

The True Witness

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 1858.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The appointment of Marshal Pélissier as successor to M. Persigny, is generally accepted as a symptom of a desire on the part of the Emperor to cultivate friendly relations with the British Government, and is looked upon as likely to restore the amiable cordiale that prevailed before the melancholy affair of the 14th of January.

There was much commercial depression in France, exciting the serious attention of the government. The position of the Emperor seems precarious; and though owing to the restrictions on the press, it is no easy matter to arrive at the truth, enough leaks out to throw very considerable doubts upon the stability of the present regime.

From India we may expect decisive intelligence in a few days. Our latest dates from Bombay are to the 9th ult. Sir Colia Campbell at the head of a force of near 50,000 men of all arms, and with a magnificent park of artillery had, on the 6th ult., arrived within a mile of Lucknow, where the great body of the mutineers were assembled, apparently with the design of there making their final stand.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

The time of the Legislative Assembly has been chiefly occupied in enquiring into the stupendous frauds which characterised the late elections; and the Session will be over before it will be possible to decide who are, and who are not, legally entitled to take their seats in the House.

On Friday the investigation into the Lotbiniere election frauds was proceeded with; when Mr. R. S. Noel, Returning Officer testified to a conversation that he had with Mr. O'Farrell—the sitting member. Before the election writ was issued, the latter asked Mr. Noel—how much more he—Mr. Noel—would receive if the election were contested, than if it were not?

On the same day, the 9th inst., Mr. Ferguson's Bill for repealing the Separate School clauses in the Upper Canada School Law, was read a first time. After all, these clauses are in practice, so utterly worthless that it is of little consequence whether they be repealed or no;—and if it were certain that their repeal would have the effect of rousing the whole Catholic

body of the country into united and vigorous opposition, towards the system of State-Schoolism, we should look upon Mr. Ferguson's Bill as a real blessing. As it is, it has its value; as it must surely stir our people to action, and arouse them from the disgraceful lethargy in which they have of late been plunged.

The Journal des Debats of the 8th inst. accuses us of imprudence, and of having wantonly insulted our Protestant fellow-citizens, by expressing, in our issue of the 19th Feb., an opinion to the effect that—taking into consideration the abominations which, by Protestant showing, are practised in the common schools of the United States and of Canada West—"we would quite as willingly entrust the education of our children to an ordinary house of ill-fame," as to one of those schools, conducted as they are at present.

Now, at the risk of again shocking our delicate cotemporary, we inform him that, after careful deliberation, we see no reason whatever for altering, or modifying, our opinion of the "common" schools of the United States, or of Upper Canada; and that we look upon them, as do the Fathers of the Church in Canada, as altogether dangerous to faith and morals.

1. We assert that schools in which boys and girls of the age of puberty herd promiscuously together—under the sole and absolute control of unmarried male teachers—who claim, and exercise the privilege of flogging their female pupils—must inevitably be ruinous to all sentiments of delicacy and purity amongst both teachers, and pupils; and that no honest man, no modest woman, should allow a son or daughter to attend such schools.

2. We assert, and upon Protestant testimony—that of a medical gentleman of Toronto who signs himself in the Toronto Colonist, Cornelius James Philbrick, F.C.R.S.—that in the "common" schools of Upper Canada, boys and girls of the age of puberty—that is, of fourteen years of age—do herd promiscuously together, under the exclusive control of male teachers—of whom Dr. Philbrick says that "it is a notorious fact that many, if not all, have never been married;" and that the said male teachers claim and exercise the privilege of flogging their female pupils, with such severity too, as in some cases to inflict serious and permanent injury upon them.

If therefore we had no other information respecting the working of the "common" schools, than that contained in the late disgusting revelations, made through the columns of the Protestant Toronto Colonist by the Protestant Dr. Philbrick, we should have ample grounds for our strictures thereupon. But we have more, far

more, than this. We have the evidence of Protestants of the highest respectability, and of undoubted veracity, to the fact that the "common" schools of the United States—of which schools, the "common" schools of Upper Canada are a servile copy, and from which they are morally indistinguishable—are, not metaphorically; but literally, brothels of the worst description; and that the pupils therein, of both sexes, are the victims of most unnatural, and most precocious debauchery. It is upon the strength of these facts, which we again lay before our cotemporary's eyes—but which, with his usual honesty, he will of course refrain from noticing—that we reiterate our assertion, that we would as willingly entrust a child to an ordinary house of ill-fame, as to one of the "common" schools of the United States, or of Upper Canada.

