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**The True Witness.**

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DEC. 12, 1856.

**NEWS OF THE WEEK.**

The *Atlantic* with Liverpool dates to the 26th ult., arrived at New York on Tuesday. The Continental news is unimportant; the affairs of the Bank of France remained unchanged—but the London money markets was reported easier. In Breadstuffs there is no material change to report.

"ANNUAL REPORT" of The Chief Superintendent of Education, for Canada West, for the Year 1855. Printed by Order of the Legislative Assembly.

That which naturally first strikes one, upon laying his hands upon this "Report," is its monstrous size; and this feeling of astonishment is not diminished, when upon opening it, he discovers the worthlessness of the greater part of its contents. For its exterior, we may remark that it is 9 1/2 inches long, 6 1/2 inches broad, and 3/4 of an inch thick; that it contains three hundred and forty-eight printed pages, and weighs upwards of 17 oz. Internally, it is made up—1st—of a voluminous dissertation upon "Books—School Teachers, their Salaries, and their Religious Faith—Separate Schools—Religious Instruction"—and the importance of paying Dr. Ryerson a high salary to superintend the education of the children of Upper Canada. This portion is, for the most part, smartly written, and is not devoid of interest. After it follows a series of statistics, giving, in a tabular form, a great deal of unnecessarily minute information respecting the fortunes of the schools in the same section of the Province; which again is succeeded by about seventy-six pages of unmitigated twaddle, under the form of "Extracts from the Reports of Local Superintendents;" and for the printing of which the country is called upon to pay. This is unfair. If "Local Superintendents" see fit to indulge largely in platitudes in their correspondence with the "Chief Superintendent," these worthies should keep their tediousness to themselves; and not bestow it upon the public, and at the public expense. Dr. Ryerson, by himself, is a very expensive luxury, not very useful, even if ornamented; at all events, one with which many a hard-working, over-taxed Papist, would willingly dispense altogether; but it is intolerable that he should impose upon us all his "Local Superintendents" besides, who are neither useful nor ornamental; and make us pay for the publication of their slip-slop gossip, about the blessings of education, and other common place phrases, in which it is their delight to indulge.

That portion of the "Report" which is dedicated to the discussion of the Separate School Question—comprising nearly one-third of the matter supplied by Dr. Ryerson himself—will be read with the greatest interest, both by Protestant and Catholic. The writer does not conceal his hostility to the principle of Catholic separate schools; though, as in practice—thanks to the restrictions with which the Separate School Law is hampered—these schools, except under very peculiar circumstances, are still impossible, he does not recommend that, for the present, they should be disturbed. So long in fact, as the Separate School Law is a dead letter, owing to the unjust restrictions placed upon the Catholic minority of Upper Canada—so long, but so long only, as it remains what it is at present, "a snare and a mockery," so long will Dr. Ryerson consent to its holding its place on the Statute Book. If Catholics continue, however, to agitate for their rights, and for "Freedom of Education," he plainly intimates that the Separate School system must be abolished altogether. In spite of these threats, we trust that the Catholics of Canada will continue to assert their rights, and to perform their duties, so as to impress upon their adversaries the conviction—that, if the Denominational, or Separate School system be abolished, they will not contribute one penny to any other; and that they are resolved to secure "Freedom of Education" for themselves and children at any price. We must, in short, make it as impossible to tax us for "State Schools," as for a "State Church." We ask only for our "rights," and these we will have.

Our demands simply resolve themselves into these:—

1. That we be not taxed, directly or indirectly—and that the common funds of the country be not devoted exclusively—for the support of either a school or a church to which, as Catholics, we have conscientious objections; and of which we cannot therefore avail ourselves. Of the validity of our "conscientious objections," of course, no secular tribunal can take cognizance, without thereby violating the "rights of conscience."

