

THE TRUE WITNESS

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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The True Witness.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 1858.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE meagre telegram, announcing the evacuation of Lucknow by the Sepoys, is the chief news by the last steamer. Of the subsequent operations of the enemy, and of the intentions of Sir Colin Campbell, we are still in ignorance. It is to be hoped however that the bloody struggle is drawing to a close, and that the fall of Lucknow may have the effect of convincing the mutineers that their best policy is speedy submission.

From the Continent of Europe the news is uninteresting. Russia and Austria are not on the best terms, and a rupture betwixt these two great powers is in some quarters looked upon as probable. Across the Channel, the Times interchanges notes of defiance with the French press, but the irritation arising out of the affair of the 14th January is now happily subsiding.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.—The proceedings in this august assembly have been somewhat dull of late. Mr. O'Farrell seems in a fair way of losing his seat; but as there are others whose seats have been obtained by means, to say the least, as objectionable as those resorted to in the Lotbiniere election, it is to be hoped that the public indignation will not be satisfied with one victim. The Usury Bill—which at one time threatened to be the Ministerial "rock-a-head"—will, it is now affirmed, be carried with some trifling modifications. Mr. Ferguson's motion for the Repeal of the Separate School clauses, has not yet been brought forward, but will most likely be rejected; the warmest friends of the "common" school system being strongly opposed to it, knowing that its success would be fatal to the entire system of which the Rev. Mr. Rye-son is the representative. Upon this subject we subjoin the remarks of the *New Era*, in which we entirely concur:—

"The Toronto *Mirror* has fallen into an error of fact, as well as of judgment, in arguing against an imaginary foe. The separate school clauses in the Upper Canada School Act have been no great boon, but they are the recognition, however begrudged or tardy, of a principle, and are valuable on that account. For that reason we would contend for them to the utmost; it is a pity they are not better worth the struggling for; but defective as they are, they are the acknowledgment of a debt the whole of which is yet to be recovered."

To dispute about the merits of a painting with a blind man, or to enter into an argument upon music with one who is deaf, is an act of folly.—In like manner, it would be absurd for us to prolong a controversy on the merits of the common schools of Upper Canada, and the United States, with one, who, like the *Journal des Debats*, is so destitute of all moral apprehension as to be unable to perceive intuitively, that schools in which pupils of both sexes, of the age of puberty, herd promiscuously together, and under the exclusive government of unmarried male teachers, are, and must be, ruinous to the morals of those who attend them, a curse to society, and a disgrace to our nineteenth century civilisation. There are propositions so intuitively evident that they cannot be proved. Every science has its axioms, or first principles; and with him who cannot perceive, or rather feel, that such schools as we have described above, are, and must be, in their moral effects upon their pupils, eminently dangerous, and little better than places of debauch, it is worse than useless to argue. Such a man is certainly not a Catholic, and for the sake of human nature we trust that he is not a parent.—No! assuredly, a father he cannot be.

He is not a Catholic certainly; for on the subject matter in dispute betwixt us and the *Journal des Debats*, the Catholic Church has spoken most distinctly and emphatically, in a *Mandement* addressed by the Archbishop and Bishops of the Province of Quebec, to the Catholics of Canada, over date 8th September, 1853. In this authoritative, and to all Catholics, conclusive document, all question as to the gross impropriety of, under any conceivable circumstances, entrusting the education of girls to persons of the other sex, is set at rest for ever.—"Never permit!"—say the Fathers of the Church in this their *Mandement*—"never permit—ne souffrez jamais—men to be the teachers—les instituteurs—of your daughters." To the Prelates of the Catholic Church the case seemed so clear, and the demoralizing influence of committing the education of girls to male teachers—under any conceivable circumstances—were so palpable, that they did not deem it necessary to

enter into details upon the subject; but at once, sharply and for ever prohibited the beastly, and to all minds not utterly lost to every sentiment of modesty and decency, the revolting practice, which to the disgrace of our age and country, still generally obtains in the common schools of Upper Canada, and of which the writer in the *Journal des Debats* is the volunteer apologist.

