

The True Witness

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 1860.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The first act of the Sicilian drama has now been played out. A capitulation was signed at Palermo on the 6th instant, by the terms of which that City was to be evacuated by the Royal troops; and more important still, Garibaldi has, in consequence of his recognition by the King of Naples, been suddenly transformed from a filibuster, into a European potentate.—He himself has organised a regular government for Sicily in the name of the King of Sardinia, and has issued his decree calling all Sicilians betwixt 17 and 50 years of age to take up arms in his cause. It is a remarkable, indeed significant fact however, that, according to the London Times' correspondent, the Sicilian patriots insist upon receiving pay for their services. No money, no patriotism, is the order of the day in Sicily.

The domestic news is of little interest. Lord John Russell has consigned his miserable bantling of a Reform Bill to an untimely grave, but promises another for next Session. Enlistment for the Pope still goes bravely on in Ireland; and the young men are finding out that they can be both more usefully and more honorably employed in Italy, fighting for their God and their Church, than in discharging menial offices in New York, and serving as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the Yankees who employ and ill-treat them. From India we hear of a strange movement or excitement, analogous to that of the "Chapputes" which preceded the great mutiny, as prevalent in the Behar districts. Slips of paper are passed from hand to hand, whereon is written "Juggernaut is closed. Distribute 500 copies, or your families are cursed."

The Europa arrived at Halifax on the 26th. Her news is uninteresting. The Great Eastern sailed from Southampton for New York on the 16th, but up to the time of our going to press tidings of her arrival had not been received.

ORANGEISM.—The Toronto Colonist of the 26th instant, gives the following notice of the proceedings of the Orange Society, and of the base usages to which the public buildings in the Protestant districts of Canada are applied by dishonest officials:—

The thirty-first session of the Grand Orange Lodge of British America was opened in the City of Ottawa on Tuesday, the 19th instant, at 12 o'clock, the Hon. J. H. Cameron, M. W. Grand Master presiding. His Honor the Warden and the County Council of Carlton being in Session were considerable enough, not only to place the County Court House at the disposal of the Grand Lodge, but to adjourn their own deliberations from the Court House to an adjoining building, in order to make room for the assembled Orange Delegates.—Toronto Colonist.

One complaint which with justice Catholics urge against their Protestant fellow-citizens is, that the latter have two standards of right and wrong; two measures—one wherever they meet out to themselves, and another wherewith they measure out to their Romish neighbors.—Of the truth of this complaint the above paragraph affords incontestable proof. The public buildings of the Province, toward the erection and repairs of which Catholics are compelled to contribute, are by Protestant officials placed at the disposal of a secret politico-religious Society, notorious not in Ireland only, but in Canada also, for its bitter hostility towards the Catholic portion of the community; and the public authorities—from whom we have the right to demand the most perfect neutrality in politics and religion—adjourn their deliberations, in order that the Court House may be entirely and uninterruptedly devoted to the service of the Orange-men!

Now let us suppose the circumstances of the case reversed. That at Quebec, or in some part of Lower Canada where the Catholics are in an immense majority, the public buildings, the Court House, had been handed over to the exclusive use of a secret society standing in the same position towards Protestants, as that in which Orangeism stands towards Catholics. Let us try and conceive the general outcry, the burst of indignation, with which the report of such an outrage upon decency, justice, and fair play, such a wanton insult to Protestants, would be received by the Globe, the Leader, the Toronto Colonist, and other members of the Upper Canadian Protestant press; and yet when these things are done, but done by Protestants, that press is silent, or only notices the disgraceful circumstances in order to approve of them.

There is no man, there is no journal in the Province that will indeed dare to defend by argument the action of the Warden, and County Council of Carlton; there is none who will venture to controvert the proposition that the Court House, that the Palace of Justice, should never be degraded to the services of a faction.