"About a week since," says the Times—"one of the monitors of the first class in a public school for girls at the North End"—this does not seem to have been a school in which, as in the U. Canada schools, boys and girls are herded promiscuously together—"happened by chance to find a written note on the floor of the school, which she read, and was so astonished at the contents that she handed it to her female teacher." In the Upper Canada schools be it remembered the big girls are under the sole control of, and are flogged by male teachers. "The note was written by one of the pupils to another in the same class, and revealed (in language too indecent for publication) the astonishing intelligence that the writer of the note, and five of her schoolmates, girls between the ages of 12 and 15 years—the age at which girls are flogged by unmarried men in the "common" schools of Upper Canada—"had been seduced and were in the habit of visiting certain places, and indulging in the lowest conduct."

The next Protestant authority to whom we will take the liberty of introducing our delicate cotemporary is the Protestant New York Dispatch. The Journal des Debats, will again be shocked; for this New York journal, heads his article "Prostitution in the Public Schools."

In this article, which is too long for insertion, and whose filthy details we do not desire to obtrude again upon our Catholic readers, but which the Journal des Debats will find on the 6th page of our issue of the 12th ult., the Protestant writer openly asserts that the said common schools are but common brothels, and instances facts in support of this assertion. The following is the concluding portion of the New York editor's article:—

"We could, perhaps, forgive the aggregate inefficiencies of many of the Commissioners, and submit in silence to the inabilities which are apparent from incompetencies and rapacities; but we cannot submit for one moment to even a bare suspicion that the children for whose education the inhabitants of Manhattan Island are taxed over one million of dollars per annum, are contaminated by the touch of lewd and lascivious preceptors, supposed to be virtuous, or glared at with libidinous eyes by lechers in educational offices. The thought that the innocent young girls instructed at these schools may be subjected to these vile influences, is so terrifying and monstrous to be entertained a moment longer than it can be obliterated by prompt and decided inquisitorial action. What evil could not be affected by the depraved mistress of a Commissioner—a mistress in charge, as principal, of a school of females? How speciously and skillfully she could distill the ioporous poison into the ears of the eldest for the advantage of herself and her official paramour! We shudder as thoughts find utterance."

This is the language of a Protestant—language which we are sure will find a ready echo in the heart of every honest man, of every modest woman, whether Catholic or Protestant; even though through affected delicacy, and fear of shocking our "separated brethren," the courtly Journal des Debats may affect to repudiate it. Where we ask, is the modest woman who would allow her daughter, of 14 years of age, to be flogged by a lecherous beast of a "common" school teacher? and shall we be told that it is an insult to Protestants to assert of schools in which such things are done, that in their effects upon the morals of their pupils, they can be no better than places of prostitution? If we speak strongly, it is because we feel strongly; because as men, as fathers, as Christians, we loath the foul dens in which our daughters can be publicly scourged by sanction of the law, and in which the first principles of humanity, of decency, and of chastity, are habitually, and with impunity violated. We do no wrong to our Protestant fellow-citizens—we offer them no insult, when we denounce as fatal to chastity, and destructive of female innocence, the Upper Canada practise of herding boys and girls of the age of puberty promiscuously together, under the sole and absolute control of an unmarried male teacher, armed by law with the power of inflicting cruel and degrading corporal punishment upon his pupils of either sex. We have known intimately many Protestants, but we thank God that we have never met one whose sentiments upon such a question were different from those expressed by the True Witness. Never have we had the misfortune to meet a Protestant mother who would have allowed her daughter to be publicly flogged by an unmarried male stranger, or who would not have as readily permitted the child of

her heart to become the inmate of a brothel; as to be exposed to the remotest possibility of such an indignity; and if any Protestant in Upper Canada, as the Journal des Debats insinuates, feels aggrieved at our remarks, it is a proof, not that the True Witness has said aught of which he should be ashamed, or which he should retract, but that he who complains of our language has neither the feelings of a gentleman, nor of a Christian; and that female honor, and the chastity of his daughters, is of far less value in his eyes, than a cask of superfine flour, or a barrel of potash. Amongst the friends of the Journal des Debats there may be fellows of this stamp; but in all the intercourse, and we may say intimate intercourse, that we have had with Protestants—to be sure they were ladies and gentlemen—we never met with one who could have taken offence at our strictures on the "common" schools of Upper Canada; or who, if acquainted with the best details, revealed through the Toronto Colonist by Dr. Philbrick, would not have heartily endorsed our condemnation of those infamous establishments, whose existence is a disgrace, not only to Canada, but to the civilisation of the XIX. century. If then, we have offended any Protestants by our language, it is because we have been simple enough to attribute to them sentiments of honor and modesty, and the feelings which are peculiar to those Protestants with whom we have been in the custom of holding familiar intercourse. This may have been—though we hope it was not—an error on our part; if it was however, it is one into which we are not likely to fall again, in so far as Upper Canada Protestants are concerned.

