

# The True Witness

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1896

## THE SCHOOL SETTLEMENT.

The hybrid arrangement which has been arrived at between the Laurier and the Greenway Governments, and which has been misnamed a "settlement" of the Manitoba Catholic School question, has at last been made public. We give our readers its terms in another column. It is as we expected it would be—a cowardly surrender of the Catholic position on the part of those who but a few months ago posed as the champions of Catholic rights. It is a base capitulation to the enemies of Catholic education, who, emboldened by this latest success of theirs, will now doubtless turn their attention to this Province, the stronghold of the Faith in Canada, where, as the Montreal Herald's fanatical crusade against our schools plainly proves, the ground is already being prepared for the final and decisive battle.

Is there a Catholic in the whole Dominion who will read without shame the announcement that the only concession given by the Greenway Government to the Catholics of Manitoba is the permission to allow Almighty God to enter their schools for half an hour every day, after the ordinary tuition business is done? The inculcation of their solemn duties to their Creator and to their fellow-creatures, the end and aim for which they were created, the all-important facts of the Redemption, are held to be of but secondary import to the children. Instruction as to the material things that are of this life is held to be of transcendent value as compared with the eternal life beyond the grave. It is no exaggeration to say that the setting apart of this half hour at the tail end of the day's programme for the purpose of religious teaching is nothing more nor less than a cunningly directed blow at the Catholic religion.

Why is it that at a time when the Catholic minority in other countries, far from retreating before the secular and materialistic enemy, are, by their sturdy and whole-hearted struggles, led by valiant and uncompromising political chiefs extracting valuable concessions; when the Catholic minority in Germany is winning victory after victory; when the Catholic minority in England and Ireland is compelling the strongest government of modern times to increase very largely the state grants to Catholic Schools—why is it that at such a time the Catholic minority of Canada, which comprises nearly one-half of the total population of the country, is ever falling back before the aggressor? Because of the new School of so-called "toleration" which has sprung up since Confederation; the new School of indifference, properly so-called, which has replaced the old generation of intrepid Catholics who, while respecting scrupulously the rights of others, were firmly resolved to resist with all their might every attempt to encroach upon their own rights.

The lay Catholic leaders of to-day have none of the old-time heroic spirit. They

have cast their principles to the winds in order that they might attain to place and power. They have betrayed the most cherished interests of their co-religionists in order to satisfy personal ambition. Weak, vacillating, "tolerant" of every usurpation effected by the enemy upon sacred ground, they have retreated step by step until the Catholic position is jeopardized at its strongest point.

In Manitoba the Catholic Schools are gone. In the North-West Territories the Catholic Schools are gone. Right here in Quebec the Catholic Schools are now threatened. The time has come for Canadian Catholics to make a determined stand; to sink all personal and political preferences; to close up their ranks; and to present a solid and united front to a restless and aggressive foe who is evidently resolved to reduce us to a condition of abject bondage.

## GAELIC AT THE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY.

As has already been announced, the Ancient Order of Hibernians has presented to the Catholic National University, at Washington, the sum of \$50,000 for the purpose of endowing a chair of Gaelic literature at that already renowned seat of learning. The proceedings attending the formal presentation of the cheque a few days ago, and its reception by Cardinal Gibbons on behalf of the authorities of the University, were of a more than ordinarily interesting character, as will be seen from a couple of extracts from the speeches delivered on the occasion. The Hon. M. F. Wilhere, who was the official head of the Ancient Order of Hibernians when the project of the endowment of the chair was first taken up, concluded his eloquent remarks as follows:

"It seems the irony of fate that a language which was supplanted by our ancient enemy with his own should be restored by us through the medium of the stranger's tongue and that the children of the banished exiles should rise up to restore that which was almost banished from her shores. The same hand which tried to rob us of our language attacked our religion, yet our missionaries have carried it to every habitable part of the globe. It lives to day with the Irish race more glorious, more stalwart and more aggressive than ever; and as we think of all the sacrifices made by our fathers for the old Church, it is somewhat pleasant to think that we have the opportunity of giving some little proof of our devotion to our work in the cause of Catholic education. And may it not be appropriate at this time to express the hope that with the gradual return of language, with the glory of our ancient faith still growing brighter, the shackles of foreign domination may fall from the limbs of beloved Mother Ireland and that she may rise from the gloom of centuries in all her ancient glory, when her bards shall sing her songs in all their native melody and her statesmen and scholars occupy in Ireland the same prominence which surrounds them in every land in which their fathers sought refuge. With the life and light of our faith through all the periods of darkness leading us onward, may the religion and nationality of our race again find their home in the old land, and may our work this day be the beginning of such a glorious consummation."