2. That—if taxed for school or church purposes at all—or if of the common funds of the country a portion be devoted to religion or education—we be permitted to apply our taxes to such school or church purposes as we please; and that, in proportion to our numbers, we receive a share of all public monies by the State applied either to religious, or educational purposes. Of course, what we ask for ourselves, we acknowledge as a "right" in all others; and if we refuse to contribute to Non-Catholic Church or School purposes, so also do we disclaim any, the most remote intention, of asking Non-Catholics to contribute, directly or indirectly, to Catholic education, or the Catholic religion. In short, we occupy the same position towards "State-Schoolism," that the Dissenters in England do towards "State-Churchism." Every argument which is valid against the one, is fatal to the other; for "State-Churchism" and "State-Schoolism" are identical in principle, and must stand or fall together.

"It is only since 1850"—says the "Report"—"that any persons pretended to demand separate schools as a right, and not as a favor." This is flattering; for it shows a decided improvement in Catholic spirit; and that, since 1850, the battle on the School Question has been removed to higher ground. The question now is no longer—"Are the prejudices of Romanists entitled to the favorable consideration of the State?"—but—"Is education a legitimate function of the State?"—has the State any more right to impose upon an unwilling portion of its subjects a system of "State-Schoolism," than it has to impose a system of "State-Churchism" upon a Dissenting minority? These—with the questions—"To whom does the education of the child belong?" and—"Does the child belong in the first place to the parent or to the State?"—these are the questions which, since 1850, the Catholic friends of "Freedom of Education" have ever endeavored to keep prominently before the public; because these questions lie at the bottom of the "School Question;" and because the answers to them must determine the respective rights of parents, and of the State.

Dr. Ryerson, and the friends of "State Schoolism" assume as their fundamental position "that it is the duty of the State to provide for the education of all its citizens." We on the contrary, in common with all the assertors of "Freedom of Education" as opposed to "State-Schoolism," maintain that it is the duty of the parent to provide for the education of all his children—that on him, and not on the State, has God imposed the obligation of providing for all the wants—corporal, intellectual, moral and religious—of his offspring—and that no power on earth can release the parent from this obligation, and the responsibilities which it entails.

Here is the first, and indeed the important difference, betwixt the friends of "State-Schoolism" and the champions of "Freedom of Education." If we admit the premises of the first, of course we must admit the right of the State to do that which it is its duty to do; and consequently its right to provide such education as it pleases for all its citizens without distinction. We must therefore if logical, assert the obligation of all the citizens of whom the State is composed, to contribute towards the system imposed by the State; and must deny the right of any to demand exemption from taxation for that purpose. The logical upholder of "State-Schoolism" will of course go further; and, as an inevitable consequence of his first proposition, will insist that if it is the duty of the State to provide for the education of all its citizens, it has the right, and that it is its duty also, to see that all its citizens avail themselves of that School instruction which it has provided; and therefore to make attendance upon the "State-Schools," compulsory, upon all its citizens, without exception. If the State has the right to make us pay for schools to which we are conscientiously opposed, it is impossible, without the most contemptible inconsistency, to deny that the State has the right to compel us to send our children to the same schools; but if it has no right to do the latter, it can have no right to do the other.

That it is the duty of the parent to provide for the education of all his children is the principle of the Catholic friends of "Freedom of Education;" who since 1850 have no longer been content, with bated breath, and in a bond'sman key, to pray as a favor to be allowed to exercise their inalienable rights as freemen, and to fulfil their indispensable duties as Christian parents. Times are changed; and we trust that Catholics would as much scorn to ask or to accept a favor of any man, as they would to accept less than their rights. We ask no favor—we ask our rights; we ask rather, that we may be permitted to fulfil our duties towards our children without let or hindrance from the State; and this we cannot do, if, in addition to the burden of supporting such schools as those which we think fit to allow our children to attend, there be also imposed upon us by the State the burden of contributing to other schools to which we will not send our little ones—whom we love, but whom we would rather follow to the grave than expose to the dangers of such schools as the

State provides; and whose fruits are conspicuous in the precocious debauchery of the female Yankees of Boston.

Into the details of the Rev. Mr. Ryerson's Report we have not space to enter to day. We content ourselves for the present with indicating the respective positions assumed by the advocates of "State-Schoolism," and by the friends of "Freedom of Education."

The Rev. Mr. Ryerson assumes that:—

"It is the duty of the State to provide for the education of all the youth of the country."

