

deserting. His critics, one and all, admit his ability. Indeed, they tacitly admit that were he a Protestant, orthodox or heterodox, high church or low, all eyes—I mean Conservative eyes—would be turned on him as the leader, the deliverer, the Joshua of the party. In conversions *per se*, of one kind or another, I take no stock. It is a matter which solely and exclusively concerns the individual; a deal between him and his Maker. It should be a matter too sacred for criticism; where outside meddling falls nothing short of impertinence.

We will now briefly review the chief objections to Sir John Thompson's leadership.

The first count in the indictment charges the Premier with change of religion. Well, all that can fairly be said of this is, that he is in very distinguished company—St. Paul, Martin Luther, John Knox, with numerous lesser though brilliant luminaries. If it be a crime *per se* to change in Sir John Thompson's case, it was likewise a crime in the cases of all these high and distinguished personages. Does not this charge come with bad grace and strange inconsistency from the apostles, *par excellence*, of the right of private judgment.

The second count charges him with being the tool, minion, emissary, or other soul-destroying instrument of the Jesuits. The Society of Jesus is the *bête noir* of your orthodox Protestant. The Jesuit is *le garoux* to subdue refractory youngsters. Although a "Papist" to the manor born may, without his cognizance, be wriggling all his life in the toils of jesuitry, it is difficult to conceive how a convert, be he ever so sincere, could, in broad daylight, with his eyes wide open, fall headlong into the Jesuit trap, with his every sense on the *qui vive*. Assuredly, warning has availed him little. The convert, before his change of heart, has heard the Jesuit denounced in all the moods and tenses, as the emissary of Satan, and his methods as the ways of

that infernal individual. Did he happen to escape this bugbear at home, he was sure to encounter it abroad, it being a topic in many an evangelical pulpit, tub, and conventicle. It is, moreover, the favorite theme of the literature specially directed to Protestant propaganda. Be the convert ever so sincere and zealous, he cannot wholly divest himself of all his early training and associations. Hence, at every step, he would be intently watching for Jesuit snares and pitfalls; treading warily and cautiously as an old mouse in presence of the dreaded cat's skin. Yet despite all watching, and it may be praying, every convert, by some inexplicable Jesuitical *legerdemain*, is tripped up by the heels, and enveloped in a haze from which he can never more emerge. Talk of the necromancy of the dark ages. It is as nothing to the witchery of the nineteenth century, with all its railways, telegraphs, telephones, phonographs, table-turnings and spirit-rappings.

It behooves us now to examine another charge, to separate the grain from the mass of chaff, and see what foundation there is for so grave an accusation. It appears that the department of the Government over which Sir John Thompson presides, in its ordinary routine, reported adversely to Federal interference with an Act of the Quebec Legislature regarding the settlement of the Jesuits' Estates Claims. It is not disputed,—much less denied—that the Quebec Government and Legislature were the lawful and only custodians of this trust. If memory serves, it passed both branches of the legislature without a dissenting voice, certainly without a division. Forsooth, because the Department of Justice did not recommend a veto of this purely local measure—a measure antagonizing no Federal policy,—a measure clashing with no Dominion statute—the head of the department must be in league with anti-Christ. Be that legislation well or ill-considered, ex-