"We feel proud," said Cardinal Gibbons, "that we can open our doors to the teaching of the tongue of a most generous, warm-hearted and loyal people. Indeed, why should not a Catholic University be glad to welcome such a branch of learning, even if it had never recommended itself to other schools and other savants? The Catholic Church has a profound interest in the preservation of this noble tongue—the deathless interest of gratitude."

It is, indeed, eminently appropriate that a professorship of Gaelic literature should be established in the great American University. Ireland's bishops, priests and monks as a celebrated writer declares, "nurtured and fashioned the Gaelic tongue and made it the richest and greatest of the European vernaculars. Millions of our forefathers went to their last rest with its pious accents on their lips. For nearly fourteen hundred years its sweet consoling tones were heard in the confessional, and its grave, sublime poetry was chanted from ten thousand altars. It echoed along the roads of Europe and in her impenetrable forests from the mouths of a thousand missionaries, and it mingled its lyric strength with the majestic Latin at the tombs of the Apostles long before any modern nations of Europe had emerged from barbarism."

"It has been a mighty channel of sacerdotal labors for fourteen centuries. It was the tongue of Patrick and Bridget. It has been sanctified by long use in the mouths of the most eminent saint and the most learned doctors. It is saturated in its structure and in its monuments with the purest and most spiritual Catholicism, and for these reasons alone deserves a place in any institution destined to be the mouth-piece of the Catholic Church in America."

The proposal to tax the land belonging to religious institutions, which is a

bad one in principle, has passed the City Council, but happily there is little chance of the project being sanctioned by the Legislature.

## SPAIN AND CUBA.

It is always a delicate matter to interfere in family affairs. Outsiders who take part, whether unasked or by invitation, on one side or the other, are pretty sure eventually to find themselves in an awkward position. After the combatants have become friends again, the unhappy meddler is full of useless regrets which, if converted into apologies, only make the situation worse. It is almost equally hazardous to thrust one's self into sectional disputes of a foreign country or the resistance of a community to its rulers, or of a colony to its metropolis. In the case of revolt or rebellion, it is astonishing how ready even these governments that have suffered from seditious agitation themselves are disposed to back up the revolted population of neighboring states. It is generally taken for granted that those in authority are in the wrong; the rebels in the right. Of course, there is a degree of truth in this view of interpreting a quarrel that has ended in blows. It is natural to suppose that a people would not rise in arms against their magistrates unless they had some strong provocation. It may be that the autocratic character of the government made patience hopeless. The struggle may have been hopeless in any case. As a rule insurrections are put down. Where they succeed, it is usual to believe that the very fact of their having obtained so large a support as to decide the issue in their favor goes to prove that they were more right than wrong. But there are two sides to every such question—many sides to some. Success does not always argue that right is with the victors. The noblest pages in human history go to show that the moral superiority is often with the vanquished, the despised, the rejected, who in their poor, sad day had none to help them of their cause. Civilization has been built up of a succession of victories some of which it would be hard to justify on strictly moral grounds. And yet if centuries of possession and of recognized authority did not constitute a valid claim to respect and obedience, government would be impossible, as some extremists would make it, if they could. On the other hand, right must be accompanied with might or it will assuredly find its claim set aside or passed over. The State that is unable to protect itself against foes without or foes within has ultimately to yield to the one that can.

To-day, every colony on the American continent that once acknowledged the sovereignty of Spain is independent. Why Spain was unable to hold them we need not inquire. Britain was unable to hold the colonies that laid the foundations of the world's greatest republic. Perhaps, had Britain adopted, as she adopted later, the policy of self-governing colonies and promptly taken the hint when those vigorous daughter States refused to be coerced, a sort of federal empire might have anticipated the modern Imperial Federation movement. Her colonies really were self-governing, compared with those of Spain, while the latter would have deemed themselves free had they enjoyed the constitution that Cuba had before this last revolt. Is Cuba's case really so hard? If we accept the accounts of the insurgent leaders and their advocates, resistance was never more justified and the situation had at last become absolutely intolerable.

