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**A CHAPTER
IN CANADIAN HISTORY.**

BY REV. JOB SHENTON.

For four years no question has perplexed our statesmen in Ottawa and New Brunswick more than that of the Common Schools. In New Brunswick a persistent and united minority have been and are clamoring for the repeal of the School Act. The people of that minority consist of French and Irish Catholics. They form about one third of the Province of New Brunswick, and with the French and Catholics of the other Provinces constitute the minority in the Dominion, numbering about one million and a half out of four millions.

A brief history which I summarise of the New Brunswick School Act will set forth the aspect of the question of agitation. In 1871 the Local Legislature passed a Common School Act which repealed the existing school acts, making assessment compulsory, and granting aid only to non-sectarian schools. The act did not interfere with the right of any denomination to maintain schools in which distinctive religious doctrines might be taught; nor the right of the legislature to grant public money in aid of their support. But the immediate effect of the act was to deprive academies, colleges, &c., of the Episcopal, Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist bodies of their legislative grants. The clergy and laity of the Roman Catholic minority felt aggrieved. They immediately petitioned the Privy Council of Canada to disallow the act. Sir J. A. McDonald replied to the petitioners that the Legislature of New Brunswick had acted within its constitutional powers, and it had the sole authority to redress any grievance. Such a reply ought to have satisfied them, as Sir John could not be accused of hostility to the Catholics, as he had always advocated separate schools. But the question was forced upon the Dominion Parliament. Mr. Costigan attacked the law, and called on the Governor General to disallow the act. The Government, instead of following their minister of justice, as it ought to have done, voted the disallowance motion. If they were not prepared for thorough action, the minority were. M. Chaveau moved that then an address be presented to the Queen, praying for an act to amend the North American Act, in the sense as understood by the minority, i. e., that each denomination in the Province should continue to possess all such rights, advantages, and privileges with regard to its schools, as it had enjoyed at the time of the passing of the Act. On learning the purport of this resolution, the N. B. Government telegraphed an earnest protest against this attempt to overthrow the school legislation, and to destroy the independent powers of the Provincial Legislatures. On the evening of that day the Chaveau resolution was voted down. But a resolution moved by Mr. Colby, of Quebec, was afterward carried, expressing regret that the New Brunswick school law was unsatisfactory to a portion of the people, to which a "rider" was appended on the motion of Hon. Alex. McKenzie, referring the case to the Law Officers of the Crown, and if possible to the Privy Council of England. Documents were forwarded to Earl Kimberley, Colonial Secretary; these were presented to the law officers, whose opinion sustained the position taken at first by Sir J. A. McDonald. The Supreme Court of New Brunswick confirmed this opinion. Not yet, however, was the contest ended, for an appeal was made to the Privy Council. The Premier, whose sympathy when in opposition had been with the minority, felt somewhat restrained by the responsibility of power; but the vote of \$5,000 to carry the appeal to the Council, though in fact to aid Bishop Sweeney to

contest the constitutionality of the School Act, was still a pretty good proof of sympathy. It is surely a fortunate thing that the final appeal in this Dominion is in the hands of the Imperial Parliament; for if Canada had been an independent country, if the Governor General had been elected by the people, and if the Dominion Parliament had insisted on its wishes being carried out, the dissolution of the union, or revolution, could hardly have been prevented. But the Privy Council, without listening to the reply of the Hon. G. E. King, in answer to arguments presented, ruled that there was nothing in the ground taken on which to found a claim with respect to denominational schools, nor anything unconstitutional in the School Act, and dismissed the appeal with costs. So apparently closed the final door. Not so, however, for an address was moved by Hon. E. Blake, asking the Queen to use her influence with the Legislature of New Brunswick, to procure such an amendment of the School Act as would remove all just grounds of discontent. She refuses the prayer of the request. And now our legislatures must face the question squarely if it be forced again upon them.

