

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 1859.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

By the *City of Baltimore* steamer, that arrived at New York on the 1st inst., we are put in possession of a few days' later intelligence from Europe. The war-cry had it seems slightly abated, in consequence of the pacific declarations in the French Emperor's speech; yet in spite of his fair words, as his warlike preparations still continue, the panic has by no means altogether subsided. The *Times* calls attention to the fact that the great improvements which within the last three years have been made in the science of artillery, and the construction of fire-arms of all descriptions, have as completely revolutionised the art of war, as did the invention of gun-powder in Europe, and the introduction of the musket in lieu of the bows and arrows of our ancestors. The infantry soldier with the weapon now in use, can bring down his man comfortably at a range of upwards of a thousand yards; and under such circumstances, the commander of an army, and the officers of his Staff, would be sure to be picked off amongst the first. War, therefore, is a far more hazardous game now than it was of yore, especially for amateur warriors. That "villainous salt-petre" respects neither rank nor condition; and when Imperial Commanders as well as common soldiers, are alike exposed to its ravages, and can be marked out as food for powder, it is more than probable that crowned heads will not be quite so fond of playing at the royal game of war, as they used to be in those days when the bullets were almost exclusively the share of the common soldier, and the honor and other prizes of the game, fell to the lot of the leaders of the host. One thing seems certain that, just as the invention of artillery called into existence the modern system of fortification, and gave birth to the arts of attack and defence of besieged places, so the introduction of the new "armes de precision" will necessitate the adoption of a perfectly novel system of tactics in the field; and whilst awaiting the advent of the new Vauban who shall perfect and teach others this art, it is to be expected that the civilized nations of the earth will be loth to engage in hostilities.

The "Right of Search" had been the subject of an animated debate in the House of Lords; and in the Commons Mr. D'Israeli had promised a Government Reform Bill for the 28th of February. He also announced that the Government did not intend to give an unconditional guarantee to the Atlantic, or to any other Submarine Telegraph. There was an increase proposed of one million to the Naval Estimates.

There were no fresh insurrectionary movements reported from Italy. Austria was represented as willing to accept as a basis for diplomatic discussion on the Italian question, whatever might be agreed to by the Western Powers. In case of a war the Emperor Napoleon would, it was said, take the field in person. From India there was nothing of importance.

The United States journals are filled with long details of the results of recent discoveries as to the peculations and frauds perpetrated by Government officials upon the public revenues. All, from the highest to the lowest, and in every department of the State, seem implicated in these rascally transactions; and the whole appears as a pleasant practical commentary upon the blessings of the democratic form of Government.—Bad as we may be in Canada, we are still a long way behind our Republican neighbors in the arts of swindling, and of picking and stealing.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

In the Legislative Assembly on the 23d inst., Major Campbell's Bill for reducing the pay of members was brought up for its second reading. Some honorable member with remarkable disinterestedness argued that their pay should be raised from \$6 to \$8 a day; but on a division a majority of 62 to 42 were in favor of leaving things as they were, and so Major Campbell's Bill has been lost for this Session.

A lively discussion then ensued upon the order of the day for the second reading of a Bill introduced by our Orange friend, Mr. Gowan, and styled a "Bill to provide for the Registration and Inspection of certain Bodies and Associations." This Bill was in short a kind of modified "Smelling Committee Bill;" to enable

the enemies of our Conventual institutions to exercise a supervision and control over those establishments; and in fact placing all our ecclesiastical corporations under the surveillance of a commission to be named by the Governor. Mr. Langevin, seconded by Mr. Dunkin, moved the six month's hoist, the mover contending that the effect of the Bill would be to create an offensive surveillance over Convents and Nunneries. Mr. M. Thibault and Bureau also spoke warmly on the same side. Mr. Patrick remarked that the Bill could have originated only in the fertile brains of some person warmly attached to Commissionerships, and who had experienced their many blessings. M. Piche also addressed the House, indignantly hurling back the insults offered by Orangemen Gowan to the Conventual Institutions and Sisters of Charity of Lower Canada; and rebuking the timidity of the Ministry in not themselves energetically opposing the introduction of a "Smelling Committee Bill" into a Canadian Legislature. Many others spoke well and warmly upon the subject, amongst whom it would be unjust not to enumerate Mr. Foley, who declared his intention to vote against the Bill. Mr. Cartier opposed it as unnecessary, because of the existing Audit Act, and as an invasion of the chartered rights of many institutions; Mr. J. A. Macdonald and other members of the Ministry likewise spoke against the measure; which on the other hand was supported by Ferguson the Orangeman, and others of his stamp. On a division, the Bill was rejected by a large majority. Mr. Brown, however, true to his antecedents, voted with the minority in its favor.—For this session then we may consider the motion for subjecting our Sisters of Charity to the insolence, the impertinent intrusion, and lewd inspection of Orange Commissioners, as effectually disposed of.

