

## THE TRUE WITNESS

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

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WEDNESDAY.....FEBRUARY 8, 1893

## THE MAYOR-ELECT.

In the *Star* of the 2d inst., Hon. Mr. Desjardins, the Mayor-elect, is reported to have said: "As for St. Ann's ward, he was sorry that the Irish section of the population had not shown a proper appreciation of the situation. He regretted it and was convinced his Irish fellow-citizens would also come to regret it in the near future." This has somewhat the semblance of a threat: let us continue on! "We have had a minority in that (St. Ann's) ward," said the hon. gentleman, "but we will bear no malice. One lesson, however, we have learned, and that is, that in future, when we make a contract with any one, we will demand security before hand." Was it thus the hon. gentleman spoke (in English) when he addressed the electors of what he called the "English quarter?"

Before commenting upon Senator Desjardins' remarks we will quote *L'Etendard*. Speaking of Mr. McShane that organ said: "Not only did the Irish Catholics rally round him *en masse*, which fact should no longer astonish us, because we have long since known that the best French Canadian candidate may be sure to have them against him, but more than this, the living personification of charlatanism and demagoguery found partisans among our people in large numbers." One more quotation from *La Minerve* and we pass to what we have to say: "We relied on the Irish Catholic element," says that organ. "It was an illusion. Mr. Desjardins did not get five per cent. of their vote. We are poorly repaid for our generosity towards the element which Mr. McShane represents."

It appears to us that our editorial, on the question of the Mayoralty, in our issue of the week before last, was sufficiently explicit to be understood, and sufficiently copied by the press of the city to have come to the knowledge of Hon. Mr. Desjardins and the two journals above referred to. We must take it for granted that the Mayor-elect read that editorial, for it was reproduced in part by both the morning and one of the evening papers, while the *Star* gave it a most prominent place. If he did not read it he must have failed to follow the events of the campaign. Moreover, it was printed and commented upon in the French press of the city. If Hon. Mr. Desjardins did not read that repudiation of Hon. Mr. McShane's course, in seeking a third term, then he should not be surprised that he did not poll a bigger vote in St. Ann's ward, for he certainly must not have taken the trouble to ask for the suffrages of the electors. If he did read it he has no right to attribute to the Irish Catholics of Montreal the blame for Mr. McShane's disregard of the tacit agreement. Mr. McShane

proclaimed himself as much a Frenchman's candidate as an Irishman's. Moreover, he, and he alone, sought to break through that unwritten compact. It was a week before the election that we explained the situation most fully and pointed out what has since taken place. We disclaimed all responsibility for Mr. McShane's course, for, as we anticipated, it would be sought to cast the burden of the mistake upon the shoulders of all the Irish Catholics. In spite of that disclaimer, that widespread and open repudiation, we find Hon. Senator Desjardins insinuating in a semi-threatening manner, what the results are likely to be, and our two esteemed contemporaries—above mentioned—openly laying the blame, for Mr. McShane's overreaching ambition, at the door of the Irish Catholic element.

One organ complains that the Senator did not get more than five per cent. of the votes in that ward. The wonder is that he got even as many as he did. We doubt very much if there is one man in every hundred who ever heard of him in that section of the city, until he suddenly appeared as candidate for the Mayoralty; and, most positively, not one in five hundred would know him by sight were they to meet on the street. Moreover, everything was uncertain and yet done in a very short space of time. There was talk of several other candidates, and especially of Mr. J. D. Rolland—who, were it not for that cablegram, would be the most eligible man—while Hon. Mr. Desjardins wavered for a comparatively long time before finally accepting. All this time the name of Mr. McShane was upon the lips of a host of canvassers, and he is known in every house in the district in question.

We would advise our confreres of the *Minerve* and *Etendard* to be a little less anti-Irish in their zeal to find some fault with our people. The Irish Catholics never yet got a kind word from them, much less a favor of any species. Not so with us when there is question of fair play and justice towards our French Canadian citizens. And the Hon. Mayor-elect should not be in such a hurry to show his teeth; it would be policy on his part—if nothing else—to wait till he finds the civic chair solid under him.

## IRISH ECHOES.

Under this heading a correspondent, "T. S. B.," writes weekly from Dublin to the Montreal *Star*. His letters are of considerable interest from the fact that they cover a large domain and go into a great number of details. Besides the information given is varied and generally instructive. However, we notice, on the part of that writer, a tendency to often give the Irish people an undeserved cut. In his letter of the 20th January last, and published in Saturday night's *Star*, we find considerable information regarding the distress in the South-West, and statistics on the subject of crops and farming in general. He says, speaking of particular districts, that "where a system of market gardening is carried out three crops in the year are often taken off the land." There is no doubt of the truth of this statement, when applied to some of the more fortunate localities. But he gratuitously adds: "In the mild portions of Ireland much more could be done than is done if it were not for the apathy and laziness of the people."

We admit that there are to be found lazy Irishmen as well as lazy Englishmen, Frenchmen, Italians, Germans, or other nationalities. But any fair-minded person, conversant at all with the subject,

will have to admit that the lazy ones are the exceptions. We have rarely ever met with an Irishman, who received proper encouragement and ordinary fair play, that could be styled lazy. In fact, the very contrary is the case. The Irish are admittedly a lively, enthusiastic, energetic and hard working people. He did well, however, to make a distinction between the apathy and the laziness. The latter, did it exist, would be a great fault on the part of a race or of an individual, but the former is generally the result of adverse circumstances over which neither the race nor the man has any control.