That he is not, that he cannot be a father, is almost as certain as that he is not a Catholic.—When Marie-Antoinette, the imperial woman, stood calm and unmoved before the filthy rabble of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and awed her accusers and her judges into silence by her majestic scorn, there was one charge to which she deigned not to make a reply. Pressed by one foul beast, infamous even amongst the many infamous, of that most infamous epoch—a fellow of the name of Hebert—she exclaimed—"I have not answered, because Nature refuses to answer such a charge brought against a Mother. I appeal to all the Mothers that are here." A noble answer, worthy of the noble woman who uttered it, and at which her ribald calumniators shrunk abashed. She spoke as a Mother, and all the Mothers who heard her, in their hearts acquitted her, for they felt that she was innocent. Now—we say it advisedly—no parent, no one who has once felt that affection which nature has impressed on the heart of every parent for his children, would ever deem it possible to entertain a doubt even, as to the disgusting impropriety of the system that obtains in the common schools of Upper Canada; where pupils of both sexes, of the age of puberty, herd promiscuously together, under the exclusive control of male teachers. We appeal to all the fathers—Protestant as well as Catholic—who may read these lines; and we are sure that there is not one amongst them who will not in his heart of hearts agree with us in condemning such schools as houses of debauch, and as dens of infamy, for which no epithet in the vocabulary is too harsh. Had we to plead our case before a Jury of Fathers and Mothers, we should feel no anxiety as to the verdict.

No, good *Journal des Debats*, it is not the TRUE WITNESS that insults Protestants by speaking of the "common" school system in terms that it richly deserves: it is you who insult them by attributing to them sentiments which, from our knowledge of human nature, we are sure that they do not possess. You think to curry favor with them by fawning and cringing; you think to obtain the reputation of being a fine sort of a fellow—free from all bigotry and sectarian prejudices—by constituting yourself the defender of a monstrous abuse, which reason and revelation, which nature and the Church, alike condemn; but we tell you that you will find yourself most egregiously mistaken. We know our countrymen better than you do; and we tell you, that if there is one thing on earth that they heartily despise, even when they condescend to make use of him, it is "a sneak"; and that, though they may not like him who tells them unpalatable truths, they far prefer him to the "dough faced" sycophant who prostrates himself in abject humility before them, and is ever striving to appear very "modest, conciliating and tranquil."—*Journal des Debats*, 21st inst.

For of the two, who is the more insulting to Protestants?—the TRUE WITNESS, who contends that the admixture of the sexes of the age of puberty, under the sole control of unmarried male teachers, is an abomination which should be put a stop to at once and for ever!—or the *Journal des Debats*, who deprecates all allusion to the subject, as likely to give offence to Protestants? If the latter would but reflect, they would see that the insult is conveyed in the insinuation of the *Journal des Debats*, that Protestant parents approve of that promiscuous herding together of the sexes which we condemn, or at all events, that they are not strongly opposed to it. We on the contrary, confident in the good natural feelings of our separated brethren, and attributing to them the same anxious regard for the moral welfare of their children, and the purity of their daughters, as that with which Catholics are animated, hesitate not to invoke their aid to put down an abuse against which every honest man, no matter what his religion, should raise his indignant protest; and by so doing we pay them a very high, but we still believe, a well merited compliment. In short, he only can feel offended at the terms in which we have spoken of the common schools of Upper Canada and the United States, who is so utterly destitute of all moral sensibility, as to be unable to perceive the disgusting impropriety of entrusting young girls of the age of puberty to unmarried male teachers; and to speak the truth—plainly and frankly—we care not how often, or how heavily, we tread upon the corns of such a miserable coarse minded wretch.

Having thus disposed of the charge of insulting our Protestant fellow-citizens, in imputing to them the same sentiments of delicacy with regard to the education of their daughters, as those that the Church has ever inculcated upon all her children, and that nature has implanted in the hearts of all parents—we will address ourselves

to the task of replying to one or two other passages in our cotemporary's somewhat indecorous sally of the 21st inst.

