

THE 'ORANGE QUESTION.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN SPECTATOR:

SIR—It is now rather more than twelve months since I published some letters on the Orange question, my object having been to correct what I believe to be a prevailing misconception as to the cause of the irritation which Orange processions cause to our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects. I had noticed that, both in the pulpit and the press, it was assumed that the chief objection to those processions was that they were in celebration of the Battle of the Boyne, where an Irish Roman Catholic army was defeated by King William the III. My conviction is that the cause of the hostility to Orangeism is, that the avowed object of the association is to maintain "Protestant ascendancy in Church and State," and that the period of time that has elapsed since the removal of Catholic disabilities is too short for us to expect that those who suffered from the penal laws can entertain charitable feelings towards a body which resisted their repeal most zealously, and for a long time most successfully. If there could be any hope of the restoration of a better feeling, it would be dispelled by such articles as those published in the *Orange Sentinel*, in which it has been recently declared that Catholic Emancipation was "a suicidal measure," and that the Act "was carried by perjury, perfidy, and treachery." It must be obvious that those who entertain such an opinion would subject Canadian Catholics to penal laws, if in their power to do so. Mr. County Master Grant is reported to have stated, in a recent speech at Toronto, that "he imbibed his principles with his mother's milk." Mr. Grant cannot be unaware that the Irish Catholics have imbibed with their mothers' milk an utter detestation of those principles. If there was any good reason for perpetuating in our adopted country the old party feuds of Ireland, those, who as tax-payers, and as owners of property in Montreal, suffer from them most severely, might be less inclined to complain, but I am unaware of a single reason that can be given to justify the formation of even a Protestant or Civil Rights Alliance which I regret to observe you think desirable.

I had fully intended last year to abandon all further discussion of the subject. I had endeavoured to correct what I deemed misconceptions, but judging from past experience I had but slight expectation of accomplishing any good. This year I carefully abstained from all reference to the subject, but my known opinions probably led to my being summoned as a witness in the cases now pending in the Police Court. I had to answer such questions as the learned counsel on both sides thought proper to put to me, and having done so I desire to add a few remarks, some of which are rendered necessary by criticisms on my evidence in court.

The history of Ireland, especially since the rupture between England and the Papacy, is a history of persecutions by the dominant party, and of successive rebellions by the subject race, and it has been written by their respective historians in the true spirit of party. Were we to believe Froude, we should have to admit that the Catholics were always wrong; and if on the other hand we were to adopt the accounts of the same transactions by Catholic historians, we should have to come to an opposite conclusion. The important facts would have to be admitted on all hands. Ireland was conquered by England, and after the rupture with the Papacy, religious animosity was added to that of race, and frequent rebellions were the consequence. As these were suppressed from time to time the lands of the rebels were forfeited and granted to English and Scotch settlers of a different race and of a different religion. The old proprietors of the soil found themselves utterly ruined. Under such circumstances it was not surprising that at the period of the revolution the Irish Catholics should have seized the opportunity of supporting the King *de jure*, who was a Catholic, against the King *de facto*, who was a Protestant. Had they at that period succeeded, it seems hardly doubtful that they would have ejected the new settlers, restored the forfeited estates to their former owners, and reestablished the Catholic religion. They were defeated, and a long period of persecution followed, resulting in another rebellion, which was suppressed with the cruelty that is the invariable accompaniment of civil strife. The penal laws, which had led to the rebellion, were deemed more than ever necessary by the dominant party in Ireland, which had shortly before the rebellion organised the Orange Association chiefly for the purpose of defence. It became apparent, however, to English statesmen that the Irish system of government must be abandoned, and the Union was the result. The subsequent history is more familiar to the present generation. The Irish Catholics have been engaged during the nineteenth century in a constant struggle for what they, at all events, have believed to be their just rights, and their most energetic opponents have been the members of the Orange Association. To do the Irish Orangemen justice, it must be admitted that notwithstanding their numerous traditions of injuries sustained at the hands of Catholics, they abstained from flaunting their regalia in the Irish cities, in which the population was chiefly Catholic, and they did not encourage young boys to enter the Order as Orange Young Britons. The zeal of the Canadian Orangemen has far surpassed that of the Irish, although the former had received no provocation whatever, when they determined on introducing processions in Montreal, which they well knew were looked on by the Catholics as an insult.

While I concur in a great deal of the letter in your last number addressed to the Orangemen, I own that I can discover no ground for your contention against what you term "the political position" of the Roman Catholic Church. You doubtless are as well aware as I am, that on several questions requiring legislative action, and especially all relating to education, there are wide differences of opinion between the great majorities of Catholics and of Protestants. It was owing to these differences that unity of action on political questions between the French Canadian majority and the Upper Canada majority became impossible, and as a consequence the maintenance of the old Union became equally so. It must be admitted that it was a necessary consequence of Confederation that the Protestant minority in Quebec holding the opinions expressed in your late letter were deprived of the powerful aid of those in Ontario who concurred in them. Sir Alexander Galt, who is a fair representative of Protestant opinion, obtained such guarantees as he deemed sufficient; and even if I were convinced of the soundness of such views as you have expressed, which I am not, I should in the present state of public