In the Legislative Assembly on the 25th ult., there arose an important debate on the Bill for relieving a Mr. McLean from the obligations of the Christian law, with respect to his wife. The majority of the members were in favor of dispensing with the law of God in his favor, and giving him Parliamentary authority to commit adultery. Sir E. P. Tache, as reported by the *Toronto Colonist*, is represented as speaking against the proposed measure, and as saying that, as "a Roman Catholic, he did not believe that adultery was a sufficient cause to totally separate a man from his wife." The honorable member might have added that, as a Christian, he knew, with the assurance of faith, that no power on earth, that neither Queen nor Parliament, could put asunder those whom God had once joined together in holy matrimony upon any pretence whatsoever; that in spite of Acts of Parliament, the second marriages of divorced persons, during the life of their former partners were, and ever must be, infamous, because adulterous cohabitations; and that a Bill to authorize divorce a vinculo matrimonii under any circumstances, was, on the part of any earthly Legislature, a ridiculous and impertinent assumption of authority which did not belong to it; an outrage upon public decency, and tantamount to a renunciation of Christianity itself. Colonel Prince's motion was, however, carried; and it is to be feared that unless our Catholic members exert themselves a little more vigorously than it is customary with them to do, a measure pregnant with danger to the Christian institution of matrimony may yet receive a Legislative sanction.

On the same day in the Lower House, Mr. McGee presented a petition from the Catholics of Northumberland, praying that, in any amendment of the educational system of Upper Canada, the rights of those conscientiously in favor of separate schools, might be respected. Mr. White moved for leave to introduce a Bill for the incorporation of the "Independent Order of Good Templars." This motion was very properly opposed by Mr. Langevin upon the grounds that the said "Order of Good Templars" was a secret society; but in spite of his opposition and that of several other members, the Bill was introduced. An amendment upon the motion for the second reading of the same Bill was also, upon the same evening, negatived by a majority of 57 to 40. Amongst the names of the members who voted for the incorporation of this secret society, we find by referring to the division list, those of Brown and Cartier in ominous juxtaposition. Thus encouraged by the highest authorities in the State, and by men of good principles—"bons principes"—it is not to be wondered at, however much it is to be deplored, that secret societies, such as the "Frances-Freres" and others, are rapidly gaining ground in Lower Canada.—A society for whose legal recognition a Catholic can conscientiously vote, it cannot surely be wrong for a Catholic to join; and if we must believe in the honesty and "good principles" of the men who vote for the incorporation of secret societies, it is not very easy to explain how the Church that altogether condemns them, and declares all their members without exception, excommunicate, can be right. However we are aware that in the domain of politics it has become almost an axiom that of contraries both may be true; and that a man may do that in his capacity of member of the Provincial Parliament,

which he would be damned to all eternity for doing as a simple individual. We are to believe in short that in one Canadian public man there are two distinct Persons; of whom one is bound to obey the laws of God and of His Church, whilst the other has full liberty to set them at defiance. This is a pleasant creed for place-holders and place-hunters; yet we must confess that we have no warrant for holding it, either in the Scriptures, or in the Decrees of General Councils.

Petitions in favor of Freedom of Education from the Counties of Waterloo and Wentworth, were presented by Mr. McGee on the 28th ult; as was also one to the same effect from the County of Haldimand by Mr. Harcourt, who at the same time took care to announce his intention of opposing the prayer of the petitioners. On the same day, and on the motion of M. Jobin, in the Legislative Assembly, the House agreed to adopt the report of the Committee to the effect that a sum of \$2 per diem be added to the \$4 to which members were alone legally entitled.—For this shabby trick, this robbery of the public chest, the members of the Ministry voted almost to a man; whilst to their credit be it said, M. M. Dorion and McGee voted with the minority. Upon this subject we copy the following from the *Montreal Gazette*, a Ministerial organ, which in this instance does but give utterance to the general sentiments of the Canadian public:—

The Ministry were known to be opposed to the high payment, and this was announced in the *Toronto Colonist* on Monday, the day on which the report of the Contingent Committee was carried. We have not yet the explanation which Ministers have to offer for the course they took, for their change of votes, but we are inclined to think it was simply this: that they were taken by the throat—that the beggars who had determined to have the six dollars a day assumed the stand-and-deliver attitude, and told them they must allow it or go out. They would have done better to run the risk of an adverse vote and appeal to the country, so sending these men to their constituencies on the issue, at a time when the public finances are in such a suffering condition as to make energetic retrenchment necessary—to make necessary, we are told, the retrograde step of re-imposing the postage on newspapers.

