculiar connection with A—to de-

mand that the profits of the business should be distributed upon terms different to those which he had himself insisted upon and obtained, when an equal division of the profits was in his favor. Under such circumstances A would have the right to insist that the law imposed upon him by B should still be binding upon both, although their relative conditions might have changed, and the capital invested by B in the business might be double of that invested by A. To any one whose moral sense is not thoroughly corrupted or perverted, or who is not the victim of an obliquity of moral vision, this must be as self-evident as is the proposition that things which are equal to the same are equal to one another.

Now there is not, and can never be, any difference betwixt the moral code to which individuals are subject, and that which is binding upon communities or nations. The law of right and wrong is the same, whether applied to the first or to the second; and one of the most pernicious, and yet most common errors of the day is that which distinguishes betwixt private morality, and public morality. But if we would apply to Upper and Lower Canada respectively, the same moral laws as those which we should feel ourselves bound to apply to the case above suggested of A and B, there could be no two opinions as to the right of Upper Canada to insist upon "Representation by Population;" seeing that it had previously repudiated that principle when its application would have been unfavorable to itself, and favorable to Lower Canada. The question of right, to him who believes that God has given but one law of right and wrong, and that justice is justice, and injustice, injustice, whether applied to individuals or communities—is as clear as the question of expediency must be to every one, not blinded by national and political prejudices, and not intent upon his own dirty personal ends, rather than upon the integrity of our Catholic institutions, and the preservation of our civil and religious liberties.

We conclude therefore, that it is the interest of Catholics to maintain an Equality of Representation betwixt Upper and Lower Canada, because it is only by so doing that they can maintain equality of political influence betwixt the Catholic and Protestant sections of the Canadian community. We conclude also that Catholics have the right to insist upon the maintenance of that political equality, seeing that Protestants repudiated the principle of "Representation by Population," when the application of that principle was unfavorable to their interests, and maintained the principle of "Equality of Representation" whilst their population was far inferior to that of the Catholic section of the community. We conclude therefore, in the last place from these premises—that, since it is the interest of Catholics to uphold at the present moment "Equality of Representation," and since they have the moral right to do so, it is their bounden duty so to do. If they, or any portion of them neglect this duty; the punishment will fall first and heaviest upon the Catholic minority of Upper Canada, in that they will be deprived of the little advantages which they now enjoy; thanks to the influence of the Catholic vote in the Legislature, and will be irretrievably subjected to the cruel and degrading yoke of "Protestant Ascendancy" which George Brown and the Protestant Reformers have already in anticipation placed upon their necks. A few amongst them may perhaps obtain government situations, and a slice of Ministerial pudding by siding with the natural enemies of their race and creed; but upon the moral and religious interests of the entire Catholic community, the effects of "Representation by Population" will be most pernicious, and irremediable.

We shall told by some whose passions overpower their reason, and with whom the prospects of personal political advancement are of greater weight than are the interests of their Church, and the Catholic education of their children—an extenuation of their degrading alliance with George Brown, that the Catholics of Upper Canada have but little to be thankful for to the Catholic representatives of Lower Canada; and that if the latter had but exerted themselves vigorously, as they should have done, the School Question would have been satisfactorily settled long ago. This is true, but is no reason for permanently strengthening the hands of George Brown, and his allies the "Protestant Reformers." The Catholic representatives of Lower Canada, its Ministers and public men, have been shamefully lax in the performance of their duties towards their coreligionists of the West; but this laxity had its origin, not in any ill-will towards the latter, but in timidity, but in an impotent and unmanly dread of George Brown and our "natural allies." The Lower Canadians feared, lest by too warmly espousing the cause of the Catholic minority of Upper Canada, they should intensify the hostility of the inveterate enemies of all that the majority of Lower Canada mostly cherish. Dread of the Protestant Reformers, who are the natural enemies of everybody and of everything Catholic, prevailed over every other consideration; and this, though no excuse for, is the explanation of, the disgraceful fact which the TRUE WITNESS has not been

the last to condemn and expose, and which he ceases not to deplore as one of the exciting causes of the irritation to which the Catholic portion of the body politic is at present subject.

