

The True Witness.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 1863.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE career of Langiewicz, the Polish Dictator, has been short, but not very brilliant. Hearing that the Russians were moving in force against him, he endeavored to make his escape with such troops as he had with him. On the 16th ult., the Russians to the number of about 10,000 fell in with the insurgent Poles, and a battle commenced which was bravely contested by the latter, till the evening, when they were forced to give way in all directions, abandoning all their materiel. The Russians followed up their advantage on the succeeding days; and the result was that Langiewicz was forced to throw himself into the hands of the Austrian authorities, by whom he was detained a prisoner. The insurrection is not however at an end, though the chances for the ultimate success of the Poles seem but small. It is asserted that the patriots are as determined as ever, and that they will burn Warsaw should the movement for national liberty fail. It is pretty evident now that the French Emperor has no intention of making war with Russia for a Polish "idea," and the Poles thus left to their own resources, the issue of the conflict cannot long be doubtful.

There have been rather serious bread-riots in the North of England amongst the distressed operatives of the cotton districts. At Ashton, Staleybridge, and other places, large mobs of the unemployed artisans broke into the bakers' shops and provision stores. The military were called out and the Riot Act read, at first without effect; but upon a rigorous demonstration being made by the authorities, the rioters were dispersed, fortunately without any loss of life, or serious personal injuries. These it is to be feared are but the beginning of troubles. The situation is full of danger, and it cannot be expected that the next riot shall end so bloodlessly as has the first.

The crowing of the Yankees over the capture of Charleston was, to say the least premature. They advanced to the attack indeed on the 7th inst., but after a smart cannonade were repulsed with the loss of one of their iron-clad vessels, the *Keokuk*—sunk—and others seriously injured by the fire of the Confederates, upon which the assailants bailed off. In the South and West the State of affairs remains unchanged.

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL.—The Council of the Ecclesiastical Province of Quebec will commence its sittings on Thursday, Feast of the Ascension, the 14th of next month, under the Presidency of His Lordship the Bishop of Thos, who has received the powers necessary for that purpose.—The Catholics of Canada are therefore invited to address their prayers to heaven, that the Holy Spirit may preside over the sessions of the Council, and determine all its deliberations to the greater honor and glory of God, and the good of His Church.

The Province of Quebec comprises the Dioceses of St. Boniface, as well as the whole of Canada.

PRINCE EDWARD'S ISLAND.—The Catholics of Upper Canada have certainly but too good grounds to complain of the insolence and aggressive violence of Orangemen, of which the proceedings of the Orangemen of Peterboro' on St. Patrick's Day last afforded a fair sample. But there are, thank God, many things in this country for which we have cause to be grateful, and for none more than for this—that here Orangism is not entirely triumphant, and that in the Legislature its influence is, if dangerously great, at all events not altogether paramount. By French and Catholic Canada, a restraint is put upon the monster; and so long as the voice of the Catholic section of the Province can make itself heard in the Legislature, the Papists of Upper Canada will not be abandoned to the cruel will of their Orange enemies.

The fate of the Catholic minority of Prince Edward's Island is very different; for there the political regime which by means of a "Representation by Population" the Clear-Grits or Protestant Reformers are seeking to impose upon Canada, is unfortunately in full force. There Orange-

ism controls, or rather rules with sovereign power over the Legislature, and the Vice-Regal Court. There the Senate is but an Orange Lodge of a very low type, in which obscenities against the Church, too foul for the well-conducted brothel, are belched forth by Government officials, and rapturously applauded by the impure band of knaves and fanatics who exercise Legislative functions. The Lieutenant-Governor, a weak minded, even if not an ill intentioned man, is but a tool in the hands of the Orangemen to enregister their decrees; and forgetting the respect due to the Queen whom he so scandalously misrepresents, Mr. Dundas sanctions at least, the most cruel insult to Her Majesty's loyal Catholic subjects. The chief agent in these painful scenes is a low fellow of the name of Pope, who fills the situation of Colonial Secretary, with the object perhaps of giving practical proof, that it is not necessary to be either a scholar or a gentleman, to administer the affairs of a British Colony.