There is further among the contingencies voted, a large sum for mileage—often times constructive mileage. There has been a call for a return of the sums paid to newspapers for advertising, &c., very properly made. We hope the return will be a full one. We should like, on the other hand, to see made public the sums allowed individual members for mileage during the last three or four parliaments.—We should like to see a return of all the sums which have been paid to each member of the House for all purposes and pretences whatever. At present there is no publicity, and no check whatever. The members go and tell what is due to them, and draw their money. We believe the light of a little publicity would act like a charm. Many men who would do mean things in secret, would hesitate for sheer shame of doing them in the light of day.

At Washington the details of all contingencies are put in a report, and what each man gets is printed. But if purity is exacted of members, constituents must see that they do not make corrupt demands either on their members, or through their members on Parliament. And we make an earnest appeal to the electors in the several constituencies, to look at the result of their acceptance of bribes, and of winking at and covering up bribery and corruption. The members who buy their seat in Parliament take their pay out of the public chest in various ways. The evil begins in the constituencies; so must the cure. We repeat, for the information of their constituents, the names of the men who on this second occasion went for the pickings and stealings:—

Messrs. Alley, Archambault, Baby, Beaubien, Caron, Cartier, Cimon, Coutlee, Daoust, Desaulniers, Dionne, Dubord, Perre, Fortier, Fournier, Gill, Harwood, Hebert, Jobin, Lacoste, Langevin, Attorney General Macdonald, D. A. Macdonald, McCann, McEwen, Morrison, Oulmet, Panet, Papineau, Piche, Playfair, Robinson, Rose, Rymal, Sherwood, Simard, S. Smith, Somerville, Talbot, Tasse, Thibault, and Webb.

It is indeed too bad that in the present state of our finances, and when retrenchment should be the order of the day, the guardians of the public purse should dip their fingers therein, and compel the country to pay for their eating and drinking; for their drunken bouts at taverns, their "ginslings" and "sherry-cobblers." If these gentry had a particle of honesty in their composition, they would scorn thus to appropriate to themselves the honest earnings of sober and industrious citizens; if, like the members of the House of Commons at home, they were gentlemen, they would not deign to defile themselves with the unclean thing. We do not object to pay their unavoidable travelling expenses, their board and lodging at Toronto, or their washerwomen's bills—for we would like to see even our Canadian Legislators cultivate a taste for clean linen; but we do object to having to find them in luxuries, in brandy, and tobacco, and perhaps in other pleasures of a still more doubtful character. By their mercenary conduct, however, they may be sure that they have but degraded themselves in the eyes of all honorable men; and are doing their best to make the title of M.P.P., a term of reproach, and a brand of infamy.—Henceforward we may expect to see a note to advertisements for servants, to the effect that "no person who has had a seat in the Legislative Assembly need apply."

As an amendment to Mr. Orange Gowan's Divorce Bill, or Bill for the encouragement of Adultery, Mr. Bureau has given notice of the following amendment, when the "Alpha and Omega of Orangeism," as he styles himself, shall move the second reading of the aforesaid Bill:—

"That in passing any Act for the purpose mentioned, this House would destroy in the ordinance of Marriage two characters of unity and indissolubility which Christian communities have recognised in all ages as essential safeguards of morals, and family ties."

Excellent as is M. Bureau's motion and creditable to a Catholic, it contains two errors; one of fact, and the other of logic. It is not true—if Protestant communities may in any

sense be styled Christian—that "Christian communities have recognised in all ages" the unity and indissolubility of marriage. From the days of St. Luther who explicitly sanctioned polygamy, to the present day, all Protestant communities have rejected the doctrine of the indissolubility of the matrimonial union; and even the Anglican sect, which in theory holds to the Christian doctrine—in practice, and in the persons of its Ministers, ignores it, by allowing the latter to officiate at the second nuptials of persons divorced before the Civil tribunals. It is the Catholic Church alone, that has always asserted, both in her doctrine and in her discipline, the sublime principle of—"One with One, and for Ever."

