

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.  
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We beg to remind our Correspondents that no letters will be taken out of the Post-Office, unless prepaid.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MARCH 31.

ECCLIASTICAL CALENDAR.

MARCH—1865.  
Friday, 31—Precious Blood.  
APRIL—1865.  
Saturday, 1—Of the Feria.  
Sunday, 2—PASSION SUNDAY.  
Monday, 3—St. Francis de Paul, C.  
Tuesday, 4—St. Isidore, B. D.  
Wednesday, 5—St. Vincent Ferrer, C.  
Thursday, 6—Of the Feria.  
The "Forty Hours" Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will commence as follows:—  
Friday, March 31—Convent of Terrebonne.  
Sunday, April 2—St. Antoine Abbe.  
Tuesday, 4—Brothers of Longueuil.  
Thursday, 6—Brothers of Beauharnois.

NEWS OF THE WEEK

Mr. Newdegate, a sort of Imperial George Brown, and, like our own unsavory Canadian acquaintance, an unscrupulous dealer in all manner of obscene fictions against Nuns and Priests, has made his annual onslaught upon Convents, in the shape of a motion for the appointment of a "Smelling Committee" and has again signally failed. His motion was rejected in the House of Commons by a majority of 27—the numbers on a division being as 79 to 106.

The moral triumph of our religious institutions is greater however than these numbers would at first sight seem to indicate. Mr. Newdegate, good credulous man, in his speech introducing his motion, told a large number of awful stories concerning Nuns, and the cruelties practised in Convents, concerning Priests and their wickedness. He spoke of chains, and dungeons, and iron bars and locks of formidable dimensions, and diabolical ingenuity. He did his best to move his hearers to indignation by marvellous legends, such as a dirty fellow of the name of Hobart Seymour delights to retail to evangelical audiences, male and female—of run-away Nuns, and their sufferings; but in the language of Sam Weller, it "was all no go." Even his friends laughed at him, and the Protestant Times had to confess that "all the cases brought forward" by the Protestant press and by Protestant legislators to authorize legal interference with Convents,—

"break down, more or less, upon a thorough investigation."

Not one single case of hardship, not one single instance to justify legal interference could Mr. Newdegate and his friends adduce; and yet they did their best to get hold of such cases, instigated by their hatred of Popery in general, and of Conventual life in particular. It is no slight triumph that out of such a searching ordeal our religious institutions should by the confession of the Times have passed unscathed.

The number of Convents now in Great Britain exceeds 200, whilst in 1841 there were in England and Wales only 16. This it is that prompted the notion of Mr. Newdegate, who naturally thought that rather than be subjected to the insults and obscene impertinences of a "Smelling Committee" such as he proposed, the Religious Ladies would abandon their houses altogether, and seek elsewhere for that personal liberty and domestic privacy to which their sex entitles them; but which if they had the power, the evangelical Protestants of England would deny to them. The Times however insists that there is no occasion for such an infraction of the rights of every British subject, as is implied in the legalising of domiciliary visits to the private houses of Catholic ladies; no occasion for alarm at the constant and rapid growth of Monasteries in England, because that growth is merely the symptom and the measure of the spread of the Catholic religion: and because the genius of the English people is so opposed, both on principle and habit, to the Catholic religion, that no one need fear that it will one day again become the religion of the country. This seems to us but sorry comfort for Exeter Hall. If the growth of Convents be the sign and measure of the spread of Popery; and as these have increased nearly thirteenfold in a quarter of a century, and are still increasing in at least the same ratio, it certainly seems as if ere long all in England that is not infidel will be Catholic.

There is nothing of much consequence to note in the affairs of Continental Europe since our last. Austria and Prussia seem about to come to loggerheads on the question of the Duchies which conjointly they wracked from Denmark.