Now we are asked to petition for the repeal of a clause in the North West Act, imposing the separate schools upon the unborn provinces. It is a mistake to fancy that the contest is purely educational. It is as much religious. The demands are to teach religion. If the clamor would cease we might give them, perhaps, not very gracefully the sop. But Rome does not ask for rights. The principle of equality upon which rests our nationality, grants to all the same civil and religious liberty. Our country is as free as any on which shines the sun. We have no parish oligarchy who could, upon the forfeiture of social standing, and of daily bread, our people to attend the Established Church. So long as religious freedom does not interfere with the State, and keeps within the law of rights to others, no one has a right to interfere. But not content with the same rights as Protestants, Roman Catholics demand privileges. They say, "Build our school-houses, pay our teachers, and we will give a certain amount of secular education; but let us teach our religion." That is the ultimatum. Rome has always bidden for votes to those who will grant most of her demands. She has but one political principle, and to change sides does not destroy it, or expose her to the charge of inconsistency. She never stays with a losing side. That principle is to get all she can, and she is infallible only in that one principle. No one prevents any denomination from building schools and paying for their sectarian teaching. And certainly if Roman Catholics wish to do it, let them do it; but don't ask Protestants to foot the bills.

Is Rome opposed to education? Decidedly, no. She has an educated priesthood, colleges, and universities. Is Rome opposed to any system of popular education? Emphatically, yes! Look at the countries she has ruled, and see the difference between them and Protestant countries. Popular ignorance is her stronghold. Educate her children, and her power is gone forever.

We are interested in the maintenance and preservation of our institutions. But if our liberty of conscience is to be sacrificed upon the altar of political expediency if our future is to be darkened by the grievous wrongs intended to our independence; then this Dominion will be injured to its foundation. We protest against the encroachment of any sect upon the liberties of the people. We protest in the name of the Christian men and women and children of this land. We protest as patriots and citizens. We protest as lovers of God's word. Let us fling out the red cross flag, bearing this device: Liberty, Equality, Rights. And if any traitor touch it, say, "hands off there." This must be our national Canadian platform.

Truro, February 28, 1876.

The Wesleyan, Halifax, N. S., in an editorial on "Ministerial, Contrasted with Lay, Benevolence" says, and we think the correctness of the statement will scarcely be called in question: "The Ministers, taking them, man for man, contribute twice as much for the support of missions as the Laity."—*Central Ch. Advocate.*

MISCELLANY.

MR. SPURGEON ON OPEN AIR PREACHING.

On Monday night at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon delivered a special address to the preachers of the Open-air Mission. Alluding to a remark made by Mr. Macgregor, Secretary of the Mission, he said that he gave that gentleman timely notice that if he ever wrote to him as "Reverend" he would write to Mr. Macgregor as the "Rev. John Macgregor." (Laughter.) He (Mr. Spurgeon) was one of the Lord's clergy and so were the open-air preachers; he did not believe they were laymen—that was, stone-headed or thick-headed—because they did not happen to have been "ordained." He received his ordination straight from the Lord himself. (Hear, hear.) He called them all "Reverend" as well as every teacher in the Sunday-school, and he would not be distinguished by any title not applied to them. (Hear, hear.) Open-air preachers had a long pedigree. He had sometimes been amused by the Freemasons assuming that every man was a Freemason from the time of Adam. (Laughter.) He thought the confraternity of open-air preachers was about the oldest in the world. He supposed Abel preached to Cain in the open-air, and he did not like it. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, had not a tabernacle or cathedral—(laughter)—and yet he had righteousness. He felt convinced that Noah preached in the open air and what a glorious open-air sermon that was of Elijah's on the top of Carmel! (Applause.) After all, the noblest thing that could be said for the open-air preacher was that he had the literal example of Jesus Christ. (Hear, hear.) Instead of being an innovation, it was a return to the old-fashioned plan of the Apostles, the first Fathers, and the Reformers. What grand gatherings there were, under the Gospel oaks. He had himself preached beneath an oak under which Wycliffe proclaimed the Gospel to assembled thousands. Open-air preaching was sure to take place wherever there was a revival of religion. It was when Wesley stood on his father's grave, and George Whitefield took to the field, that the shaking of dry bones took place in the last century. The Holy Spirit did not now give people the gift of language; but whatever we had lost by the withdrawal of miracles had been gained by innumerable other advantages. The Holy Spirit would not teach them to speak the English language; they had better buy a grammar and stick to that. (Laughter.) There were some open-air preachers who would be all the better if they read the grammars as often as they did their Bibles. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) Every open-air preacher ought to be an indoor student. Taking another small matter, he advised them when they stood up to preach to pay a little attention to their manner. "Some men always shut their fists when preaching—(laughter)—others sawed and chopped the air, and one he knew always reminded him of a little soldier on post at the back of the Tabernacle telling people which way the wind blew. (Laughter.) Other men assume attitudes which made them look like birds with tails—(laughter)—and he remembered seeing a speaker who, on one occasion, clutched the rails of the very platform in his enthusiasm, and almost sat down. (Laughter.) He hoped they would not imitate these. Preaching monkeys would not do; they wanted preaching men, who were original, not eccentric and singular—men who were themselves. (Hear, hear.) He had no doubt in the street it was necessary to speak very loudly, and it was a great thing to have a glorious voice; but they need not bawl themselves to death. (Laughter.) Again, there was no need to be offensive in preaching. (Laughter.) Anything like the attitude of a prize-fighter in preaching was out of place. As to matter, there was nothing else to preach about beyond Jesus Christ. (Applause.) Let them hammer away at that text, and they would never want another subject. They should preach the language the people understood. At the West-end they might be polite, while even "slang" would be tolerable at Billingsgate, because there it was not slang, but their everyday talk. He did not want to be over-critical, but he thought tales were a little over-done. Some of the stories