The counter thesis of the friend to "Freedom of Education," on the contrary, maintains that:—

"It is the duty of parents to provide for the education, as for the feeding and clothing, of their children."

Hereupon issue is joined; and the whole "School Question" is in fact comprised in this:—

"To whom does the education of the child belong?—to whom has God committed the charge—and whom does He hold responsible for its due fulfilment?—The parent, or the State?"

"WHAT shall we do with our poor?" is a question that is beginning to force itself, very seriously, upon the attention of Protestants in Canada, as it has, for the last three hundred years, upon all the Protestant communities of the Old World. Pauperism is in fact one of the fruits of the Glorious Reformation; and it is not wonderful that Protestantism, which caused pauperism, now finds itself helpless in the dread presence of the gaunt monster which it has itself evoked.

Protestantism is the parent of Pauperism; because Protestantism, in its blind hatred of every thing connected with the Church, destroyed, or seized upon for secular purposes, these ample funds which the farsighted charity of our Catholic ancestors had devoted to the relief of the poor, the support of the widow and fatherless children, and the alleviation of all those miseries which flesh is heir to. Poverty and sickness, proceeding, oft from the inscrutable decrees of God, oftener from idleness, vice, and the violation of His laws, there ever have been, and ever will be; for we have the words of our Lord. "The poor ye have always with ye." But pauperism in the form that it now presents itself to the nineteenth century, was properly speaking, unknown to the "Ages of Faith;" and can exist there only, where the malice of man has actively interfered to choke up the sources of Catholic charity, or to divert the stream into another channel.

Far be it from us to reproach our Protestant fellow citizens with indifference to the sufferings of the poor; or to assume that naturally or individually, Catholics are more prompt to relieve the wants of their afflicted neighbors. We claim however for ourselves a better organization, a better system, and above all, the blessing of God, without which nothing can prosper. Herein, and herein only, can we boast of any advantage over Protestants; and our complaint against them is, not that they are naturally hardhearted, or uncharitable, but, that their anti-Catholic prejudices are so strong, their hatred of Popery so intense, that they will not allow us to do for the poor, that which the experience of three centuries has shown them to be incompetent to perform; and that their anti-Catholic prejudices are so strong, that our efforts to administer to the wants of suffering humanity are invariably repressed by their active opposition. If we attempt to found asylums—or to endow existing charitable institutions with a portion of our wealth—every possible legal obstacle is thrown in our way. Old Statutes are brushed up; new laws are enacted to limit the right of testament; and we may think ourselves but too lucky if the profane hands of the sacriligious robber are not laid upon our conventual and other ecclesiastical establishments, whose funds are intended for the support of the sick, infirm, and aged. Nor alas! is it from Protestants alone that this opposition proceeds. Catholics—that is nominal Catholics, like the French Bourbons and the Cauchon Ministry—have ever been amongst the most active of our foes; and whenever some superlative piece of legislative rascality has been enacted, or has been attempted to be enacted, against the right of the Church to receive, and the right of the individual to give of his own—it has invariably been found that some of the Cauchon-Drummond tribe—of whom the breed is (we regret to say it) very numerous in Canada—were at the bottom of it.

At the present moment public attention has been forcibly directed to the case of a Protestant woman—not of the very best character—with four children, who, together with their mother, were lately committed to jail by M. Coursol, Inspector of Police, nominally as vagrants, virtually as paupers, to whom the jail offered the only place of shelter from the rigors of a Canadian winter. This has been much commented on by the Montreal press; and though we cannot join with those who would therein find an occasion to reproach either the Magistrate—whose sentence was dictated by the kindest feelings towards the unhappy mother and her little ones—or our Protestant fellow citizens, whose benevolence and philanthropy, even if misdirected, all must admit—we think that the circumstance is of a nature to challenge the serious attention of

the public, to the dangers likely to occur from the growth of pauperism in our midst; and also to the best means of encountering and warding off those dangers which so seriously menace the social fabric.