In Italy Victor Emmanuel is trying to regain his lost popularity amongst the Piedmontese. The Pope replies to the noisy attacks of his enemies by his patient and sublime attitude, much to the indignation of the Protestant world, which expected better things from the Convention. The Times especially is indignant at the attitude of the Holy Father, who will neither submit himself to Victor Emmanuel, nor avail himself of the permission so generously accorded to him, a Sovereign Prince, by the Convention of Sept. 15th, to raise an army for his own protection against the hordes of brigands instigated against him by the Piedmontese. The Pope neither by word nor deed, will recognise the validity of a Convention to which he was no party, or admit that it imposes any obligation on him. Besides of what use would it be to him to raise troops for his own defence? He did so once, and immediately they were attacked and destroyed by his unprincipled neighbor: were he to raise another army, and were that army to threaten even, any serious opposition to the designs of Victor Emmanuel, he would again, in spite of Conventions, invade the Papal Territory, and with the legions at his command, repeat the brutal massacre at Castelfidardo upon the handful of brave and loyal defenders of the Holy See.—Mgr. Talbot is spoken of as the successor to the late Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

The prospects of the Confederates are most gloomy, and the end of the first civil war seems to be approaching. There has been some fighting with Sherman's force, and the enemy seem to have been repulsed in one or two instances, but the immense superiority of numbers must, unless a miracle intervene, assure to them the final victory. It will be a sad day for Canada, a sad day for liberty on this Continent, when the South is subjugated, and reduced to the condition of Poland; and hence the Witness and other annexationist and anti-British journals published in this Province, are elate, and rejoice exceedingly over every success announced by the Yankee press. Now, when too late, the London Times recommends the adoption of precautions against the aggressive tendencies of the Northerners, who flushed with triumph over the Confederate States, and inspired with that bitter hatred of England, and English institutions which is the one ineradicable passion of all Yankees, will not fail to turn their victorious arms against Mexico to the South, and Canada to the North. That this would be the result of Federal victory any one not a born fool must have seen years ago, even before the Trent affair, from the insulting and hostile tone of the entire Northern press when speaking of England; and as Great Britain then refused to adopt the only policy which could assure the independence of the Confederate States, and the integrity of her North American Provinces, it is "too late" to take precautions now.

Judgment in the case of the St. Alban Raiders was pronounced by Judge Smith on Wednesday.

THE FAMILY VERSUS THE STATE.—DR. RYERSON AND STATE SCHOOLISM.—Mr. O'Reilly of Kingston has so fully and so ably replied to that portion of Dr. Ryerson's pamphlet in which the first named gentleman is assailed for the expression of opinions unfavorable to the details of the existing Separate School Law at a late public meeting in Kingston—that we feel that it would be superfluous to say another word on the subject. As betwixt Dr. Ryerson and Mr. O'Reilly the case as to the details of the School Law is fully before the public of Upper Canada; and we doubt not that a verdict in favor of the latter will be returned by those who from practical experience are competent to pronounce judgment.

But Dr. Ryerson does more than dispute the accuracy of certain details given by Mr. O'Reilly. He attacks the principle of Separate Schools; and in his capacity of Chief Superintendent of Education he prescribes to the Legislature the course which it should adopt, should the Catholics of U. Canada renew an agitation for reform in their School System. That course is, "to abolish the Separate School law altogether."—p. 17.

As an argument in favor of the adoption of this course, Dr. Ryerson, at p. 18 of his pamphlet, lays down the following proposition:—

"Separate Schools cannot be claimed upon any ground of right, as I have often shown in discussing the subject in former years."

This proposition established, there would be no room for further discussion. In it lies the whole question at issue. The Chief Superintendent affirms that he has proved it: he will pardon us for giving him a flat contradiction, and for asserting that not only has he never proved it, but that he has never yet dared to discuss even the question of "right" as betwixt the supporters of State-Schoolism, and those who assert that as against the State, the claims of the Family over the education of the child are absolute, and will brook no competition.

It is a question of "right" that Dr. Ryerson proposes: and one therefore which involves a question of theology, strange as this may perhaps appear to our Chief Superintendent. The moment we get into the domain of "right," we are in the domain of theology; for as all "rights"

are from God, and from Him alone, it follows that where we predicate "rights" there also we predicate a divine commission or authority.—The *onus probandi* rests of course with him who asserts the possession of such authority or divine commission.