He asks us, if we would repeat all the expressions of our article of the 16th inst., before a Bishop, young priests, in the vestibule of a convent, or before a half dozen of young ladies? We answer, that we would never willingly make such places as the "common" schools of the United States or of Upper Canada, the topic of conversation before young ladies; but, that if duty compelled us to speak of those places, we should not scruple at applying to them, before any society in the world, the same expressions as those that we employed in our article of the 16th inst. We look upon those schools, as at present conducted—and so long as under any circumstances, boys and girls of the age of 14 years, are allowed to herd promiscuously together therein, and under the exclusive control of unmarried male teachers, armed with the power to inflict corporal chastisement upon their pupils of either sex—as hot-beds of vice; as such we should speak of them before priest, Bishop or layman; and, if compelled by duty to broach the disgusting subject before persons of the other sex, we should still give utterance to the same sentiments, and in the same words—confident that prudes only would take offence thereat. Now a prude is one, who having lost the substance, consoles herself with the shadow, of modesty.

The *Journal* insinuates, that the intermingling of the sexes under male teachers, in the "common" schools of Upper Canada, is by no means general; and, indeed, that the case alluded to by Dr. Philbrick, is a solitary instance, from whence it would be unjust to draw a sweeping conclusion. We reply, that the *Journal des Debats* is either very ignorant, or very dishonest; and that if he will but push his enquiries, he will find that the beastly practise reprobated by us, is very common indeed; now it is of the inevitable moral effects of this intermingling of the sexes at an advanced age, and under the control of male teachers armed with power to inflict corporal punishment upon their pupils—and not merely of the physical injury inflicted upon one girl 14 years of age, by a flogging from the hands of an unmarried man—that we complain. The fact of the said disgusting promiscuous intercourse of the sexes was first brought under our notice by Dr. Philbrick's letter in the *Toronto Colonist*; but since the Rev. Mr. Ryerson has not dared in reply thereunto to deny the allegations therein contained, and has not taken any steps to put a stop to the gross abuse complained of, we have the right to assume that the system as administered by him, sanctions the said huddling together in one "common" school, of boys and girls, presided over by male teachers exclusively, armed with power to flog their pupils at their pleasure. This—and not an isolated case of severe girl flogging—is the gist of our charge against the Rev. Mr. Ryerson's "common" schools.

But, says the *Journal des Debats*, if Protestants, through the public journals of Canada and the United States, bear testimony against the "common" schools, it must be admitted that Catholic writers have adduced facts as damning against the inmates of convents and religious houses; and he cites as his Catholic writers against the nuns, the name of Voltaire, Diderot, J. J. Rousseau, Eugene Sue, the editor of the *Avenir*, and other anti-Catholic writers of a similar stamp. It is a marvel that he omitted the names of two such staunch Catholics, and therefore trustworthy witnesses against Catholic convents and seminaries, as Achilli and Gavazzi.

Here again our cotemporary's ignorance, or else gross dishonesty is apparent. Voltaire, Rousseau, the editor of the *Avenir*, &c., are not Catholic, but essentially Protestant or anti-Catholic writers; and their evidence therefore, is of no force against the Church, and those institutions of which they openly proclaimed themselves the enemies; and against which they raised their battle cry of *écrasez l'infame*. To represent such men as Catholics is the act either of a fool or of a knave.—A Catholic is one who believes, even if he does not practice, all that the Catholic Church believes and teaches. He who denies all, or any portion of the Church's teaching, is—if a baptized person, a Protestant—and a heathen if unbaptized. But all the writers cited by the *Journal des Debats* did openly deny the greater part of the doctrines of the Catholic Church; and were therefore to all intents and purposes, as sound Protestants, as was Calvin, or the author of the "Book of Mormon." Their testimony therefore, as that of prejudiced enemies, is worthless as against our convents; whilst that which we have cited against the "common" schools, is the testimony of men whose Protestantism, or denial of the authority of the Catholic Church, is above suspicion.