ought to be good ones. (Laughter.) They had been told so many times that people knew them off by heart. (Laughter.) They should preach in places where they were most wanted; and he saw no use in preaching in places where there was nobody to listen. (Laughter.) He once saw a man preaching in the street—he was preaching with all his might. A little dog was sitting down, and there was not a soul about. (Laughter.) About 500 persons were added to the Tabernacle last year, and that number, more or less, had been yearly added to the church for twenty years. Out of the number there were always some who told him or his brother how much they owed to open-air preaching. In conclusion, he remarked that the best time to get a shot at the devil was whenever they saw him. (Laughter.) If a man had a right to swear in the streets, they had a right to preach. If a man was drowning—although he (Mr. Spurgeon) was not an ordained Humane Society man—(laughter)—he would try to save him; if sinners were dying, a man might not be an ordained preacher, but he was obliged to do what he could to save them. (Loud cheers.) The ceremony of baptizing a number of persons then took place.

THE WAY OF TRANSGRESSORS IS HARD.

Sad, sad indeed, is the picture given by a reporter of those nine men recently sent to the Indiana State prison for connection with the "crooked whisky" business. Some of them—perhaps all—were men of reputable social standing, and one man at least said to be a leading member of a church. But there they were, in the ante-room of the penitentiary, ready to be admitted, have their hair cropped and their beards shaven off, to don the "zebra clothes," and to go "to hard labor," some for two years, some for two years and six months. One man's case was specially touching. It is thus described: "He was sitting on a smoking lounge, with his face buried in his hands, the picture of grief and despair. The reporter touched him lightly on the shoulder, when he started and raised his head. His face looked careworn and haggard, and his eyes were suffused with tears. He is an old man, sixty winters having whitened his hair. He has an open, frank and honest countenance, and would be taken for a gentleman. "Mr. McGriff, I am sorry to see you here; I believed that you were more sinned against than sinning, and hoped you would pull through." "It was no use; my council did everything they could for me." After a pause he continued: "My God! to think that I would ever come to a place like this! It will kill me! My heart is crushed now!" He spoke in a voice deep with emotion, and was greatly agitated. "If it were not for my poor wife and son, I believe I could stand it; but to think of the disgrace brought upon them is more than I can bear. It will kill my wife; she is sick now, and this will kill her. But there is one consolation—she knows I am innocent of the charge. John Bingham lied on me—cruelly and maliciously. He never paid me a dollar in his life, and he knows it well. Byron Bingham, his brother, told me at the Grand Hotel in Indianapolis, in the presence of the United States Marshall, that he knew nothing against me, and he did not believe I was in the ring. I spoke of it afterward when John Bingham found it out, sir, and that is why he swore that his brother Byron knew nothing about the money he (John Bingham) swore that he paid me while I was at home sick. They raised the stumps and did the dumping on me, and I swear to you that I am an innocent man." The above was given to the reporter in a broken voice. The speaker would often pause in its narrative. He said that his wife was fifty-eight years old, and that he had been married thirty years; was warm in the praise of his son, who had stood nobly by him during his long trial. McGriff was well known and highly respected at Evansville, being for seven years the city clerk of that place, and a leading member in the Church. His trial and conviction have told heavily upon him, and those who know him well state that he looked ten years older yesterday than he did two months ago. He is a man of high nervous temperament, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he could keep up yesterday. He was almost entirely let down. With