Legal provision for the poor is the favorite panacea of the Protestant political economist; as Christian Charity is that of the Catholic. The one gives us poor-houses and parish officers—the other, the convent, and the daughters of St. Vincent de Paul; the former is actuated by the dread of revolution, commercial embarrassment, and pestilence—the other, simply by the love of God. And thus the great social questions of the present day are—To whom shall we entrust the charge of the poor?—to the Christian, or to the Statesman?—How shall we make provision for their relief?—by Act of Parliament or by the Evangel of Christ?

We confess ourselves strongly in favor of the latter plan; and feel confident that, if allowed free and unrestricted action, if uninterfered with by tyrannical legislation, and untrammelled by odious Statutes, that it would fully suffice for all our wants. The Catholic portion of the community, at all events, could, if not prevented by the State, amply provide for the poor of their own faith, leaving their Protestant neighbors to do the like with the Non-Catholic poor. All that we would ask of the State, and of our Protestant fellow-citizens, is, that they leave us free to carry out the good work in our own way—that they would oppose no arbitrary legal obstacles, in the shape of "Incorporation Bill" clauses, to the charitable intentions of the individual; that they respect the rights of property in the private citizen, and in the Community; and finally that—if possible—they keep their hands from picking and stealing, and their tongues from evil speaking, lying, and slandering.

It must however be always borne in mind that here in Canada, and in our large cities especially, the Catholic charitable institutions are burdened not only with the support of their own poor, but with a great part of the pauperism of the British Islands, annually cast upon our shores; which pauperism again is the natural product of the "Glorious Reformation." Under this heavy additional burden upon their resources, it is no wonder if, sometimes, our Catholic societies seem inadequate to the work imposed upon them; and if it should appear as if "Christian Charity" were incompetent to repair the evils caused by three hundred years of "British Protestantism." But this affords no argument against the all sufficiency of the former to provide for the poor. God is more powerful than the devil; the inventive genius of the Catholic Church is more than a match for the malice of her enemies; and fearful as are the ravages caused by sin, heresy, and infidelity, she is still in the XIX century, as in all preceding ages of her existence, ready and able to repair those ravages, if only allowed to pursue her course, undisturbed by the State, and unimpeded by the fanaticism of evangelical convent burners. State aid for the support of the poor can only be necessary in those countries where the fountain of Christian Charity has been dried up; or where an arbitrary government, has either laid sacrilegious hands upon the property of the Church, or imposed its tyrannical restrictions upon the right of the Catholic to do what he will with his own.

**THE DENISON CASE.**—We confess that this case, destined to be one of the "causes celebres" of the Anglican Establishment, gives us much, and almost unmixed satisfaction; not only in that under Divine Providence, it may in all probability be the means of bringing back many erring souls to the fold of Christ; but because in its results, it will certainly prove highly ruinous to, if not destructive of, the Establishment itself, so long the curse and "monster grievance" of Ireland, and the stronghold of heresy.

The Establishment has long been hateful; but to ensure its destruction more is required than that it should be hated. It is necessary that it should be thoroughly despised, and that it should become generally contemptible. Many a justly odious institution manages to survive the well merited hatred of those whom it oppresses, and amongst whom, like a tall bully, it still rears its unblushing front, and lies. But an institution that is both hated and despised, which is contemptible as well as odious, totters to its fall. Thus is it with the Anglican Establishment. Men do not any longer curse it only, but they laugh at it; it is no longer, as in the days of old—an object of dread and abhorrence—but of mockery and derision; a something to point the finger of scorn at. Torn and distracted with internal divisions, it has become a hissing and a reproach to all connected with it. Well then, and with reason, may we hope, that this crying iniquity, this monstrous injustice—the like of which the world has never seen, and in whose name more and greater crimes have been perpetrated, than any which stain the page of history, ancient or modern—is nigh the hour of death.

The overthrow of the Establishment is, and should be, the first great object of all Irishmen, of all Catholics. This got rid of, this "monster grievance" disposed of, the redress of all Ireland's other grievances, social and political, will

quickly follow. To the Church question, or question of "religious liberty" for Ireland, all other questions are subordinate, and of but secondary importance; and for the speedy settlement of that question; by the destruction of the "Law-Established Church," should the prayers, not of every Irishman only, but of every Catholic throughout the world, be offered up. Happy will he be, who shall contribute to the accomplishment of this great end; in the words of the Psalmist, "Blessed shall he be who shall repay thee. . . . blessed he that shall take and dash thy little ones against the rock."—Ps. cxxxix, 9.