Now in the proposition as laid down by Dr. Ryerson to the effect that "Separate Schools cannot be claimed upon any ground of 'right'" is implied or included the proposition, that the State has the "right" to establish "common schools," which schools—as every "right" implies a correlative "duty"—all its subjects without distinction are in duty bound to support. In other words, Dr. Ryerson's proposition implicitly asserts that the State, or civil magistrate, holds divine commission or authority from God to impose a common or uniform system of education upon all its citizens: that to the State in short, and not to the Family, God has committed the education of the child. This is what Dr. Ryerson asserts: this is the proposition which he boasts to have often proved: and again we meet this assertion, this arrogant boast, with an unqualified contradiction.

Whom does God hold responsible for the education of the child? The State or the Family? the father or the civil magistrate? There cannot be two responsible, but one responsible: and if Dr. Ryerson's proposition be true, then are the parents and the Family released from all moral responsibility for the education of their children: then is the commandment "Honor thy father and thy mother" but a form of idle unmeaning words, and the Decalogue should be so revised as to contain an injunction prescribing the child to reverence "Jack-in-Office," and to "Honor the Chief Superintendent of Education." If Dr. Ryerson have indeed proved that "Separate Schools cannot be demanded as a right" there where the State undertakes to meddle with education, he has proved a good deal more than he perhaps gives himself credit for; he has discredited the God of nature and the God of revelation: and he has finally established the principles of Socialism on the ruins of Christianity. In the School Question there are greater forces in presence of one another than Dr. Ryerson with his narrow contracted views is perhaps aware of. These rival and contending forces are "Socialism" and "Christianity;" nor is it logically possible, without renouncing the latter and adopting the principles of the former, to assert that the State has the right to prescribe a common system of education to all its citizens, or to determine how their children should be educated.

We start from the Christian premise that God holds the parent, and the parent alone, responsible for the education of the child; and as every obligation or duty implies a correlative right, we thence conclude that, to the parent, and to the parent alone, has God given the right to control the education of the child, and to determine wherein it shall consist, even to its minutest details.

If then the State, meddling therewith, where-with it has no right, or authority from God to meddle—that is to say with education; if intruding there where it has no right to intrude—that is to say within the sacred precincts of the Family, arrogate to itself the right of establishing "Common" schools, it becomes the duty of the Christian parent to resist that impertinent usurpation on his right; and he meets the Socialistic proposition of Dr. Ryerson that "Separate Schools cannot be claimed upon any ground of right," with the counter and Christian proposition:—

"Common schools cannot be claimed upon any ground of right."

And if "common" schools cannot be claimed or established upon any ground of right, then, if the State meddle with educational matters at all, it is bound to recognize the right of separate schools, if these be demanded by parents, and in the name of the Family, to whom alone belongs of right the education of the child, and of everything pertaining thereto.

Nor is it any answer to assert that in our actual state of society, of parents, many are too poor, and others too vicious or ignorant to perform their duties effectually towards their children; and that thus these parents having failed in their duties, have forfeited also their rights.

From these premises all that can logically be deduced is, not the "right" or the part of the State to establish, but the "expediency" of establishing, not "common" but, "pauper" schools for the education, not of the entire community, but, of the neglected children of pauper and criminal parents, unable or unwilling to perform their parental duties, and therefore self debarr'd from pleading their parental rights. But the thesis which Dr. Ryerson boastfully pretends that he has proved is this:—That the State has the "right" to assume the functions of the "universal parent" of the St. Simonians; and in this character to control and direct the education of the children of all its citizens. It is this tyrannical, anti-Christian, proposition which we deny; which it is the duty of every freeman, of every Christian, of every father of a family keenly conscious of his duties, and therefore as keenly sensitive as to his rights, to protest against; and to denounce. We avoid entering into the discussion of de-