And yet though no one will venture to defend none of the Protestant organs of the press will dare to condemn the improper conduct of the Carlton officials, so great and so prevalent is the dread of Orangeism. Everywhere the monster raises its foul head, and asserts its baneful influence. The Courts of Justice are polluted by its presence; the administration of the law in Upper Canada is suspected, and more than suspected of being subject to its arbitrary dictates; and the officers to whom the administration of that law is confided are known to be its docile tools. Have we not seen, with our own eyes, one of the very first legal dignitaries of the Province leading at his heels a vile mob of Orange rowdies—swaggering with drawn sword, and staggering through the mud, at the head of a drunken rabble, the sweeping of the Toronto brothels and pot-houses? Have we not heard, with our own ears, the shouts, the blasphemous execrations of his following of inebriate rascals, eager to umbrage their hands in Popish blood? And seeing, and hearing such things, can it be wondered at that we have nearly lost all respect for the law and its officers, in so far at least as Upper Canada is concerned?

The curse of Orangeism is in fact more grievous in Upper Canada than it is, than it ever was even in Ireland. In the latter country the evils of Orangeism have been to some, and often to no inconsiderable degree, modified by the fact that its officers or leaders, were, in spite of their political bigotry and fanaticism, gentlemen; gentlemen by birth, gentlemen in their sympathies, and not destitute of that chivalrous spirit which is the characteristic of the gentleman, no matter of what denomination, either in religion or in politics. But here in Canada, we have all the bigotry, all the political fanaticism of the old Irish Orangeman in his worst days, but without any leavening even of that gentlemanly and chivalrous spirit which, in Ireland often restricted and modified the inherent brutality of Orangeism. Its leaders or officers in Canada, are, if wealthy, in no respect morally superior to, or distinguishable from, the very lowest and most degraded of the swinish herd of which its ranks are everywhere composed. A pinch-beck aristocracy, bears its scarlet honors, and takes infamous precedence over the less conspicuous rascals whose names are unrecorded amongst the "most worshipful" snobs who preside over the deliberations of the Orange Grand Lodges, of British North America. A Canadian Orangeman, in short, is one—especially if he be an official in high standing with the Order—with whom it would not be prudent to have any pecuniary transactions, and in whose vocabulary there is no such word as honor. Hence it is that Orangeism in Canada is of a far lower character than it is in Ireland; that, if in the latter it is often hateful, here it is always loathsome and contemptible.

And yet if we may credit the hints thrown out by the Colonist, this odious and contemptible society has it in contemplation to thrust itself on the notice of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and to present an official address to our expected illustrious visitor. This indeed, seems hardly credible; but it is as difficult to assign limits to the presumption and insolence of Orangeism, as to its cruelty and disregard of truth and justice. It is well, however, that the Catholics of Canada should be forewarned of what is contemplated by their enemies; and, that being forewarned they should be on their guard. It is possible, therefore, barely possible, that encouraged by the unstatesman-like and most ungentleman-like precedent afforded some years ago, the Orange body may venture to approach the heir apparent to the British throne with an address; but it is in the highest degree improbable that that illustrious personage will be so unmindful of what he owes to his mother's loyal Canadian Catholic subjects, of what he owes to himself, as, in a certain sense, her representative, and above all, of what he owes to her who is his sovereign as well as our sovereign—as to receive that address; or to offer such a cowardly and wanton insult to the Catholics of Canada, as would be implied by any official, or quasi-official, recognition of an extra legal and secret politico-religious, anti-Catholic society. The Prince will, no doubt, be accompanied by some responsible adviser, who will guide our Royal guest by his sage counsels; and we cannot bring ourselves to believe that any English gentleman would venture upon a step the immediate and inevitable result of which would be to convert a season of rejoicing and festivity into one of heart-burning and ill-will. Better—we say it advisedly—better would it be that the Prince of Wales should never set his foot on our shores, than that he should visit us only to add fresh fuel to the flames of sectarian discord, which already rage far too fiercely in our midst.

