

THE TRUE WITNESS

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED AT

No. 761, Craig Street Montreal, Canada.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Country.....\$1.00
City.....1.50

If not paid in advance: \$1.50 (Country) and \$2 (City) will be charged.

Subscribers, Newfoundland, \$1.50 a year in advance.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1892

C. M. B. A.

As announced last week, the TRUE WITNESS, has been appointed, by the grand president of the C. M. B. A. and is at present an official organ of that Association. This is an honor which we highly appreciate and for which we are thankful. However, it will be well to remark that our paper becomes an official organ at a very trying time. The discussion that waxed warm of late with regard to the Province of Quebec and a separate Grand Council seems to continue. In the first place we don't desire to appear under any false colors, nor to commit our paper to one side or the other in this matter. We consider it our duty to publish whatever we receive officially with regard to the association. But, not being members of the C. M. B. A. we don't feel competent to enter into any discussions on any questions that may have arisen, or that may arise between any portions or branches of the organization. Still, we feel it inside the limit of our right to express a general opinion, and it is an emphatic one. We believe that all the incalculable good that has been done by the association, in the past, and all the blessings it is destined to bring about in its future, must suffer as long as any species of division exists between those who should be fraternally united. Consequently we are confident that the future utility and benefit of that grand organization depend upon the cementing, as soon as possible, and for all time, every division—no matter how small it may be.

OUR SCHOOL GIRLS.

During the last two weeks we have paid some attention to the subject of "Our School Boys," and have given our views, in very open language, about the treatment of pupils and the punishments to which they are often subjected. "Without waver," as the lawyers say, of our right to continue upon the same subject, we desire to turn our attention this week to the girls. We have not the same experience to speak from as that which we invoked when referring to the boys, for never having been a girl, we never spent much time in convent or academy for young ladies. Still—it is unnecessary to tell how, where, or when—we have gleaned considerable information about the youth of the fair sex and the ordeals through which they are required to pass, while being prepared—in school—for their battle of life.

In the first place, all that we said about the boys, the modes of correction, the degradation of certain kinds of punishment, the distinction between the young and sickly or the older and stronger lads—all these things apply even more in a school for young girls. The reasons are very simple: the girl is naturally weaker, more delicate, more

nervous, more refined, more sensitive than the boy. Severe, unjust, and especially humiliating or cruel punishment must tell with greater effect upon her mind and body; the impressions left are more lasting, in proportion as the frame is weak or the mind is sensitive; these effects for evil, upon the mind of the girl, are often incalculable, and they survive long after the memory of their infliction has disappeared; and upon the physical constitution they are often lifelong, and even criminal—if not in the intention of the teacher, at least in the consequences that may follow the girl to her grave.

As we gave the boys the benefit of a couple of editorials, as a matter of courtesy, we should allow the girls the same amount of space. Moreover, it would be absolutely impossible to go into this question properly in one short article. For this week we will be satisfied with touching upon the health of the girl pupils, the physical care and attention which they should receive; we thus leave the consideration of the instruction of the mind, by *precept* and *example*, also the training or education of the heart, and the moulding of the character, for succeeding numbers. We may here repeat, what we pointedly stated in our articles about the boys, that we have special reference to our Catholic schools, our convents and academies, and above all, our boarding-schools for young girls. As in the case of colleges and boys' schools, there are exceptions to be found amongst them; to some of them certain of our suggestions may be intended: few of them can take all our words as directed towards them; fewer still can say that none of these little caps fit them.

Few are the young girls, who are sent at an early age to a boarding school, that are really as healthy or as robust as they appear. Red cheeks and stout limbs are not always signs of perfect health and ruggedness in a girl. When from the more tender years up to ten or twelve these children are placed under the care of sisters or teachers in convents or academies, these latter should be taught that these little ones require nourishment, sleep, absence of excitement and suffering, just as much as the most sensitive plants. Therefore, early rising, long hours of study, constant class-work, severe punishments, kneeling on hard floors and standing in corners are so many wrongful treatments that may often result in the retardment of growth, or the bringing on of simple or complicated maladies, that only develop into chronic diseases in later life. These little ones deserve, and should receive every consideration that, in a comfortable home, would fall to their lot. That such is not the fate of all the girl children in all our Canadian institutions we are very positive. As a rule, nothing could surpass the tender care of the good sisters of the different congregations for the young girls placed under their custody; but there are exceptions, and often it is not the superiors, nor her assistants that are to blame, but rather young persons unaccustomed to authority, and who, when they are allowed to take charge of a few children, seek at once to play the petty tyrant, at the expense of the young ones.

But there comes a still more important time: when girls are in their full growing period, when they step from childhood into what is called their "teens," when every care is required to be taken in order that the germs of no future illness may be implanted in their systems. It is then that the teacher is too often forgetful of the same period in her own life, and often recklessly exposes the

frail girls to dangers incalculable in their after effects. For example, these long and cold walks, the promenades from which no exemption is allowed, and for which no excuse will be taken; those more or less cruel punishments, of fasts, of long kneelings, of hours of standing, of slaps and cuffs, or of enforced study when the pupil is actually unfit for it. These things are better understood than we can explain them. Suffice to say that the physical systems of the young girls must be most carefully guarded, or else we will yet have a generation of sickly, useless and dying females. It is in the school, the convent, the academy, the boarding-school above all, that hundreds of female constitutions are either ruined or saved. The majority of the good and holy women, who direct so well the houses of Catholic education, are aware of the heavy obligations that rest upon their shoulders in regard to this matter; but, also, they are not always surrounded by assistants, teachers, or directresses as careful or as well informed as themselves. We would therefore beg of our sisters—in the different congregations and orders—who have charge of houses of education, to pay a most particular attention to the physical welfare of the pupils, in all their treatments, especially in punishments,—punishments that should never exist for girls.