tails of the reforms sought for by the Catholic minority of Upper Canada, and for several reasons. They alone are competent to judge of the expediency of those details, and it would be presumptuous for us to appear even as if we wished to dictate to them in a matter in which they are the principals interested. Besides, this task has been ably and faithfully accomplished by Mr. O'Reilly of Kingston, for whose letter we will endeavour to make room in our next. In the meantime, we content ourselves with asserting and contending for the principle, that as the education of the child is the duty of the parent, not of the civil magistrate, the legitimate function of the Family not that of the State—so if the latter interfere in any manner whatsoever to make material provision for education, it shall do so in such manner only as shall still leave every parent, every head of a Family, in the full enjoyment of his heaven-derived rights over his children. But this is not the case where the parent is taxed for the support of a school of which he does not approve, and to which he does not think fit to send his children: and therefore we conclude that the "right" to Separate Schools exists for all who choose to assert that "right," (irrespective of their several religious denominations with which the State has no business to meddle,) there where the State has already imposed a tax for educational purposes. We do not, as does the Witness, insist upon the Voluntary System either for religion or education, for the Church or the School, though if the system be good in one case, it must be good in the other. But admitting the expediency of a general tax upon property for the purpose of education, we assert the right of the individual parent, who shall not have forfeited his parental rights by the dereliction of his parental duties, to determine for himself in every particular instance absolutely and without let or hindrance of any kind, to what school, to what educational institution, his quota of taxation shall be applied. This right we assert for all, not discriminating betwixt Catholics and Protestants; we assert it, not in the name of any particular Church, but in the name of the Christian Family, to whom, and not to the State, the child belongs.

The question of "Confederation or Annexation?" is the subject of lively discussion amongst our contemporaries of the press, more especially amongst the members of that section which is published in the French language. According to the arguments of one side, Canada has no alternative betwixt "Confederation and Annexation." According to those of the other side, the first offers no guarantee against the second; neither the acceptance nor the rejection of the Ministerial scheme will hasten or delay an event which, to do both parties justice, we will hope is not looked upon with favor by either.

To make a frank confession of faith, we will not hesitate to declare that, if we could see in the Brown-Cartier scheme of Union for the British North American Provinces, any the slightest chance of evading entirely, or even of staying off for any length of time, the other alternative, *i.e.* Annexation, we would not hesitate to give to the first named our support, in spite of our strong objections to many of its details, and its centralising tendencies. Of all the evils, political, moral, and religious, which could befall Lower Canada, as a Catholic country, we look upon "Annexation" as beyond all comparison the greatest. To escape such an evil, such a humiliation, no material sacrifice would be too great. Only, and this is with us the difficulty, we see not, and nobody has as yet attempted to show, how "Confederation" will act as preventive of "Annexation."

We believe that the argument that it will do so, in the mouths of some, a snare, a delusion, a dishonest argument; in the mouths of others, sincere perhaps, but founded upon a total misconception of our actual circumstances, and of the state of public opinion in England; but in both cases it is a weak and vicious argument.

"Union is Strength," we are told, *utque ad nauseam*; and therefore the British North American Provinces united, will be stronger against the aggressions of the people of the neighboring Republic, than they would be if disunited.

Perfectly true no doubt; but this argument is based on the false assumption that the British North American Provinces are not for all military purposes of offence and defence, united already; and as closely united as, considering their peculiar geographical conditions, they could possibly be under the Brown-Cartier scheme of Union.—The people of all the British North American Provinces are, as it is, the citizens of one Empire, subjects of one sovereign, and war with any one of them means necessarily war with all the others, and with the whole force of the British Empire. Were their relative political conditions as those of France and Spain, of Belgium and Holland, we could understand the meaning of the argument "Union is Strength;" but we do not, we confess it, we do not see how the substitution of one kind of political union, for another already existing political union, can in any way augment the military strength of these Provinces, or their capacity to offer resistance to an invader.