Whilst upon this subject we may mention that an effort is being made by a section of the Anglican Church in Canada, to take part in the disputes which now distract the bosom of the poor dear old lady at home. "A Clergyman of the Church of England" writes in the *Quebec Chronicle*, exhorting his brethren to hold a solemn assembly, to consider the best manner of conveying to Dr. Sumner their feelings of gratitude for his decision against the Romanising party, and in favor of the Zuinglian view of the Eucharist; or if this be not deemed advisable, recommending that an address be sent to Dr. Sumner, numerous signed by the clergy and laity of the Government church, unequivocally stating their sincere thankfulness for his faithfulness and zeal.

We should ask no better fun than that the recommendations of the "Clergyman" correspondent of the *Chronicle*, should be followed, or rather attempted to be followed; as one result would inevitably be a serious schism in the ranks of the Anglican clergy in Canada. Of these, we well know, many hold and avow the Eucharistic doctrines for which Archdeacon Denison has been deprived; and though we are no admirers of their theological system, we believe them to be too honest men, and possessed of too keen a sense of honor, to allow what they look upon as a vital doctrine of the Christian faith to be impugned without a reply, or counter-remonstrance, from them. This would lead of course to recriminations, and controversies innumerable; and we may be permitted to hope, that, with the Grace of God these controversies would be the means of leading many poor benighted creatures, still wallowing in the mire and slough of Anglicanism, to the solid ground of the Catholic Church.

**FEAST OF THE CONCEPTION.**—Monday next will be observed as a *Fete d'Obigation*, being the Festival of the Conception, established in the Catholic Church by Clement IX., in 1708, in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary.—*Quebec Chronicle*, 6th inst.

It is not wonderful that Protestants so often misrepresent the Catholic religion, when, as is evident by the above extract from our *Quebec* contemporary, they are so ignorant, not only of history, but of their own religion, and the customs of their own church. If, for instance, the editor of the *Quebec Chronicle* had been aware that the 8th of December is still ordered to be observed by the Church of England as the "Festival of the Conception," he would have perceived that the observance of that Festival must, at all events, be older than the great apostasy of the XVI. century; and that therefore it could hardly have been first instituted by Clement IX., in 1708.

Another reason, which to many persons may seem almost conclusive as to the said Festival not having been "established by Clement IX., in 1708," may be found in the simple fact, that Clement IX. died in the month of December, 1669; and could therefore hardly have "established a Festival" thirty-nine years after his death. This consideration has had great weight with us, in causing us to refuse credence to the statements of the *Quebec Chronicle* with respect to the recent origin of the religious observance of the Feast of the Conception, by the Catholic Church.

To the same purpose also is the historical fact that the Great Council of Basle, in the XV. century, formally recognised the Festival in question as one of immemorial observance in the Catholic Church, and ratified its celebration. Thus, when the Government establishment arose in England, on the ruins of the old Catholic Church, the founders of the new religion, whose object was to appear to the world as the conservators, as well as the reformers, of ancient usages, retained in their calendar the "Feast of the Conception" on the 8th of December; as our cotemporary may easily convince himself by referring to the Book of Common Prayer. The Festival itself, is, therefore, not exclusively *Romish*; though as the *Romish* Church celebrates with religious observances, only that which is pure, or immaculate, and would not insult her Divine Lord by holding a Festival in honor of that which is maculate, or stained with sin, it follows that there is a difference as to the manner in which the Catholic Church, and the "Church as by Law Established," observe the Festival. But the Festival itself is of obligation to Anglicans, as much as is Christmas Day, or the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord—that is, if they recognise the in-

The Festival of the Conception was certainly observed in the Oriental churches, as early as the beginning of the V. century; and in the days of St. Anselm, Romish Archbishop of Canterbury, was duly celebrated in England.