But should our worst fears be realised; should in an evil moment our expected visitor be induced to give encouragement to that secret society which is the curse and the disgrace of every country where it has obtained a footing—we, Catholics, must be mindful of what we owe to ourselves; we must be the guardians of our own honor, and of our own integrity. That we are loyal subjects we must always testify, by our quiet orderly conduct, by our obedience to the laws of the land, and our submission to all constituted authorities; yet, we besitate not to say it, we owe it to ourselves, to our holy religion, and we may add to the principles of our civil Constitution, to mark by our silence, and averted looks, our strong unqualified condemnation of him who avails himself of his exalted position to offer to us wanton, unmerited, and most cowardly insult, by giving any semblance even of recognition or sanction to the accursed Orange Society. No salute, no cheer, no word of welcome from Catholic lips should greet the advent, passage, or departure of one, who should so far forget his duties both as a prince and as a gentleman, as to give a word or sign of welcome, or of recognition even, to Orangeism, and to the eternal enemies of our civil and religious liberties. The demeanor of our expected visitor will, we may be sure, be closely watched; and if unfortunately he should be so ill-advised as to throw himself into the arms of a hateful party, instead

of proclaiming himself the representative of Majesty towards all Queen Victoria's Canadian subjects, without distinction of creed or national origin—then let him receive his welcome from Orangemen, but from them alone; and let no Catholic approve himself so vile, so craven hearted, as to join in paying any honor to one, no matter how exalted his earthly rank, who has offered foul dishonor and outrage to his spiritual mother. This is, we know, plain speaking; but it is always well to speak the truth plainly and fearlessly.

THE SEPARATE SCHOOL QUESTION.—This is a question which neither "Ins" nor "Outs" desire to have raised. The former because, though generally not ill-disposed towards the claims of Catholics for Freedom of Education, they dread the anti-Catholic or Clear Grit party; and because, however favorably disposed they may feel towards Catholics, they are far more strongly impressed with the advantages of retaining office, and will not therefore incur the risk of a defeat from the hands of their political opponents the "Outs."

The latter also would gladly, if possible, evade or stave off for the moment all discussion on the Separate School Question; because whilst they dare not proclaim themselves false to all their ancient pledges and political antecedents, by openly supporting any system of separate schools, they at the same time are anxious, in view of an approaching general election, to avoid saying or doing anything to provoke the hostility of Catholics, or to open the eyes of their deluded Popish adherents as to their ultimate intentions. By common consent of the "Ins" and of the "Outs," the School Question of Upper Canada has been postponed to a more convenient season. Even the Globe, once so rabid, so eloquent in its denunciations of the nefarious designs of the "Dogans" upon the State Schools, confines itself to deprecating any further "extension of the Separate School system."

And yet, despite of all precautions of worldly minded statesmen, and illiberal fanatics, this question must force itself yet more and more upon the attention of the public, and of the legislature. Ever and anon it persists in bubbling up, and will not be arrested in its flow. Were the Catholics of Upper Canada to hold their peace, the very rocks—the Anglicans and the Wesleyans—would cry out, and rebuke their unworthy, unmanly silence. Day by day, the School Question is assuming its true position amongst the social questions of the day. It is no longer merely a question of Catholics against Protestants, but it comes before the public in the guise in which we have always endeavored to array it; as a question of the rights of the family as against the State, of the claims of the father as against "Jack-in-Office." It is no longer, to use the vague language of the "Clear Grits," a "sectarian question;" it is the question of Freedom of Education ver. State-Schoolism.

So long as we had to fight the battle simply as Catholics; or so long as we based our claims for exemption from taxation for the support of State Schools upon an exclusively denominational basis, we were weak. Indeed, throughout the struggle Catholics have almost always been content to abandon the natural advantages of their proper position, and to accept the proffered combat on the lower and inferior ground selected by Protestants. Of this the fact that Catholics condescended to argue for "Separate" schools is an instance; for by so doing they logically implied the right of the State to establish "Common" schools. They condescended to ask as a privilege, that which was theirs, by eternal right; to sue in forma pauperis for that which was their's by inheritance, and of which no man had the right to deprive them.—The real state of the question is not—"why should there be 'Separate' schools?" but "why—in the name of common sense, and of the first principles of heaven-born justice—why should there be any Common Schools?"