To this fellow and his designs we have already called the attention of our Catholic readers; and as a specimen of the insults which their coreligionists in P. E. Island have to undergo at the hands of the illiterate, and low-bred government pettifoggers, we lay before them to-day a letter upon the subject lately received from an esteemed correspondent:—

P. E. Island, March 24th, 1863.

DEAR SIR,—I beg to thank you sincerely for the severe castigation which you administered last summer to our unprincipled Col. Secretary Pope, and his master, or rather tool, I. G. Dundas. Some time after the article appeared in the *True Witness*, I received a letter from Major O'Reilly, then in Belgium, desiring me to send him the particulars about this Pope's attack on Catholics, with the view of enabling him to bring the matter before the Imperial Parliament. I accordingly sent him all the particulars; but I have not since heard from him—at which I am not so much surprised, for I have little, or no confidence in the honesty of the Post Office authorities in Charlotte Town.

"I presume that you have, ere this, heard of the triumph of Orangism and the Orange party at the late elections in this Colony. It is needless for me to mention the means by which this triumph was achieved—as they were merely such as are usually employed by low and unscrupulous demagogues.—But the result is, that the proscription, or anti-Catholic party are for the present triumphant; and they seem fully determined to make the most extreme use of their victory.

"As a proof of this, I may mention the fact that on St. Patrick's Day, Mr. Pope introduced a Bill for the Incorporation of the Orange Societies in this Island, and that he was supported by all the Government party. During the debate on this Bill, the aforesaid Mr. Pope made use of the most obscene language ever employed in any Legislature. Our House of Assembly has become a most degraded body, and it is within a few degrees of being as vile as an Orange Lodge. In this august assembly our Colonial Secretary Pope, a member of the Executive Council, with Dens' Theology in hand, endeavored to elucidate the intricacies of the Sixth Commandment to an admiring audience.

"It is impossible for me to repeat, it would be impossible for you, Sir, to repeat in your columns, the abominable language of this scurrilous fellow.—Decency, and respect for your readers, forbid it; but that you and they may form a faint idea of the intelligence, the good taste, the gentlemanly feelings, and morality of our rulers, and legislators in P. E. Island, I will venture to give you one short specimen of the style of argument which is most acceptable to such a class of men as that of which our Legislative Assembly is now composed. I hope that neither you, nor your readers will be scandalized, and that you will excuse me for asking you to pollute your columns with the obscene language of our Orange Colonial Secretary. Speaking of the Confessional, the fellow said that 'a female going to confession was like a mare going to a stallion with a fence between them.' He said this on the floor of the House of Assembly, the Speaker in the chair; and instead of being called to order, his foul remarks were rapturously cheered by the foul-minded rabble who compose our Legislature, and by the crowd of listeners of both sexes in the galleries.—This fact speaks volumes; and yet the language above cited gives but a very feeble and inadequate idea of the general character of the Colonial Secretary's language, and of the regard for decency which obtains in our Legislature. Modesty forbids me to enter into further details—but you may judge how low and depraved must be the morality of Prince Edward's Island, when such language can be used and applauded by its Representatives.

"With such men, an Orange Bill speedily passed its second reading in the Lower House, and there is no doubt but that it will be passed by the Council and sanctioned by the Governor. As soon as it shall have gone through all these stages here, meetings will be held throughout the Island, and a Petition sent to our gracious Queen, praying her to disallow it. I fear, however, that there never will be peace here, until Governor Dundas is removed. The man is, intellectually, but little above a simpleton, but like many other simpletons, he is a great fanatic. The strength of his prejudices may however with some, seem to atone for the weakness of his intellect.

"Your paper has a very wide circulation here, and if you would have the kindness to devote a little of its space to the exposure of Mr. Dundas, and the manner in which he permits his Colonial Secretary to insult, not Catholics alone, but all who entertain a lingering respect for decency and purity of language, I think it might have a salutary effect, by bringing public opinion outside of the Colony to bear upon the subject. I am sure that all right-minded Protestants, and thank God they are numerous, must condemn the manner in which Mr. Pope defends the Protestant religion, and carries on the war against Popery.

There is a Catholic paper published here, the *Vindicator*, but its circulation is necessarily limited, and

does not as yet extend much beyond the Colony. I therefore address myself to you, in the hope that you will lend the aid of your columns to making more widely known the many grievances under which the Catholics of Prince Edward's Island now labor.

Yours most respectfully,

YERAX.