ORANGE RIOTS.—The Kingston Commercial Advertiser notices some recent disturbances in that city, which it attributes to the old leaven of religious animosity between Catholics and Orangemen. With an Orange Attorney-General, and Orange principles rampant in the Council Hall, our Orange enemies rely with but too good reason, upon impunity for their acts of violence against their Romish fellow-citizens. At Toronto the enquiry into the Orange attack upon the Irish Catholics at the National Hotel has ended in smoke. The police who were examined, most discreetly took care to be unable to identify any one of the assailants, thus eliciting from the Toronto Police Magistrate the following significant remarks:—

"An hotel was smashed by a crowd, numbering, as was admitted by every person, from one to two hundred, and perhaps more. A strong body of police was present, but not one of them as yet has identified any of the assailants. They were all able to see Mr. Sherwood, Mr. Hutson, Alderman Moodie, Mr. Andrews, Mr. McLellan, &c., but from some unexplained and unsatisfactory cause, it seems the mob are strangers to them. Can such a thing be possible?—men who have been brought up in the city, or at least have spent a great part of their lives in it, are present at a riot in a public street, and not be able to identify a single participant in this disgraceful affair? To him, Mr. Garnett, it appeared most mysterious, and certainly it did not reflect a great deal of credit on the perpetuity of our police."

We believe that the solution of the problem, which to the Police Magistrate of Toronto is so "mysterious" is to be found in the fact, that the Police force is composed mainly of Protestants; and that their inability to identify a single one of the Orange rioters of the 17th March, proceeds from a moral, not from any physical defect.

The Ottawa Tribune, writing upon the present efforts of Orangeism to obtain a formal recognition from the State, and the duty of Catholics to oppose these efforts, has the following sensible remarks:—

"In this movement, God forbid that we should desire to diminish the social or political status of any one of the Queen's subjects. We want neither proscription nor coercion of any class or sect; what we desire is equal toleration and protection to all, impartially towards none, and therefore expect the co-operation of all friends of Civil and Religious Liberty in Canada, without distinction of race, creed, or nationality."

A Petition similar to that of Montreal, which will be found below, has been adopted by the St. Patrick's Society of this City. Committees have also been appointed, whose duty it will be to obtain signatures, that all may have an opportunity to sign it. There shall, likewise, be draughts of the Petition sent for a like purpose next week, to the Presidents of the St. Patrick's Societies, and other leading men in the various Parishes and Townships throughout this Diocese, and we need not ask all our friends to make themselves energetic in obtaining signatures, both Catholic and Protestant. Let none be left unsolicited, and let every man work as if the issue depended solely on his individual exertions. If any amongst you refuse to sign, let him be branded as a traitor, shun him as you would a plague, for he is far more dangerous. There is no time to be lost, as this infamous Bill is likely to come up for discussion immediately, and let there be an undoubted expression of public opinion on the monster indignity. Make the tables of the Legislature groan under the weight of your indignation, and where is the Ministry who durst refuse your just demand. After the names are obtained, let the Petitions be forwarded carefully to this Office, and we shall take care that they be forthwith transmitted to Parliament.—If any locality should not receive a printed draught, let them copy a written one from this paper. One Petition is for the Legislative Council and the other for the Assembly, so let every one sign both."

We are delighted to find that our Ottawa friends are determined upon taking action, but strictly constitutional action, against the aggressions of Orangeism. The Toronto Mirror on the other hand, treats the action of petitioning—our Provincial Legislature in the first instance, and the Queen herself if necessary—as a "sham," and seems to favor the formation of an "armed" anti-Orange organisation as the best policy for Catholics to adopt at the present juncture.