Here we must stop, for we care not to deal with the personalities, and very small witticisms in which the *Journal des Debats* thinks fit to indulge at our expense. We would remind him however, that it is not by such silly jokes as styling the TRUE WITNESS, "willless," that he will succeed in defending the cause of those "common" schools of which he has constituted

himself the champion; and that it is much easier to call us "une bete," than it is to convince the world, that there is no moral impropriety in that promiscuous intercourse of the sexes which generally obtains in the "common" schools of Upper Canada; or that the Prelates of the Catholic Church acted indiscreetly in prohibiting under all circumstances, and upon any pretence whatsoever, the disgusting practice of entrusting girls to the control of male teachers.

If however our cotemporary has any doubts upon the subject, here is what we recommend him to do. Let him ask the first father or mother whom he may meet—Catholic or Protestant, we care not—the following question. "Sir, or Madam, would you like to send your little girl of 14 years old, to a school in which there are boys of the same age, which is under the exclusive control of an unmarried male teacher, and wherein she is liable to be publicly flogged?" If there is one parent who will reply in the affirmative, we will admit that in one instance we have formed too good an opinion of our fellow-citizens.

PRIESTS AND POLITICS.—"In faith and morals"—says the *Montreal Herald*—"are included the whole duty of man towards God and his neighbor; and it would be impossible to frame any 'temporal edict or law' which should have no bearing on faith or morals."

The truth of this proposition of the *Montreal Herald* we, as Catholics, have no intention of impugning. We admit it freely; but, we deduce therefrom one or two consequences to which our cotemporary will perhaps object.

1. We contend for instance that the Priest has not only the right as a citizen, but is, in virtue of his sacred office, bound to interfere in all questions which bear upon "faith or morals."

2. We admit with the *Montreal Herald* that it is scarce possible to frame any "temporal edict or law," or in other words to take any political action, which shall have "no bearing on faith or morals."

When we conclude that there is scarce any "temporal edict or law"—or, in other words, any political action—with which it is not the bounden duty of the Priest to interfere; and that the late outcry raised against our Catholic Clergy, because of what is called their interference with politics, is the very highest compliment that their enemies could have paid them.—If they had not so interfered, they would, by the *Montreal Herald's* own showing, have been silent upon matters which have, inevitably "a bearing on faith and morals;" and the silence of the Priest upon such matters is one of the worst crimes of which the Minister of religion can be guilty.

"But"—and here is the difficulty that naturally presents itself to our cotemporary—"who is to decide when temporal edicts or laws trench upon faith?" Of course if there be no judge, if there be no tribunal competent to decide, there can be no middle ground, betwixt anarchy on the one hand, and despotism on the other; possible; there can be no reason assigned why we should yield obedience to any "temporal edict" which in our private judgment "trenches upon faith;"—and our obedience, if yielded at all under such circumstances, would be yielded not to right, but to might—not to reason, but to brute force. Therefore of three things the *Herald* must admit one—That there is an authority or tribunal competent to decide when "temporal edicts," or the laws of the civil magistrate, "trench upon faith," and should be set at naught; or that, the individual is bound under all circumstances to obey the said "temporal edicts," even though they enjoin the burning of incense to Cæsar; or else it must assert the right of the individual to decide for himself when the edicts of the civil magistrate "trench upon faith," and under what circumstances therefore he is justified in disobeying them.

Now that there is a law higher than that of man, that the edicts of the latter may often contravene that higher law, and that in such a contingency, the subject would be bound to obey God rather than man—is a proposition which no Christian will, we think, venture to deny. The *Herald* therefore, if he rejects the Pope, or Church, as arbiter betwixt the civil magistrate and subject, must either be prepared to accept the theory of "passive obedience" under all conceivable circumstances; or else to show that there is some other power, distinct from the civil magistrate on the one hand, and from the subject on the other, capable of deciding when temporal edicts, or laws, trench upon faith, and when therefore such laws or edicts may be lawfully resisted. Now in all courtesy, we would ask of our cotemporary—what is that power, or authority, if it be not the Pope, or Church? and where does it reside?