On the other hand, can we believe that if Cuba, instead of being within a comparatively short distance of the United States, were in contiguity to the motherland, so that her six provinces were just like any other Spanish provinces, would she still find it so hard to put up with Spanish rule? Does not Cuba respond to influences and aspirations that have no particular connection with the tyranny and injustice of governors and lieutenant-governors? Does not the thought that she is greatly desired by many statesmen in the great Republic, and that, as a State of the Union, she would be a power in that federated cluster of more or less independent commonwealths, agitate her and fill her with discontent until she listens once more to the fascinations of promises that alas! are never fulfilled? The consciousness that a whole continent of Spanish republics, some of them with a population hardly a sixth of hers, are independent states, with their presidents and ministries, their police and armies, while she, the queen of the Antilles, is still bound with the chains of an allegiance which she scorns, a mere dependency, a possession—does not this consciousness fret and distress her until, in wild unrest, she determines to make one more dash for freedom?

But Cuba is not the only dependency of Spain that rouses her energies to resist. In the Philippine Islands Spain is engaged with another rebellion. We hear more of Cuba because it is nearer and because it is coveted by our neighbors. But in the Philippine Islands

Spain has a veritable insular empire. The entire group extends from north to south over sixteen degrees of latitude and over nine of longitude. They contain an area of about 115,000 square miles, with a population estimated at 7,000,000. Cuba and Porto Rico together have an area of more than 45,000 square miles, and a population of 2,800,000. The population of Cuba alone is more than a million and a half. Porto Rico is much more densely inhabited, having more than 800,000 people on an area of 3,550 square miles. Both groups are rich in tropical products—sugar being the staple in both. It is not surprising that Spain should hesitate to part with either, especially as she feels that they would be promptly appropriated by some other power. The indignation with which she has answered every offer of the United States to relieve her of the island by purchase during the last half century testifies to her determination to cling to Cuba while she has a dollar or a soldier. In the Peninsula there is difference of opinion as to policy and the completeness of the reforms vouchsafed to the Cubans before the last revolt, but there is no difference of opinion as to the duty of the Government to spend men and treasure until Spanish authority in the island is recovered. If there is any man in Spain from whom we who know but vaguely the intensity of Spanish national feeling would expect a word of sympathy for the Cubans in their struggle for freedom, it is Emilio Castelar. Yet here is his latest utterance on the subject: "Cuba deserves her punishment for having attacked our national supremacy, for having flung against our national peace the blazing brand of partricial insurrection. But even in this punishment may be found regenerating elements, which will in the end free the island from all devastating horrors, and envelop it in the living light of our national spirit."

## PROFESSOR CAPPER'S LECTURE.

In another column will be found a letter which has been sent us by Professor Capper, of McGill University, in reference to our criticism of some remarks of his regarding the monks of the Middle Ages in a lecture which he recently delivered. The letter is characterized by a manly candor which does honor to the writer. We regret that the scholarly and exceedingly instructive lecture on architecture with which he inaugurated his present course should have been marred by an isolated passage, which, judging from the tone of his communication, must have crept in inadvertently, and was not, at all events, the outcome of a spirit of bigotry, as we were led, erroneously we now know, to believe. We shall accept with pleasure, and we have no doubt, with profit also, Professor Capper's courteous invitation to attend his lectures on "Ancient and Medieval Architecture."

## AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT.

Our esteemed and talented contributor, "Wayfarer," touches upon an important subject this week. It is the inexplicable indifference of a large portion of our Irish Catholic population to the interests of newspapers which make it their special mission to champion the twofold cause of their Faith and their Fatherland. Secular newspapers, even anti-Irish and anti-Catholic newspapers, they support liberally; but the journals which should appeal successfully to their practical sympathy are for the most part ignored. The conduct of these Irish Catholics is in this respect illogical and entirely indefensible. If a person were to offer for sale to them a Protestant version of the Bible, would they not decline it with more or less firmness of resolution and emphasis of language? But if the canvasser for subscriptions to a daily newspaper calls upon them—a daily newspaper, it may be, which, like one of our local evening contemporaries, is never tired of attacking the Catholic Church and its ministers—he is received with courtesy, and in the majority of instances books a large number of subscribers. Yet, as "Wayfarer" points out, the presence of such newspapers in Catholic homes is capable of doing considerable harm. Trite as the subject is, it is one which should continue to be brought to the attention of those whom it concerns most; and it is to be hoped they will act upon the hint which is thus gently thrown out to them.