M. Bureau's motion includes also an error of logic, because his argument is valid only in so far as addressed to a body professedly Christian. But in Canada "it is desirable to abolish all semblance even of connection between Church and State;" there can, therefore, be no connection between the Legislative Assembly and the Church; the former, therefore, has no distinctive religious character, and is no more Christian than it is Mahomedan. In other respects M. Bureau's motion is unobjectionable.

The McLean Divorce Bill has, we are sorry to see, passed the Upper House.

THE TORONTO COLONIST AND MR. MCGEE.—Our Toronto cotemporary from its habit of making reckless attacks upon all the opponents of its Ministerial patrons, sometimes finds itself in an embarrassing position. It will not confess its error and retract, neither can it establish its accusations; its sole resource, therefore, is to bluster and talk big, hoping under the cloud of words which it splutters about, to cover its retreat, and perhaps to inflict some damage upon its adversary. Thus in a late issue it hazarded the statement, that Mr. McGee was busily engaged in setting on foot a series of secret societies, by way of counterpoise to the rapidly increasing influence of Orangeism. This the *Colonist* stated as a positive fact:—

"It is now known beyond denial!"—said the *Colonist*—"that this man—Mr. McGee"—has for months past been deeply engaged in secret correspondence with bad men like himself, in every city, town, and township in Upper Canada. That he has set on foot, under the names of Franchise Clubs, St. Patrick's Societies, and Gun Clubs, a series of Ribbon Lodges, with the view of gaining control of the Roman Catholic vote for political objects. That for the purpose of winning over the hierarchy, he has made his first overt attempt in behalf of Separate Schools; and as the best means of working upon the passions of the masses, his next move has been to attack the social, civil and political rights of Orangemen."—*Toronto Colonist*, 23d ult.

To this injurious imputation Mr. McGee replied by a letter to the editor of the *Toronto Colonist*, under date of the 25th ult., and which appears in Saturday's issue of the above named journal.

"Sir—On reaching town to-day, the following paragraph in your editorial article of Wednesday last came under my notice:—

(Here follows the paragraph from the *Colonist* cited above.)

"I hereby most explicitly deny your statement, and every part of it—that I have 'set on foot a series of Ribbon Lodges,' or any one Lodge, or other Society, partaking in any degree of the taint of sworn secrecy, or any other secrecy. I do not know that there is—I do not believe that there is—a Ribbon Lodge in all Canada. But if there be, I as heartily invoke for it, as I do for Orangeism, the condemnation of public opinion, and the discountenance of all good men—more especially of all influential public men. Beyond this I have never gone in relation to Orangeism, and the other *ism* (if it exists) I place precisely in the same category. They are both organisations which every man, outside their magic circles, must in his heart desire to see done away with."

"Your positive statement of my founding such societies, is equally as far from truth as some other charges which have recently attributed writings and acts to me, which are not mine. I repeat, I am not now, never was, and never mean to be, connected in any way, near or far, direct or indirect, with any oath-bound partisan organisation; nor am I aware of the existence of any such among my co-religionists in Canada."

Your most obedient servant,
"THOMAS D'ARCY MCGEE."

Upon the above the *Colonist* comments; and though we are certainly not prepared to deny the truth of its assertions as to the existence of Ribbon Lodges in Canada; though from the insolent pretensions of late put forward by Orangeism—its unpunished atrocities against the Catholics of the U. Province—and the open sanction and active encouragement that it has received from the Governor General, the Ministry, and the Provincial Legislature—as well as from private information, we have but too good reasons for fearing that the odious and infamous Ribbon Organisation, or at all events a secret organisation designed like Ribbonism as a protection against Orangeism—does exist in this Province; and is threatening to take deep root, and to spread its branches far and wide over the land unless something be speedily done to repress Orangeism, which alone has provoked it into existence—still we say that, even admitting the existence of this social pest, and the truth of the *Colonist's* statements respecting it, our Toronto cotemporary has utterly failed in implicating Mr. McGee therewith; and has not assigned any, even the shadow of an argument in support of the very serious charge made in its columns against that individual—charges which if true would expose him to the reprobation of all honest Catholics. Here in substance is all that the *Colonist* can adduce in support of his charge that Mr. McGee is

founding a series of Ribbon Lodges in Canada:—

1. That "in the first place, Mr. McGee is known to have been a member of a treasonable secret association in Ireland."—*Toronto Colonist*, 26th ult.