THE MANCHESTER MARTYRS.

This is a memorable year in jubilees, silver and golden; there are several twenty-fifth anniversaries celebrated, for the good reason that the year 1867 was fruitful in important events. Twenty-five years ago this country, the American Republic and the British Isles were stirred into great activity by the universality of a movement that, of necessity and on account of the existing circumstances that accompanied it, was a failure, but which nevertheless created considerable excitement—consternation in some quarters, great enthusiasm in others—we refer to the Fenian uprising of 1867. We recall the story of that period in order to say a word about a sad, yet in a sense glorious, event that marked the month of November of that year. A quarter of a century ago to-day (23d November 1867) the political martyrdom of the three victims of a prejudiced commission was consummated in the city of Manchester—England. The purely historical portions of this short tribute to the memories of men whose names shall live in every Irish heart, from generation to generation, could not be told more clearly and exactly than in the words of Mr. Justin H. McCarthy, in his "Outline of Irish History."

Thus writes that able essayist; "Once again there was a period of political apathy, as far as constitutional agitation was concerned; but the '48 rebellion had left rebellious seed behind it. Even as the United Irishmen had generated Repeal, and Repeal Young Ireland, so Young Ireland generated the Phoenix conspiracy, and the Phoenix conspiracy soon grew into the Fenian Brotherhood, a vast organization, with members in all parts of the world, with money at its disposal, and, more than money, with soldiers trained by the American Civil War. Irish-Americans steadily promulgated the cause in Ireland, and prepared for the rising. The Fenians in America invaded Canada on the 31st May, 1866, occupied Fort Erie, defeated the Canadian Volunteers, and captured some flags. But the United States interfered to enforce the neutrality of its frontier, arrested most of the leaders, and extinguished the invasion. The Fenians in England planned the capture of Chester

Castle. The scheme was to seized the arms in the castle, to hasten on to Holyhead, to take possession of such steamers as might be there, and invade Ireland before the authorities in Ireland could be prepared for the blow; but the plan was betrayed, and failed. Then in March, 1867, an attempt at a general rising was made in Ireland, and failed completely: the very elements fought against it. Snow, rare in Ireland, fell incessantly, and practically buried the rising in its white shroud. Large numbers of prisoners were taken in England and Ireland, and sentenced to penal servitude. In Manchester two Fenian prisoners were released from the prison-van by some armed Fenians, and in the scuffle a policeman was killed. For this, three of the rescuers—Allen, Larkin and O'Brien—were hanged. Mr. John Stuart Mill and Mr. Bright strove hard to save their lives, with all the eloquence and all the influence they could bring to bear. Mr. Swinburne addressed a noble and equally unsuccessful poetic 'Appeal' to England to 'put forth her strength, and release,' for which his name shall be held in eternal honor by the people of Ireland."

Such is the very concise and truthful history of that great movement, its result, and the causes which led up to the cruel execution of the three patriotic, honest, and nobly heroic men, whose only crime was to have loved their country, sought her freedom, and to have rescued a couple of their fellow-countrymen from the grasp of the oppressor and the terrors of the dungeon or of penal servitude. That they were entirely innocent of murder, attempt at murder, or even a thought of murder, was clearly proven before the Commission that tried them. They were consequently found guilty of a political offence—treason-felony—and were sentenced to the scaffold. Not all the prayers of their powerful advocates, not all the efforts of Bright, not all the sympathy of the public, not all the extenuating circumstances, could save them: they were Irishmen, they belonged to the Fenian Brotherhood, they were in harmony with the physical force party, they were patriots, consequently there was no mercy, no justice for them. They elected to walk in the footsteps of Tone, Emmet, and Fitzgerald; the power that held them fast determined that they should expiate their political offence even as did the immortal Robert. If ever men fell martyrs for a just cause, Larkin, Allen and O'Brien should be numbered with them. Like the sons of Warsaw, as sung by Campbell, they—

"Found not a friend, nor pitying foe,
Strength in their arms, nor mercy in their woe."

They fell and for them "should fall the tears of a nation's grief." More heroic than the men who, surrounded by martial excitement, rush to victory or death, they calmly and bravely faced their fate and died offering up their young lives, so unjustly taken from them, as an oblation for their country. And who will say that perhaps the fruits of success that the race is beginning now to taste, did not spring from the seed sown by the martyred children of Erin?

The writer or speaker, on public and national events, is often too apt to mistake the inadvisability or inopportune-ness of a movement, for the motives that sway the actors and the legitimacy and justice of the object they have in view. Standing to-day upon the rim of the last quarter of a century, and looking at the respective positions of England and Ireland, beyond the Atlantic, of Canada and the United States, on this side of the Ocean, with the experience of the giant strides that have been made towards the goal of every true Irishman's national