And by fighting the battle on exclusively religious grounds, we necessarily fought it single-handed, or almost single-handed; for so long as the question was stated as a question of Catholics ver. Protestants—the latter were united against us. We, therefore, always insisted that, since to fight successfully we must win allies to our side from amongst Protestants, we should state the question in its true terms; that we should base our opposition to State-Schoolism or common schools upon grounds common both to Protestants and Catholics; in a word that it was in our capacity of parents, of heads of families, and not in our character as Papists, that we should urge our claims upon the public, and upon the legislature. To Catholics, and arguing with Catholics on the School Question, we may apply Catholic premises, and may appeal to the authority of the Church; but when we have to deal with Protestants, who do not admit our Catholic premises, and who reject our Church's authority, we must content ourselves with urging our natural rights as parents; the natural right of the father—absolute as against the State—to educate his own children, and therefore to be exempt from all State interference with that natural right. Why—we always asked—in a country calling itself free, should there be any School Question at all?

We hail therefore as a good sign of a coming change, the action of our Protestant brethren on the School Question. The Methodists have taken it up, applying to University education the principles we have always sought to apply to primary education. The Anglicans, in their late Synods, have also taken the question up, and seem determined to apply those same principles in their behalf, and in behalf of their brother Protestants of other denominations. Heartily do we wish them success, and strongly would we urge upon Catholics, the wisdom, nay, the duty of aiding their separated brethren in throwing off the degrading and demoralising shackles of State-Schoolism. We should have no more talk about a "separate" system, for that presupposes the existence and prior claims of a "common" system; and it is precisely of the latter that we must get rid before we can establish any sound educational system. "Common" schools

and "Separate" schools are mutual contradictions; the one can thrive only in proportion as the others decline; and it is rank hypocrisy for the friends of Freedom of Education to conceal that they aim at the overthrow, root and branch of a "Common" school system. As the term "Dissenters" implies the existence of a dominant established Church, and as the term "separate" implies the existence of the established "common" school; so the latter also virtually implies that the former subsists only on sufferance, or as a special privilege.

Now certainly, Catholics should not ask for, should spurn with disdain, if offered to them, all special privileges. They should ask for their rights as citizens, and no more, but they should be content with nothing less. First, and most important of these rights, is the right as against the State—the correlative of his duty as before God—of the father to determine all the circumstances of his child's education. But this right is common to Protestants and Catholics. In joining issue, therefore, with our enemies, we should content ourselves with asserting the proposition that Education is not a legitimate function of the State; that it belongs to the family, and to the father, but not to the Civil Magistrate. Whether State-Schoolism be productive of the spread of intelligence amongst the people? whether its tendencies are moral or immoral? are questions altogether foreign to the purpose, into which we should not condescend to enter. Enough for us to urge our right to educate, feed, and clothe our own children, and its corollary, our right to be exempt from the burden of feeding, clothing, and educating, other men's children. Thus shall we put the School Question on its right basis; thus shall we eliminate the religious element—on which Catholics and Protestants can never agree, or have ought in common—from its discussion; and thus, fighting the battle on the high vantage ground of natural right, on which ground both Catholics and Protestants can make a common stand, we may reasonably hope that the cause of Freedom of Education shall triumph; and that "common" schools may, ere long, be numbered with the exploded absurdities of rule and ignorant ages.—We must, in short, fight Protestants with their own weapons; and retort upon the supporters of State-Schoolism, their own arguments against State-Churchism.

We cannot afford space or time for a lengthy notice of the Toronto Freeman's rejoinder to the True Witness of the 8th instant. Suffice it to say that our cotemporary willfully mistakes facts, and must bear to be contradicted.