2. That "Mr. McGee has not denied, and cannot deny, that ever since he arrived in Canada, he has been in constant correspondence with the most violent of his co-religionists in all parts of the Province for purposes of political organisation."—*Id.*

3. That the *Colonist* has "for months past known it for a certainty, upon the information of the most respectable men of his (Mr. McGee's) own religious denomination, that there existed in Toronto at the last general election, and still exist, secret societies called gun-clubs, franchise clubs, and Hibernian societies, the members of which have frequently boasted of their Ribbonism." All these organisations have sprung up since Mr. McGee's arrival, as we are assured and believe, and in Toronto alone, they number several hundred members."—*Id.*

These are the sole grounds upon which the *Colonist* rests its case as against Mr. McGee; and though as we said above, we have but too good reasons for believing that the sanction given by the Government of "good principles" to the "secret" Orange Society, has greatly encouraged the spread of Ribbonism, and amongst the French Canadian youth of a society called by our informant "Frances-Freres," or some such name—we think that it has utterly failed in connecting Mr. McGee in any manner with any of those odious organisations; and is therefore in the very unpleasant position of the slanderer who will not retract, and cannot substantiate his calumnious assertions. Even were it true—and of this we know nothing—that Mr. McGee had been connected with secret societies many years ago in Ireland, it does not logically follow that he is now encouraging the formation of such societies in Canada. Because a public man is constantly urging upon his fellow-citizens and co-religionists the importance of "political organisation," in order to wring from an unjust and reluctant Government the recognition of their rights, it by no means follows that the "political organisation" which he advocates is "secret," or that its members are "oath-bound;" and it is only under these circumstances that "political organisations" are to be held in abhorrence. And in the last place, though there may be Ribbon, or analogous "secret societies" in Toronto, even the *Colonist* does not so much as pretend that its informants insinuated that Mr. McGee was in any manner connected therewith. What then becomes of its accusations "known beyond denial," against that gentleman?

And what means the *Colonist's* horror of secret societies amongst Irish Catholics, when it has not a word to say against Protestant secret societies? How, if it be so monstrous a thing for a private individual to encourage Ribbonism, can it be less monstrous on the part of Her Majesty's Representative, and his Chief Law Officers to encourage Orangeism, another secret organisation equally dangerous to society, and equally odious to all honest, and honorable men. Indeed when we remember that Ribbonism is exclusively defensive; that it was provoked into being by long continued acts of Orange brutality and oppression; and that Orangeism is essentially aggressive, avowing as its object "Protestant Ascendancy," it would seem as if of the two, the latter were by far the more objectionable, the more deserving of every good citizen's censure.

Our position, however, as a Catholic journalist is different from that of the *Colonist*. We can consistently denounce Orangeism, because we denounce and condemn Ribbonism; we can invoke a healthy public feeling against the one, because we spare not the other; because we do not recognise the existence of one law or one code of morality for wealthy and influential Protestants; and another law, another and different code of morality for the poor and often persecuted Papist. We condemn all secret societies alike, and without distinction. We do so because he must be either a fool or a knave, who exclaims against one, and smiles blandly on another; because we know, and every one must know that, as wrong always provokes wrong, so the existence of Orangeism must inevitably provoke to Ribbonism; and that if we would deal a deadly blow to the latter, we must make our first thrust at the former; and because we believe upon excellent authority, that, in our large cities in Lower as well as in Upper Canada, and amongst French Canadians as much as amongst the other races of our mixed community, "Secret Societies" have greatly increased of late, are increasing, and should be checked. But to check them is impossible, so long as any one of them is petted by the State, received as an honored guest at Government House by Her Majesty's Representative, allowed to control the Provincial Parliament itself, and to ride rough-shod over the civil and religious liberties of Her Majesty's loyal Catholic subjects of Canada.

ST. PATRICK'S LITERARY ASSOCIATION.

The Director of the St. Patrick's Literary Association acknowledges, with thanks, the receipt of the following handsome donations to the Library of the Association:—

From T. D. McGee, Esq., M.P.P.—42 volumes valuable works.

From T. G. Collins, Esq.—The Ecclesiastical History of Ireland; Vols. 1, 2, 3, and 4, of Gerald Griffin's Works; Rod Head of Ulster: Tales of the Irish Peasantry; Travels in Italy, France, Ireland, &c.; Life of Dr. Doyle; Bible History; History of North and South America; History of the Christian Church; Napoleon and his Generals; Natural History.