opinion be convinced of the impolicy of advocating them. It seems to me anything but fair that the Protestant minority in Quebec should not only claim perfect equality with the majority, which has always been conceded to them, but should further claim to dictate to the majority how they are to manage their own affairs. You remark: "We have demanded a real education for the French *habitant*," and you complain of want of active support to your demand from the Orangemen. Now, I could understand a complaint based on interference by the Catholics with the Protestant schools, but none such could with truth be made. It is those who think with you, who claim to interfere with an educational system, which is not merely sanctioned by the Catholic bishops and clergy, but by an overwhelming majority of the laity of both political parties. Again, you complain of "the iniquity of clerical exemption from taxation." If I am not mistaken, such exemption prevails both in the United States and in Ontario, with the sanction of Protestant majorities. And something at least may be said in its favour. Were the present exemptions removed the tax-payers as a body would no doubt be benefited, but it would, most assuredly, be at the expense of the very class which now voluntarily contributes the largest amount to the support of our religious and charitable institutions. You desire to deprive the Catholics "of privileges which are not rights." You are in favour, as I understand, of abolishing the payment of dues for the support of the clergy in the Province of Quebec, although no complaint has been made by the people interested, and Protestants certainly have no cause of complaint on that ground. You favour a Protestant or Civil Rights Alliance, the chief object of which, as far as I have been able to comprehend it, would be to unite Protestants in a crusade against Catholic institutions, although it cannot be shown that Protestants suffer in the least from the laws which are in force in the Province of Quebec. I have ventured on the foregoing criticism on your letter because I feel assured that you are a sincere friend to free discussion.

With regard to my late evidence, and especially to that portion of it which refers to the duty of the civil authorities to prevent processions calculated to endanger the public peace, I desire that it should be borne in mind that it was based on the legal opinion of the Attorney and Solicitor-General of Upper Canada, and on the present practice in Ireland. If it be imagined that I approve of the violent interference with processions by those who feel aggrieved by them, I cannot too emphatically disclaim such a sentiment. Most sincerely do I wish, and I have frequently heard influential Catholics express themselves to the same effect, that all such interference were abandoned. I cannot however be blind to consequences, which during a long period of years have invariably followed when they have taken place. With regard to attacks upon churches, and especially during divine service, I should hope that there is but one opinion, viz., that those guilty of such attacks should be severely punished. I should hope that instances of such attacks are very rare, indeed the only one that I recollect hearing of is the Gavazzi case which became celebrated owing to the unfortunate casualties which took place, the result of accident or mismanagement. Being asked whether, in my opinion, the principle of law laid down by competent authority was applicable to such a case, I was inclined to think that a Chief Magistrate might so construe it, although I am far from admitting that there is any analogy between such a case and that of a public procession. In the Gavazzi case, even those who hold the Catholic Mayor responsible for the firing, which I do not, cannot but admit that he called out the military, and posted them for the protection of the lecturer and his audience. I am not aware that any other part of my evidence is open to misconception, although I might, if disposed to indulge in controversy, comment at some length on an article in the *Toronto Globe* of the 21st inst. I shall not, however, trespass much on your indulgence.

I can assure the *Globe* that I do not feel myself "in a corner." I have not a word moreover to retract, nor do I admit that my evidence, fairly considered, requires the explanations which I have seen fit to offer. I own that I am not a little surprised at opinions being attributed to me which I expressly gave as those of the law officers of the Crown, and those adopted in practice in Ireland at the present time. I find no allusion in the *Globe* to the opinion referred to, nor to the practice, but I do find that my evidence has been literally tortured into a charge of maintaining that a foreign lecturer "may, in case of his not being suppressed and silenced by the authorities be very properly mobbed by the populace." I do not think that the opponents of Orange processions in Montreal are of opinion that my evidence is at all favourable to mob law, but the *Globe* may be assured that his political friends in the Province of Quebec are not particularly pleased at finding that he has remounted his old Protestant horse. The Orange leaders are not destitute by any means of the wisdom of the serpent, and if a secret order should have been conveyed to the brotherhood in Lower Canada to ally themselves to the Liberal party, and to do all in their power to exasperate the Catholic majority, it would have been a wonderful manifestation of such wisdom. It is at least an extraordinary circumstance that a body which has usually acted with tolerable unanimity should at this time take opposite sides in the two Provinces. One consequence is that both political parties are inclined to protect the Orangemen, and my only consolation is that their proceedings give me no offence, and that I have only to suffer like the taxpayers generally from the enormous expense to which they annually subject the city of Montreal. It appears, too, that besides the direct tax there is an indirect one, as they have boasted of the contributions which they receive from the Protestants who are not Orange. My chief regret at present is that I should have been compelled by circumstances to take any part whatever in discussions regarding Orangeism.

F. HINCKS.

"Turn your mind to realities, and self-made phantoms which darken your soul will disappear like night at the approach of dawn."—*Goethe*.

"Where there is everything personally noble, pure, simple, and good the lowliness of a man's birth is but an added honor to him; for it shows that his nobility is altogether from within him and therefore is his own."

"It is a great and mysterious gift, this clinging of the heart, whereby it hath often seemed to me that even in the very moment of suffering our souls have the keenest foretaste of heaven; and it is a strange truth that only in the agony of parting we look into the depths of love."—*George Eliot*.