## BISHOP KEANE'S SUCCESSOR.

The announcement that the Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Conaty has been appointed to the Rectorship of the Catholic University at Washington, in succession to Bishop Keane, will be received with special interest in this city, for the Rector studied in the Seminary of Montreal for several years, and has many friends amongst our clergy. Of late years he has been pastor of the Church of the Sacred Heart at Worcester, Mass., and President of the Catholic Summer School of America. He is one of the prominent advocates of the cause of Temperance in the neighboring Republic. Of Irish descent, he has always

evinced a deep interest in the cause of Home Rule. He is a comparatively young man for the responsible position to which he has been called, being only forty-eight years of age. The choice is a wise one, and its popularity amongst American Catholics is attested by the fact that immediately upon its becoming known that Bishop Keane had severed his connection with the Washington University the name of the Rev. Dr. Conaty was amongst the first of those mentioned as being likely to succeed him. A profound theologian, a ripe scholar, a prudent administrator, endowed with a rare affability of manner, the Rev. Dr. Conaty will fill with distinction the Rectorship of America's great Catholic University.

## MR. CLIFFORD SIFTON.

That the selection of Mr. Clifford Sifton for the position of Minister of the Interior will not tend to increase the confidence of the Catholic electorate in the Laurier government, is evident from a brief sketch of his career published by the Northwest Review of Winnipeg. Our contemporary says:

"We in Manitoba know only too well the prominent and active part he has taken in the persecution we have undergone during the last six years, and we remember also the bitterness he has shown both in speech and manner when any question affecting our rights has been up for discussion. But it is not to us alone that he is well known as an anti-Catholic politician, for not many years ago he posed before the whole people of Canada during that celebrated Haldimand election as the chosen champion of our most inveterate enemies. More recently we can call to mind how he secured the nomination in Brandon for his friend Dalton McCarthy, and how he stumped the constituency, and also spoke in Winnipeg, denouncing the Catholic claims and doing his best to keep alive in the Province the anti-Catholic agitation which has had such disastrous results."

The bartering of Catholic rights in order to get such a man into his cabinet will remain a stigma upon the character of Mr. Laurier as a man whom his co-religionists were once asked to regard as a champion of their interests.

## LAURIER'S LOST OPPORTUNITY.

"There is a tide in the affairs of man which taken at the flood," &c., says England's greatest dramatist.

At every turn in life persons who are bawling their circumstances little fancy how many golden opportunities they have allowed to pass which would have changed the whole current of their career.

What a splendid opening to achieve imperishable fame was offered to Premier Laurier in connection with the settlement of the School Question? What a magnificent occasion on which to proudly proclaim his religious belief, to stand in the breach between Greenway and Sifton and the innocent children of his nationality and faith!

But he failed! Our country must suffer the consequences, and our Catholic children must bear the taunt that the religion they profess is only tolerated in the so-called National schools.

## OUR OWN PROVINCE.

The last session of the eighth parliament of the Province of Quebec opened on the 17th inst. under circumstances that are not without promise of fruitful legislation, advantageous to all classes of the population. The course of events in this province—by antiquity and constitutional recognition the pivotal province of the Dominion—may be said to furnish a key to the state of sentiment and material progress of the country at large. In this province were enacted the successive scenes in the drama of the old regime, and it has naturally preserved more of the flavor of that period than any other part of Canada. For thirty years after the conquest it virtually represented the whole of New France, due allowance being of course made for the separate existence of the Maritime Provinces. The fifty years of more or less troubled political life that followed the passage of the constitutional act of 1791 form an instructive portion of our annals. How the long struggle with the oligarchy closed in a rash appeal to arms, and how, after the repression of the rebellion, the two provinces were united under a common executive and legislature, our readers will remember. The union, though it was the parent of some compromises and several important reforms, was not destined to be permanent. It prepared the way for the more comprehensive federal system established by the passage of the British North America Act in 1867. By that system the provincial independence assured by the Constitutional Act of 1791 was restored, but it was restored under conditions that made independence more worth possessing than before. The very first sitting of the Legislature under the Constitutional Act had made it clear that the French-Canadians would be satisfied with nothing less than the fullest acknowledgment of their right to the use of their mother tongue. The election of a French-Canadian speaker brought on the question and it was quickly decided.