all this he has the heart disease, and it is the general opinion among his friends that he will not long survive his imprisonment.—*Pittsburgh Christian Ad*

THE CASE WAS POSTPONED.

A tattered memorandum book was recently found on the steps of a very humble dwelling out West. Some of the entries are as follows:—
"My father had a slight misunderstanding with a neighbor about a division fence which he had inherited from my grandfather. After several disputes he consulted a lawyer, who had a good many children, but little practice. This was fatal. A suit was commenced.
"Several years ago my lawyer said I must get ready for the trial. I did so, and went to court at every term. But it was postponed on every pretence that human ingenuity could invent.
"1871. March term—Counsel for defendant moved a continuance, because he was engaged in the Court of Common Pleas. Court granted the motion but intimated, with great dignity, that such an excuse would never avail him again.
"September term—Counsel trying a case in an adjoining county. Judge hesitated, but yielded.
"December term—Defendant ill. Proved by the certificate of a respectable physician.
"1872. March term—Counsel had made an engagement to meet a client from New York, who could not conveniently leave his business again. Continued, the Judge suggesting that New York clients might find counsel nearer home.
"1873. September term—Carried the title deeds to my lawyer. Surveyor examined the premises, said the defendant had encroached on me. But another surveyor (partner and pupil of the first one) said that my deed spoke of a hackmatack stump in the line of the fence, a foot in diameter; whereas, the only tree anywhere near the fence was a pepperidge tree, not more than seven inches and a half across; case postponed to employ other surveyors.
"December term—Counsel agreed that Court might visit the premises in dispute. Judge refused to go, but said the jury might do so, provided that nobody went with them to explain and confuse. Next morning a heavy snow fell, and boundaries were covered. Case continued.
"1874. September term—Motion to postpone on the ground that the defendant's attorney wished to be absent, hunting for a few days. Motion prevailed. I remonstrated, but my counsel said the lawyers were very accommodating gentlemen, and the courtesies of the bar required it.
"1875. March term—One of the jurors taken sick. Motion to go on with the trial with eleven jurors. Defendant's counsel objected with great strength of voice, and demanded a full jury trial, pure and simple. I think he called it the 'palladium of our liberties.' Case postponed.
"September term—Received a bill for retainers, term fees, clerks' fees, and expenses. One item was for the amount of a retainer which my lawyer had declined from the defendant. Offered him the farm, provided I gained the case. He said this would not be deemed honourable practice, but he would take it, and give me credit as far as it went.
"Took the cars for the West, coming mostly on freight trains and after nightfall.
"Mem.—Don't forget inscription for tombstone: Here lies one who died of a lawsuit bequeathed by his father."

Not once or twice alone in the world's history has God seemed to make his very best and gravest servants drink to the very dregs the cup of apparent failure—called them suddenly away by the sharp stroke of martyrdom, or down the long declivities of a lingering disease, before even a distant view of their work has been vouchsafed to them; flung them, as it were, aside like broken instruments, useless for their destined purpose, ere he crowned with an immortality of success and blessings the lives which fools regard as madness, and the end that has been without human honor. It is but a part of that merciful fire in which he is purging away the dross from the seven times refined gold of a spirit which shall be worthy of eternal bliss.—*Farrar.*