We believe that our only chance of safety,

that our only guarantee against Annexation, consists, not in any change of the nature of the existing political relations betwixt ourselves, but in the maintenance of the Union which binds us to Great Britain, and which therefore at the same time binds together in a real Federal bond all the Provinces of the British Empire without distinction. Things that are united to the same, are united to one another; and so long as we remain united to the British Empire, forming together with New Zealand and New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Van Dieman's Land integral portions of that Empire, we see not what other form of Union is needed, or can be beneficial to us, in a military point of view.

On the other hand, we believe that any political change which shall have the tendency to sever or to weaken the tie which connects us with that Empire, will have the tendency to throw us into the arms of the neighboring Republic. "La domination Britannique," says the *Canadien* of the 22nd inst., "est notre planche de salut;" an opinion in which we need scarcely add we entirely concur. Now we fear that the political changes propounded by the Quebec Delegates will have the effect of depriving us of this "plank of salvation," by withdrawing us from "British domination."—Hence our opposition to those changes.

Nor are we singular in this opinion. It has been entertained and publicly expressed by some of the leading publicists of the British Empire, in the Legislature, and in the press. Perhaps on this point we may be permitted to cite the opinion of the *Edinburgh Review*, no mean authority:—

"It is impossible to regard this proposed federation in any other light than that of a transition stage to eventual independence."—*Edinburgh Review*, Jan. '65, p. 101.

"Hence it comes to pass that we accept, not with fear and trembling, but with unmingled joy and satisfaction, a voluntary proclamation, which, though couched in the language of loyalty, and proffering an enduring allegiance to our Queen, falls yet more welcome on our ears as the harbinger of the future and complete independence of British North America."—*ib.*, p. 102.

At all events, and in this all will agree with us, the maintenance of British connection is essential to our successful defence against the aggressive tendencies of the neighboring Republic.

In this also many, if not all, will agree with us: That the scheme agreed to by the Quebec Delegates, and laid before our Provincial Parliament, would, if carried into execution, have the effect of weakening, and ultimately destroying the tie which binds us to Great Britain, whose protection to us as against the Northern States is our plank of salvation.

Now it is never good policy to renounce the certain for the uncertain. It is certain that British connection is our best defence against Annexation; but it is by no means certain that the scheme of the Quebec Delegates would afford us any additional means of defence at all: whilst in the opinion of many it would deprive us of the aid which, as a British Province, we have the right to expect, and would receive from our Imperial head. What follows from these premises? This—That it would be foolish on our part to risk the loss of the certain benefit of British connection, for the uncertain benefits of Confederation, which would probably deprive us of that connection.

We should bear in mind too that the great supporter of the Ministerial scheme of Union is Mr. George Brown; and remembering this man's antecedents, his notorious Yankee proclivities, his democratic tendencies, his undisguised attachment to the principles of the Revolution in Europe, which are identical with the principles of the Federal or Yankee, we cannot bring ourselves to believe that he sees in the scheme which he advocates any guarantee against Annexation; any screen betwixt us and Washington towards which his loving, anxious glances are ever cast; any security for the independence or the autonomy of Lower Canada, with her Catholic, and therefore anti-revolutionary principles, or any pledge for the preservation of the monarchical and anti-democratic elements in our political and social life. On the contrary, it is, we believe, because of the absence of any of these things; because it interposes no obstacle to, but rather invites, Annexation; because it is a measure essentially democratic, anti-monarchical, and revolutionary, that he Mr. George Brown, the democrat, and the No-Popery revolutionist of the reddist hue, gives to it his support; and propounds it to the Clear-Grits of Upper Canada as the remedy for the evils which French Canadian and priestly influence in the Legislature imposes on them. We might just as reasonably expect to find Cobden or Bright assuming in the House of Commons the attitude of defenders of an hereditary landed aristocracy, and of the laws of primogeniture, as to find Mr. George Brown aiding and abetting in a measure designed to affirm monarchical principles and British connection in Canada, and calculated to avert "Annexation" to the neighboring democratic Republic.

But though we have, can have, no faith in Mr. George Brown's professions of loyalty, we can willingly believe, that of our French Canadian friends who advocate his Union scheme, as a means of averting the disgrace and calamity of