"P.S.—For fear that this letter should be intercepted by the Orange spies who infest our Post Office, I send this by a friend to Quebec, who will mail it there."

We of course cheerfully comply with our correspondent's request, though we feel that we owe an apology to our readers for giving even in its most mitigated and chastened form of expression, an extract from the speech delivered in the Prince Edward's House of Assembly by the Colonial Secretary. Yet not otherwise could we convey to them the feeblest idea of the real state of matters in that Colony, or of the disposition of the ruling powers towards Catholicity. The matter will however probably excite the attention of the friends of decency in England, who will we hope bring the matter before the notice of the Imperial Parliament, to which Lieut. Gov. Dundas at all events is amenable—though Pope is as much beyond its reach as he is beneath the serious notice of any gentleman. These low pot-houses orators may do well enough for a set of low Colonial Orangemen, and may by the latter be highly esteemed, but the English gentleman could not condescend to notice him.

We respectfully invoke therefore the co-operation of the London Catholic press, of the *Tablet* and the *Weekly Register* especially, to bring the unseemly conduct of Lieut. Gov. Dundas before the public, with the object of making it a matter of inquiry in the House of Commons. There are plenty of Catholic members, able, and we have no doubt, willing to take the matter up;—and to give the Minister a bit of their mind upon the subject; making him understand that if he will persist in forcing an unworthy representative of our beloved and respected Queen upon Her Majesty's loyal Catholic subjects in the Colonies, he must prepare himself for disaffection in the latter, and for the stern, uncompromising hostility of the Catholic members of the House of Commons at home. These Colonial Jacks-in-Office play their fantastic tricks before high heaven, because they flatter themselves that they shall from their obscurity escape notice and censure. Let it be the work then of our Catholic contemporaries in England, and of the Catholic members in the House of Commons, to undeceive them as speedily as possible.

THE MEETING IN TORONTO.—Assuredly our Protestant Reform fellow-citizens are a hard lot to please. They are determined to find fault, and no matter what we do, we incur their censures. If, for instance, we are silent on the School Question, and abstain from public demonstrations, our silence and our quiescent attitude are triumphantly adduced as a proof that on the question of the Separate Schools we, the Catholic laity, are quite indifferent; and that our cunning, ambitious priests and Bishops are the sole instigators of the agitation against State Schoolism. If on the other hand, by way of giving a practical refutation and the lie direct to this calumny we take an active part, and come forward in our strength at Public Meetings to declare our sentiments, and to show our numbers and unanimity, we are denounced as rowdies, as disturbers of the peace, as seeking to stifle freedom of discussion, and the expression of public sentiment.

So it has been at Toronto. A Public Meeting of the citizens was there called to consider Mr. Scott's School Bill, and to express their opinions on the subject. Of course the design was, that no opinion save one hostile to Catholic, and Separate Schools should be expressed; and the Protestant promoters of the Meeting relying upon their great superiority of numbers, confidently anticipated carrying their cut and dry Resolutions condemnatory of the Catholic Hierarchy, and asserting the apathy of the Catholic laity on the School Question, without opposition from the latter. The object of the Protestants in calling the Meeting may be gathered from the first Resolution, which was proposed by a Mr. N. C. Gowan. It was couched in the following terms:—

"That this meeting considers the Common School system to be one of the chief means under Providence of promoting the morality and prosperity of the people of Upper Canada, and that the concession, unasked for by the masses of the Roman Catholic laity, of Separate Schools is not only an act of injustice to Protestants, but that its effect will be to add to the power of the Hierarchy, to derange, if not destroy, our Common School system, to deprive many of the means of education, indirectly to establish Roman Catholicism in Upper Canada, and to retard the prospects of the country."

Now it is evident that if the Catholics of Toronto had allowed such a Resolution as the above to have been carried without strenuous opposition on their part; and that if they had kept aloof from the Meeting, or attended only in small numbers, their inaction and absence would have been immediately cited as conclusive proof of the truth of the allegation of the Resolution, to the effect that "Separate Schools were unasked for by the masses of the Roman Catholic laity," and that they were sought for by the Romish priests alone, as a means of extending priest-craft, and sacer-

dotal influence. The one object of the Meeting, in so far as the Protestants of Toronto were concerned, was to establish this proposition. Clearly then the Catholics of that city owed it to themselves, and to their clergy, to prove by their numerous attendance and by their energetic action, that they, the 'laity,' did ask for Separate Schools, and that the Resolution which affirmed that they did not, was, in its allegations, a lie.