We can only again record our dissent from our Toronto cotemporary; believing that an armed anti-Orange organisation would inevitably sooner or later degenerate into an illegal and anti-Catholic secret society; and would infallibly lead to collision; blood shed, and civil war. We believe that all our legitimate objects may be attained by peaceful, and strictly legal means; and that the arrogant assumptions of Orangeism at the present moment are mainly attributable to our venality, banking after office, and consequent servility to an Orange Administration. We feel assured that no "armed" organisation such as a writer in the Mirror of the 9th inst. recommends, would be of any use, unless its members had been accustomed to meet together for the purpose of learning the use of their weapons; we are of opinion that such assemblages, and for such a purpose, would very quickly be pronounced illegal by the Law Officers of the Crown; that consequently they would have either to be abandoned, or else to be conducted with closed doors, and in secret. But this latter plan, if adopted, would at once lead to the worst practices of "Ribbon," and other Secret Associations; and yet, without meeting of some kind—either public or private—for the purpose of drilling and learning the use of arms, an "armed" anti-Orange organisation would be utterly useless—i.e., "a sham." These considerations against an "armed" anti-Orange organisation, we would respectfully submit to the consideration of the Toronto Mirror and its correspondents.

We have now the advantage of occupying, as against Orangeism, strictly legal and constitutional ground. In this consists the strength of our position, which is indeed impregnable so long, but so long only, as we adhere to our present system of tactics. Why then should we give the enemy an advantage, by descending to meet them on their own grounds? At the best, all "armed" organisations—such as Orangeism, or that which the writer in the Mirror recommends—are of doubtful legality; and a hostile Orange Attorney-General would very quickly convert the doubts as to the legality of an "armed" Catholic anti-Orange organisation, into certainty, by a prosecution against its several members.

No; let us adhere strictly to the letter and spirit of the constitution, as well as to the principles that the Catholic Church lays down for our guidance in all doubtful circumstances. Our enemies would of course be delighted to see us adopt the course advocated by the Mirror; they would rejoice to see the constitutional opposition with which we menace them, dissipated; and would laugh in their sleeves at our folly in descending from our present position of vantage, to the low and dangerous ground of "counter organisation." Such a mode of opposition, an Orange Attorney-General would very easily dispose of.

But, argues the Mirror, petitioning is "a sham," for "there is no danger of the Bill passing;" and "in such an event, instructions would come from England which would soon put down the movement." This reasoning strikes us as strange when coming from the Mirror, who, if we remember right, deprecated the action of the Catholics of Montreal—in calling the attention of the Imperial authorities to the unstatesmanlike and ungentlemanly conduct of Sir Edmund Head in July, 1856, in giving to the Orangemen of Canada an official reception at Government House—as "impolitic, unjust and unnecessary;" because, not the Governor but the Ministry were "responsible for the misdeed;" and because, to invoke the interference of the Imperial authorities with the acts of our Provincial Ministry or our Provincial Legislature, would be to sacrifice the great principle of Canadian self-government. Now, however, our cotemporary seems to have forgotten his old objections, and his old arguments against appealing to Imperial authority for protection against the misdeeds of Provincial Ministers, and a Provincial Legislature. He seems to have a horror of exercising the constitutional right of petitioning, whenever its exercise would tend to embarrass his Ministerial patrons. If it is proposed to petition the Imperial authorities, against the gross misconduct of the Governor General, who is an Imperial servant, our cotemporary straight-way finds out that it would be "impolitic, unnecessary, and unjust" to invoke Imperial interference; when however our Provincial authorities, our Provincial Legislature, and our Provincial Ministers are the ostensible offenders against us, the Mirror still condemns petitioning as "a sham"—because, the Imperial government would immediately come to our aid, and put its veto upon the acts of our Provincial government. Well! even to obtain that interference it is first necessary for us to take some steps, in order to make our wishes known on the other side of the Atlantic. Is the Mirror then prepared to recommend a petition to the Imperial Government against the incorporation of the Orangemen of Canada by Act of the Provincial Legislature? If it is, how can it account for its opposition in 1856 to a petition to the same Imperial authorities against their hired and responsible servant? If it is not, what assurance has it that the Imperial government will interfere unasked, in our domestic affairs?—and how will it be able to remove the very natural suspicion that its eagerness to dissuade from petitioning the Provincial Legislature proceeds, not from a regard to the honour and interests of those whom it professes to represent, but, from its anxiety to stifle in its origin a movement which, if allowed to gather force, threatens to embarrass seriously those friends who furnish it abundantly with the bread of life, in the shape of Government advertisements? We pause for a reply.