After half a century's enjoyment of so precious a privilege it was not likely that our fellow-countrymen would part with it under the so-called Union regime. That Lord Durham's purpose in his famous report was to effect a gradual fusion of the two elements of the population and to make the English language the sole medium for the interchange of ideas in public life cannot well be denied. Saxon and Norman had united to form the population and the speech of England, the Celt having previously amalgamated to a considerable extent with the Teutonic invaders, and this development seemed to His Lordship a fair precedent for the two races in Canada to follow. His provisions were not, however, carried out. Although the Union Act embodied a clause making English the sole official language, M. (afterwards Sir) L. H. Lafontaine set the example of using French, and, insisting on the right to use it, succeeded in having the obnoxious clause removed, and a special amendment formally made French, equally with English, the language of the State. Another great question was settled during the Union régime by the acknowledgment of the people's right to a Government responsible to themselves, through their elected representatives. Not less important was the introduction of a common school system which, while providing the advantages of education for every class, element and creed in the two provinces, was so adjusted to the traditions and circumstances of the two main sections of the people—the Catholic majority in Lower and minority in Upper Canada, and the Protestant majority in Upper and minority in Lower Canada—that no parent was forced to send his child to a school where his religious training was neglected or to pay for a schooling of which he did not conscientiously approve. The conduct of the majority in this Province has always been exceedingly generous to the minority in this matter, and it was considered no slight triumph for the cause of good education and fairness to minorities when the Upper Canadians were induced to adopt a system equally tolerant and just. The wheels of material progress received under the Union an impetus which prepared the way for the accelerated movement of the Confederation period. But while this Province—and Montreal especially—have gained by the grander enterprises, commercial and industrial, of the new era inaugurated in 1867, it must on the other hand be admitted that by the opening up of the vast expanse of Western Canada and the direction of people's thoughts to the extent, resources and fitness for colonization of the new region, the still unoccupied tracts and manifold productions of our own ancient Province were to a great extent lost sight of. While our public men were helping to boom the Prairie Province and the Territories beyond it, and to convince the world that the plains of the great Canadian North-West were a very paradise for the immigrant from Europe, the rich lands watered by our own great rivers, the settlement of which ought to have been their first care, were hardly ever mentioned. Nor was the neglect of our proper heritage in this way the only mistake committed in those early years of Federal rule. What we have most to deplore is the fact that of our French-Canadian farming population whose minds were unsettled by hearing so much of the distant and so little of the near, most of those who left their native province to seek new homes, migrated not to the Northwest but to the New England or Middle or Western States of the Union. In due time our public men realized the mistake that had been committed, and for some time past attention has been diligently directed to the untold wealth of soil, of forests, of mines, of fisheries within the borders of the Province of Quebec.

The report which we publish of Mr. John Morley's great speech at Glasgow, recently, shows that that distinguished statesman and writer is as staunch and true a friend of Home Rule for Ireland as ever he was, and that he is thoroughly acquainted with the actual position of the movement. His warning to the enemies of the popular cause not to misunderstand the tranquility which now prevails in Ireland is no less timely than sincere and important. Mr. Morley is the most far-seeing of modern British statesmen.

The name of the Hon. Bourke Cockran is mentioned as Attorney-General in the McKinley Cabinet. It is hardly likely, however, that the great Irish American orator would enter a Republican administration. In his powerful efforts to secure the election of McKinley, Mr. Bourke Cockran was acting as a good Democrat whose object was to force out of his party the anarchistic element.

Said Mr. Marchand in his recent speech at the Monument National:

"If I am called upon to form a Cabinet, one of the leading articles of my programme will be to give to the youth of our Province every advantage which should be found in the schools."

In what schools? In the schools which Mr. Marchand's Dominion leader has just given the Catholics of Manitoba?