Now if our explanation is correct, it must be evident that everything which can tend permanently to increase the political power of the Protestant Reformers, must have the effect of increasing the dread in which they are held by the Lower Canadians; and therefore of increasing the aversion of the latter to interfere in Upper Canadian questions, even when the vital interests of religion are at stake. It is from the Protestant Reformers that the opposition to Separate Schools for Catholics emanated; by the Protestant Reformers has that opposition been kept alive, stirred up and fanned into a flame; and it is therefore madness on the part of Catholics, it is but to throw fuel on the fire, to do or say anything calculated to increase the political influence of the party which has risen to power by its successful appeals to Protestant fanaticism, by its marked hostility to Catholics in general, and by its marked contempt for the Popish "Dogans" in particular. The practical result which we would draw from these considerations is this:

That it is the interest and the duty of the Catholics of Lower Canada to take an active part in all that concerns their persecuted brethren of the West; and that it is the interest and the duty of the Catholics of Upper Canada to withhold all political countenance from any man, and any party, who or which, directly or indirectly, encourages "Representation by Population."

To those of our Protestant cotemporaries who have kindly undertaken to criticise, but who have evidently not so much as glanced at, the Bishop's Pastoral against usury, we would say a few words, with the object of allaying their apprehensions, and of dissipating their objections. They need—we can assure them of it—they need be under no fears of any undue or tyrannical interference with the course of trade, or with the business affairs of the Province. The Bishop of Montreal addresses himself to the consciences of sincere Catholics; but leaves the rest of the world, with its extortioners and usurers, whether they be called Catholics or Protestants, at perfect liberty to pursue their nefarious traffic, to grind the faces of the poor, and to devour the substance of the widows and fatherless children. In spite of the earnest remonstrances of Mgr. Bourget, there will still be plenty of bad Catholics, and of sound Protestants to carry on the business of "usury," and blood-sucking, and that till the day of judgment.

Neither are there grounds for accusing the Bishop of interfering with the private pecuniary affairs of the community, or of laying additional burdens upon the consciences of his people. It must be remembered that the Bishop of Montreal does not make the law, but that he merely declares it. He tells his hearers, being Catholics,—“This is the law of the Church with regard to exacting of interest. If you would live, obey it; if you disobey it, it is at your own peril, for I have discharged my conscience, and no man can plead ignorance of the law, because of my neglect of duty.” Here is a fact which even intelligent Protestants often overlook. A Bishop, the Pope himself, has no power to annul the laws of God; and as it is God, not Pope or Bishop, who has made usury a sin, so neither Pope nor Bishop can make usury innocent, or absolve the usurer from the obligations of the divine law. As our Pastor, and divinely appointed teacher, the Bishop tell us, what is by God's law allowed, and what forbidden; exhorting us to cling to the one, and to eschew the other. He merely enlightens our consciences, but lays no fresh burdens upon them; and his Pastoral is but the torch which shows us more clearly the path in which God has enjoined us to walk.

If however it is to the Church's exposition of the divine law that our Protestant cotemporaries object, we would ask them to show upon what grounds, according to the laws of natural justice, A having lent x to B, can reclaim from the latter the restoration of anything more than, or over and above the value of, x —unless A have incurred expence, loss, or risk of loss, by his loan to B. Where there is loss, or risk of loss incurred, or where there is expence, or cessation of profit, there, and for those reasons, the Church recognises the perfect right of the lender to exact the return of an amount over and above the value of the thing lent, equivalent to the loss or expence accruing from the loan, and proportionate to the risk to which the lender is thereby exposed—and so far there can be no difference betwixt the results of Catholic theological teachings, and of Protestant politico-economic analysis. What the Protestant objector has to prove is this—that, according to natural justice, the lender who incurs by his loan neither loss nor risk of loss, neither expence nor cessation of profit, has a moral right to exact from him to whom his loan is made, anything over and above the full value of the thing lent.

Amongst men of all denominations the term "usurer" is, and ever has been, a term of re-