It is not true that Mr. McGee's boast in the House of Assembly to the effect that he "would never consent to abandon one single conviction, at the dictate of any authority, that did not reach him through that reason which was at once the charter and the chart of the tempestuous voyage of political life," was made "as a protest against the dictatorial and denunciatory style of speaking of himself, and his public acts by the True Witness"—as the Freeman of the 15th instant impudently asserts. Mr. McGee's boast of independence of "ANY AUTHORITY" was made in immediate connection with, and in reference to, a letter written and published by the Catholic Bishops of Canada; wherein the latter gave expression to their opinions upon several important politico-religious questions on which he, Mr. McGee, had taken a decided and well known stand. This shall be evident from a perusal of the passage which we again publish in its integrity.

Replying to the Provincial Secretary, Mr. McGee said:—

"The hon. Secretary prefaced this part of his speech with an expression of regret that religious topics should ever be mixed up with political discussions—and if there is any man, at this moment in Canada, entitled, more than another, to echo that regret, I am that man. It is but yesterday, Sir, since acting under certain impressions or representations, the chief Pastors of the Church, to which it is my happiness to belong, were induced to publish their views, on questions—such as representation by population—on which I had taken a well understood stand. [Hear, hear.] Sir, I do not believe there is in my heart one particle of irreverence towards those high dignitaries. If it could be taken out of my breast, and all its invisible springs and levers examined, as a watch may be by a watchmaker, I do not believe there would be found there one motive principle, urging its action, to any end but reverent obedience and cheerful submission to ecclesiastical authority. Yet while I remain in political life, using all its opportunities of observation, I shall never consent to abandon one single conviction, at the dictate of any authority, that does not reach me through that reason which is at once the charter and the chart of the tempestuous voyage of public life."

We leave it to the candid and intelligent reader to say, whether the above repudiation of "any authority," asserted in the passage by us italicised, was made—as we pretend—in reference to the action of the "Chief Pastors of the Church" in publishing "their views on questions" upon which Mr. McGee had taken a well understood stand; or whether, as the Freeman asserts, it was designed to be understood by those to whom it was addressed merely "as a protest against the dictatorial style of the True Witness."

That at his election for Montreal in '57, the maintenance of the Constitution "as it is,"—that is to say, in such a form as to secure to Lower and Catholic Canada a political equality with the Upper and Protestant section of the Province—formed part of the political platform of Mr. McGee's Lower Canadian Catholic constituents—to whom he is primarily responsible for his political acts—is evident from the fact that in his Address to the electors of Montreal—that which was actually made public,—he felt it necessary to pledge himself to uphold that Constitution "as it is;" because all the necessary reforms could be obtained under it, by the action of a liberal and tolerant representative body, on a responsible Executive. Without this pledge, we are well assured that many who voted for Mr. McGee would not have recorded their votes in his favor. So well assured also was Mr. McGee of this, that he felt himself constrained—even after the Ministerial party had spurned him, and refused to purchase him at any price—to retain in his Address the pledge to uphold the Constitution of Canada "as it is."

The Freeman complains also, that we "ask him" (the Freeman) to ask Mr. McGee for liberty to authorise the publication of certain letters; which, if published, would establish the falsity, absurdity, and cowardly malignity of the Freeman's insinuation that our political hostility to Mr. McGee, and to his alliance with George Brown, is owing to Mr. McGee's Irish origin.—The complaint of the Freeman is ill-founded.—We did not ask the Freeman to ask Mr. McGee for permission to publish that correspondence; but we addressed ourselves to the latter directly, and without reference to the intermediation of our Toronto cotemporary. Here are our very words, which sufficiently refute the latter's miserable attempt to shuffle out of a very disagreeable position. Addressing ourselves to Mr. McGee, we said:—

"We hereby give the latter our full permission—nay, we earnestly request him—to publish every line and every word of that correspondence in the Toronto Freeman, in order that the public, whose ear his organ has abused, may judge betwixt us. If Mr. McGee will not, or cannot publish the correspondence referred to, we here ask his permission to publish it in the True Witness.—True Witness, 8th instant.