This duty the Catholics of Toronto nobly performed, and by so doing have, of course, brought down upon their heads the reproaches of the *Globe* and the Protestant Reform press. On the evening of the Meeting, the St. Lawrence Hall was from an early hour densely filled by the laity, whom the Resolution represented as not 'asking for' Separate Schools; and the reading of that Resolution was by them received with strong marks of disapprobation. It embodied a lie; and the Catholic laity who were the sufferers by the mendacious calumny, were determined to prove to the world that it did embody a lie. This purpose they very properly and very signally effected. Henceforward we trust we shall not be tainted with our indifference or apathy on the Separate School Question. The Catholics of Toronto have shown that they feel strongly on the subject, and that Mr. Scott's Bill is not a measure unasked for by them.

With the exception of the Mayor, Mr. Bowes who expressed himself favorably towards Separate Schools, the only person who took a prominent part as a speaker at the Meeting was the aforesaid Mr. N. C. Gowan. We have not time or space at our command, or inclination to refute all his false statements, and expose his false reasoning. The first was abundantly effected when, as a rejoinder to his impudent statement 'that the concession of Separate Schools was unasked for by the masses of the Roman Catholic laity,' the masses of that laity greeted the speaker with 'hisses' and other marks of disapprobation; and when, in consequence of the overwhelming numbers of that 'Roman Catholic laity,' and though they form but the minority of the population of Toronto, the Meeting broke up, because unable to carry out the objects of its Protestant promoters. For this the *Globe* roundly rates the Catholics of Toronto as the enemies of freedom of discussion; but by what other or better means than loud and angry demonstrations could they disprove the allegation of Mr. N. C. Gowan, to the effect that Mr. Scott's 'Bill was demanded, not by the Roman Catholic masses of the country, but by the Bishops and the Priesthood?'—*Globe*. Had the masses of the Roman Catholic laity remained silent under these taunts, their silence would have been construed as an acquiescence in their truth, and would have been cited as an argument against conceding Separate Schools, which not the laity but 'the Bishops and the Priesthood' alone demanded. The object of the Meeting, the terms of the Resolution proposed, and the language of Mr. N. C. Gowan forced the Catholic laity to give to that Meeting a demonstrative character, as the only course left to them for defeating the designs of their foes. Not by calm speeches or by quiet reasoning could the falsity of the allegations as to the apathy of the masses of the Catholic laity on the School Question be established—but only by loud, vehement, and general demonstrations of disapproval, such as these which the laity indulged in. We repeat it; had they acted otherwise they would have endorsed the slanders of their enemies against themselves and their clergy.

Mr. N. C. Gowan's solitary argument in favor of Common Schools may be thus summed up—that "the Government was the parent of us all;" and of course as a common parent had parental rights over all its subjects, and therefore the right to enforce "Common Schools." Granted the premises, and of course the conclusion follows: but we deny the premises; but we deny that the Government is, in any sense "our parent;" but we protest against its assumption of any parental rights over us, and we positively and most emphatically declare that we will not yield to it any filial duties. Our Government is not thank God, a paternal government. In its origin, in its rights over, and duties towards its subjects—there is not any the remotest resemblance to the origin of the authority of a father over his children, or to his rights over, and duties towards them. A paternal or parental Government is by its essence a pure despotism; holding from God direct, without reference to the consent of the governed. Our Government is, by the boasts of its admirers, the very contradictory of this. It holds, not direct from God, but *mediante populo*, or through the consent of the governed; and through its authority, as is all legitimate authority, is from God, it holds under a completely different tenure from that in virtue of which the parent rules and governs his children. The functions and the rights of constitutional, and paternal governments being thus essentially distinct, it follows that the duties of their respective subjects must be totally distinct also: and that the right which a parent has, and holds direct from God, to control the education of his children, cannot even figuratively, be cited as authorizing the State to assume the functions of a "Common parent" towards its subjects. This "paternal government" humbug cannot be too often and too loudly denounced, for it is the basis of all despotism: and even Protestants, when its principles are logically carried out so as to apply to religion, as well as to education, will often join with Catholics in denouncing it. For as the "parent" has the undoubted right to teach religion to his children,

and to enforce their attendance at Church—so also, if the Government be "parent of us all," it must have just as good a right, and it must be just as much its duty, to establish a "Common Church" for all its children, as to impose upon them a Common School. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of Mr. N. C. Gowan's "parental government" theory; and we are content to leave his argument in favor of Common Schools reduced to this its last and simplest expression.