It cannot be in the individual subject; for as no one is a competent judge in his own cause, the subject can never be competent to judge for himself, that he is justified in disobeying the laws of his civil ruler; besides, to proclaim the right of the subject to withhold his obedience to laws, whenever he in his private judgment, looks upon them as contravening the laws of God, would be fatal to all authority, to all government. For the same reason the civil magistrate, the harmony of whose edicts with the laws of God is the

subject matter in dispute, cannot be competent to decide in a case in which he is an immediately interested party. To make him the judge of the legality of his own edicts would be but another form of proclaiming the slavish, and atheistical doctrine of "passive obedience," the favorite tenet of the Anglican Church of the XVII century.

E. G. The law of the land requires clergymen of the Church of England, to celebrate the marriages of divorced persons, whose former partners are still living. But the great majority of the said clergymen—to their honor be it said—still hold the ancient Christian doctrine, that such marriages are in contravention of the law of God. Here then we have the case of the law of the land, contravening what a large body of the people firmly believe to be the law of God. Who shall decide? who shall mediate betwixt the civil magistrate on the one hand, and the recalcitrant Anglican clergyman on the other?

Or turn to our neighbors in the United States with their "Fugitive Slave-Law." That law is by many citizens of the States looked upon as in direct contravention of the law of God; and they assert that they are not bound to obey it, because there is a "Higher Law" in virtue of which they assume to themselves the right of violating the law of the land. Here again is a case for which according to the Protestant theory, there is no provision made; and the probable consequence will be a rupture of the Union and a "break up" of the Federal constitution. For who is competent to pronounce as to the legality of the "Fugitive Slave Law?" what power is there to decide whether the said edict be in harmony with the provisions of the "Higher Law," and therefore to be obeyed by all; or in contravention of that "Higher Law," and therefore to be unanimously resisted?

It is in short absurd to assert a higher law, and at the same time to deny that there is a judge to interpret and administer that law. Either then, there is no law higher than the temporal edict of the civil magistrate; or there is a judge higher than Cæsar, whom Cæsar is in duty bound to hear, and whose decisions upon all questions bearing upon faith and morals, kings and peoples are bound to accept. Such a judge the Catholic finds in the Pope, speaking from the Chair of Peter, in the name of, and addressing the universal Church. Such a judge the Protestant can find nowhere; and therefore, to be consistent, he must either deny that there is any law higher than that of man; or he must assert for the individual the right of deciding for himself in every particular, whether the "temporal edict" is to be obeyed, or, as "trenching upon faith," to be resisted. Logically carried out therefore, Protestant principles must lead, either to despotism—if we deny the Higher Law; or to anarchy—if we make the individual the judge and interpreter of that law.

We have no desire to prolong an unprofitable controversy upon "armed organisations" with our Toronto cotemporaries; especially as, from the mode of action adopted pretty generally throughout Upper Canada, we have good reasons for believing that our Catholic fellow-citizens have made up their minds as to the relative merits of constitutional petitioning, and "armed organisations." Still, in justice to ourselves, we will once more endeavor to define our position, and will state the arguments by which we propose to defend it.

Without absolutely denying that cases may arise in which it is not only lawful for, but the duty of, the citizen to appeal to physical force, and to seek protection for his life, property and liberty in "armed organisations," such as our Toronto cotemporaries recommend—we may assert safely that no such case has as yet arisen in Canada. Appeals from law and constitutional action, to physical force, gun clubs by whatsoever name called, and "armed organisations" for the attainment of political ends—however desirable in themselves those ends may be—cannot be justified, and should never be resorted to, until all constitutional means have been thoroughly exhausted. When the law is avowedly impotent to protect the innocent, and to repress the guilty—when the Government of a country is no longer able to fulfil those functions for which civil government was instituted—when all legal and peaceful means for obtaining redress have been fairly tried, and have unequivocally failed—then no doubt the people may, may ought to, arm in self defence, and seek in other and voluntary forms of organisation, that security which the State organisation is unable to afford, but which is the inalienable birthright of all God's rational creatures.

But before we thus appeal, before we thus reject the protection of the regular State organisation for that of voluntary "armed organisations" of our own, we must make sure, very sure, that the former is impotent to protect us, and that it is impossible to restore it to a state of efficiency. Now—and this is the point at issue—is it true that in Canada the State is no longer able to protect its peaceful citizens? and if it is, have we done our utmost, have we availed ourselves of every constitutional means at our dis-