It will thus be seen that we addressed ourselves directly, to Mr. McGee. But of our permission to publish the correspondence alluded to, he has not availed himself; neither has he, for reasons which we can easily appreciate, accorded to us the permission to do so. Instead of adopting a bold and manly course, he has recourse to subterfuge; and tries to sneak out of the dilemma in which he finds himself, by making his tool of the Freeman mendaciously assert that we had addressed ourselves to him through the Freeman, asking the latter to act as our "attorney." We do not qualify this conduct of the Freeman as it deserves, because we do not desire to use harsh language; but we again leave the candid and intelligent reader to draw his own conclusions; and to judge betwixt him who courts publicity, who invites scrutiny—and him who, to avoid the test, has recourse to a miserable subterfuge, not to say downright falsehood.

We might add also that it is passing strange, that the writer in the Freeman who as he himself boasts, "knows" that Mr. McGee "never meant the words of receiving no political dictation except such as reached him through his reason in any other sense than as a protest against the True Witness," should not also "know" Mr. McGee's mind on the subject of the publication of the correspondence by us called for. And we would in conclusion beg the Freeman to bear in remembrance that, if we have called upon Mr. McGee either to publish that correspondence himself, or to authorise us to publish it, it is solely with the view of showing how false, how utterly unfounded, were the insinuations of Mr. McGee's tool and organ of the press, as to the cause of the political rupture which we deplore, but which Mr. McGee's dishonesty, and his utter want of principle imperatively forced upon us. Again, however, we say that we confidently appeal to an impartial and intelligent court to judge betwixt him who earnestly courts publicity, and him who sneaks into a corner, takes shelter behind a miserable subterfuge, or assassin like, rushes out from time to time to stab men "in the dark."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—An Irishman's communication has been received, but as we do not wish to rip up old sores, we must decline inserting it. This only would we observe, in conclusion, and in justification of the accuracy of the Belleville correspondent of the True Witness.

That our issue of the 15th instant did not originate the report of Mr. McGee's offensive remarks in his Belleville lecture, is evident from the extract by us given last week from the Belleville Intelligencer of the 8th instant. We ourselves heard, as early as the 7th of the present month, the remarks of Mr. McGee on the French language severely commented upon; and our Belleville correspondent we know to be a gentleman of intelligence and veracity—one who would not willingly deceive, and who could not have been himself deceived as to the truth of the facts by him testified to. We may also add, that if Mr. McGee did not use the language imputed to him both by our correspondent, and by the Belleville Intelligencer, the fact that two persons, having no communication with one another, should both have come away from the lecture vividly impressed with the idea that the lecturer made use of certain expressions to which he had never given utterance, presents to the curious, one of the most remarkable, indeed inexplicable, acoustic phenomena on record.

(Communicated.)

As long as Thomas Darcy McGee acts the gentleman and the man of honor, he has a right to be treated as such; but the moment that he descends to the despicable resource of "quibbling"—(to use the mildest term)—his undoubted talents and learning will not save him from the execration of all honest men. But when, besides the "suppression veri," he tries to sully the fair fame of one of the most honest journalists in the world, and to fasten upon the True Witness the crime of which he himself is guilty, he deserves to be scouted from society as a dangerous and suspicious member. When Mr. McGee accused the True Witness with originating, what he calls the "mis-statement," with regard to his language at the Belleville lecture, he knew full well, that that "mis-statement" (as he calls it) did not originate with the True Witness, nor even with the Belleville Intelligencer; but that it originated the very evening of the lecture, and immediately after its delivery—and that when hard pressed by several gentlemen for having enunciated such tyrannical sentiments, he neither denied nor sought to palliate the expressions, but absolutely strove to sustain them by arguments. Nay more, on its being pointed out to him, that if his principles were conceded with regard to Lower Canada, they would justify England in the attempted suppression of the Irish language, he replied that he did not care, for he believed that the English "language was destined by God, for His own good ends, to be-