The Montreal *Witness* is greatly, but we hope unnecessarily exercised in spirit, lest the sentence of death pronounced upon one Pierre Barbina for the murder of his wife, by arsenic—be remitted by the Executive, or commuted for imprisonment in the Penitentiary. Some of the jurymen before whom the convict was tried, and by whom he was upon, apparently the clearest evidence, found guilty of the horrid and deliberate murder with which he was charged, have it seems signed a petition to the Executive praying for such commutation: and though we cannot bring ourselves to believe that the prayer of such a petition will be granted, we join heart and soul with our contemporary in deprecating this attempt to avert the well-merited doom of the murderer.

It does not proceed from any doubts as to the fact—or as to the extent—of the condemned's guilt. Were there any doubts, or should it appear that any reasonable doubts upon either of these points could be raised, we should at once make common cause with the petitioners, and plead for a total remission of the sentence, if these reasonable doubts referred to the fact of Barbina's guilt; or for a modification of the sentence, if there were any possible doubts as to the extent of his criminality. Such motives for mercy are not however urged. It is not pretended that there exists any shadow of doubt as to the fact that Barbina did knowingly administer arsenic to his wife with the intent of causing her death, and that death did thereupon ensue. And such being the case, the Executive would be guilty of a gross dereliction of duty were they to give ear to the prayer for mercy in behalf of the convicted prisoner.

This prayer proceeds not from any respectable motive, or motive worthy of one moment's respectful consideration; but solely from a maudlin aversion to the execution of the death penalty. The petitioners are actuated, not by a tender regard for Barbina, but by a tender regard for themselves, and for their own feelings, which the spectacle of the scaffold erected at their own doors would no doubt shock: and we can not believe that the maudlin sentimentalism of a few silly weak-minded individuals will be allowed to outweigh the claims of justice, and the exigencies of Christian civilisation. The hanging of the murderer, if, rightly considered, a high and holy thing: the Minister of man's justice, abstractedly considered, or without reference to his salary, exercises a sublime, indeed a sacred office. An execution is, in one sense, a sacrifice. The criminal not only expiates by the sacrifice of his life, his offences against society and against man; but, if by him offered up in a spirit of true penitence and of course in union with the One Great Sacrifice of Calvary, his life because a sacrifice by which he expiates also before God. Viewed in this light, the scaffold is, as it were, an altar, and the gallows a holy thing.

Only let us take care that it be not desecrated, that it be not profaned, that it be not employed for any unworthy object. Let us draw nigh to it in no irreverent, above all in no vindictive spirit; and let us be careful not to invoke its agency unless upon solid and substantial grounds. God Himself, in the interests of human society, and of morality, has confided this august instrument of justice to the hands of the Civil Magistrate. He has given to the latter the sword with the charge that he bear not that sword in vain, but as a terror to evil doers—which, being interpreted, means that he should keep his gallows in good working order. If the civil ruler neglect to do this, he neglects the most important end of his institution; and thus abnegating his duties—he forfeits also his rights to the respect and allegiance of his subjects. In the name of God, and of man, in the interests of religion, and of human society, and in the interests of the criminal himself, the Civil Magistrate is called upon to do his duty, painful though no doubt that duty must be: and to allow no maudlin entreaties to divert him from the course which God Himself has traced out for him to follow.

Though we would insist upon the execution of the death penalty as the safeguard of society in general, we do not pretend to pronounce any opinion as to its application in particular. In the case of Barbina for instance, we argue upon the presumption of the convict's guilt, and we do so because no doubts of that guilt have been urged in his behalf. If guilty he should be hung: and if any doubts as to his guilt are urged, those doubts should be carefully weighed, and rigidly scrutinized by the Executive before they allow the sentence to be carried out. It is one of the functions of an Executive to exercise a *quasi* jurisdiction or supervision over the verdicts of juries; and to mitigate the consequences of such verdicts, and even to set them altogether aside, when grave doubts as to their justice can be reasonably entertained. But when no such grounds for inter-