There are certain portions of Ireland in which considerable apathy has been at different times, exhibited. And why? Simply because the heart of the people was crushed by unjust legislation, and the spirit of the race was broken by the continued and ever augmenting series of troubles and hapless difficulties that have been cast in its way. If, from father to son, it had been made evident that no matter how they improved the soil, never could they claim it as their own; if generation after generation has learned, from bitter experience, that the more the people labor the harder becomes their lot; if they are made to understand, by means of constant facts to that effect, that every extra exertion on their part to make the land more valuable is a step towards higher rent and heavier burdens, then it is not to be wondered at that a certain apathy sets in. But that apathy is not due to any natural inactivity, much less to laziness, on the part of the Irish peasant; it is inflicted upon them by a system under which their life-blood has been sucked out and their every hope and ambition destroyed. In fact they have learned that the greater their apathy the less their load of troubles. If the *Star's* correspondent, who evidently knows a great deal about Ireland, would look the matter honestly in the face, lay aside all prejudice and squarely allow his best judgment to dictate his remarks, he would attribute that apathy, not to any shirking of labor on the part of the Irish, but to the presence in the land of legalized oppression to such an extent that no other people in the world could have survived its baneful influence for many generations.

Take those same Irishmen off their little holdings in the very "mild parts of Ireland" and transport them to Canada or the United States, and see how quickly they will turn the "wilderness into a garden." Why so? Because, on this side of the Atlantic, they live under fair laws that recognize only a man's honest worth. Here they do not make the slightest improvement on their farms that is not repaid to them many fold. The soil that they till and the land upon which drops the "sweat of their brows" may some day be their own. With that bright prospect ahead, they set to with a heart. There is no apathy to be found where the Irish pioneer or farmer swings his axe or drives his plough. Much less is there any laziness in his household. We are speaking facts that neither "T. S. B." nor any one else can deny. Again, we repeat that he did well to use the both terms; still they are not synonymous, as his letter would lead a reader to believe. Laziness can scarcely exist without a subsequent apathy; but apathy does not necessarily presuppose the existence of laziness. As far as being lazy is concerned, we deny *in toto* that it is a characteristic of the Irish. As far as the apathy goes, if it ever exists, it is not an offshoot of natural growth, but rather an exotic that strangers have sought to plan and cultivate—for their

own sinister purposes—upon the Irish soil. The one is a fault that belongs not to the people; the other is a state to which tyrannical legislation has brought portions of an active race.

THE Mass recently celebrated in the chapel of the Church of Notre Dame on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the death of Louis XVI. was an event little commented upon by the English press of the city. Yet there was something touchingly sublime in the *requiem* event. It told plainly that the genius of Catholic France, the soul of *la Fille ainee de l'Eglise* had not departed from earth as the soul of the "son of St. Louis" ascended into heaven." Although principally a Royalist celebration, still, if properly understood it should have been an occasion for all true Frenchmen to pause and glance back over the changes that a century has wrought. One hundred years ago the evil genius of the Revolution arose, and in the giant grasp of his nervous fanaticism, shook the throne and the altar, murdered the clergy, destroyed the nobles, cut off the venerable head of Louis XVI., and then, drunken with the blood of the good and great, ran riot through the frantic masses, raising the red cap of Liberty in the place of the Cross, and planting a prostitute from the slums of St. Antoine upon the sacred altar of Notre Dame, to represent the goddess of Reason and receive the homage of the brutalized mob. The fall of Louis was the signal for "The Reign of Terror." At last "the mob-executioner of to-day became the mob-victim of to-morrow;" Danton, Robespierre and their co-executioners became co-victims. "And all this was done in the sacred name of Liberty; although, in the deluge of human blood, they left not one mountain-top for the Ark Liberty to rest upon." Sublimely upon the confines of two centuries towers aloft the figure of the Royal martyr, one hand pointing to the dawn of western civilization, the other indicating the chaotic confusion of Empire, Revolution, Kingdom, Revolution, Empire, Revolution, Republic, Revolution and Republic, and so on till the end of the nineteenth century. Again that picturesque character stands upon the limit of land and sea, the spot where the solid Rock of Faith, that upheld the structure of the Church, was met by the in-rolling tide of infidelity, irreligion, social, political and national confusion. It was an anniversary truly historical, and be it ever to the credit of the Montrealers who had that solemn Mass sung for the dead King of one hundred years ago.

THE Liverpool *Catholic Times*, speaking of the coming Eucharistic Congress in Jerusalem refers to another change that will be noticed, a change now in progress. Its remarks run thus:

"Hastened by the persecutions in Russia, the Holy City is now rapidly filling with Jews, their numbers now being not far short of 50,000. Less than twenty years ago there were only a few villas outside the ancient city walls, but now there is a Jewish suburb extending for a mile towards the west, and in the northern portion of the city numbers of houses are being erected. In order to prevent too great an influx, the Jewish building-clubs have adopted the rule enforced of old by the Prophet Nehemiah, that only one out of each ten families should be selected by lot to reside in Jerusalem—the rest to scatter over the land for developing agriculture. Many Jewish settlements are springing up around Jerusalem and over the country generally, when fruit, wine, oil, and grain are produced for their own consumption and for purposes of export. Are we witnessing the fulfilment of those prophecies which declare that the remnant of the Jews will in the last days return to the Holy land and seek their God?"