

The True Witness.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, OCT. 22, 1858.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The Anglo-Saxon arrived at Quebec on the 19th instant. Breadstuffs dull. — Later dates from Lady Franklin's Arctic yacht Fox, mention that the expedition had safely crossed the middle ice of Baffin's Sea, and was in a fair way of accomplishing the object of the enterprise. Lord Derby was suffering from a severe attack of gout. Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, prompted by the Canadian Ministers now in England, was giving special attention to the plan for the federation of the British American Colonies. — The London Shipping Gazette is informed that Lord Bury leaves Galway in a week for British North America, with instructions from the Colonial Office, to obtain the opinions of the Legislature and people of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, on the subject of confederation.

INDIA.—Troops were actively engaged in all parts of the country. Serious disturbances amongst the recently raised levies in the Punjab. Mutiny broken out among the troops of Sungher Sing. Several successes gained by the British in Oude. By the end of October an army of 25,000 Europeans and 10,000 natives will be collected at Cawnpore. Lord Harris, Governor of Madras, is very ill.

Brownson's Quarterly Review, October 1858, contains the following articles:—

- I. Conversations of Our Club.
II. Catholicity in the Nineteenth Century.
III. Alice Sherwin, and the English Schism.
IV. An Exposition of the Apocalypse.
V. Domestic Education.
VI. Literary Notices and Criticisms.

We should have been better pleased if, instead of treating the important question of education, and the relative rights of the Parent and the State, in the light and desultory manner that he has adopted in the "Conversations of Our Club"—the Reviewer, speaking in his own name, had favored us with his own views thereupon; and shown us how those views might be reconciled with the explicit and oft-reiterated declarations of the Catholic Church upon the same subject. Imaginary "Conversations," such as those to which the Reviewer treats us, may be very convenient, if the writer's object be to shirk the real merits of the question at issue to conceal his own opinions, and to distort or suppress the arguments of his opponents; but upon such an important, and to all Catholics such a vitally interesting question as that of Education, we cannot but think that the Reviewer would have done better if he had spoken out boldly the opinions which he entertains, and which we think he has partially suppressed, knowing them to be irreconcilable with the principles laid down for our guidance by our divinely appointed spiritual rulers.

We must, however, make great allowances for Dr. Brownson. He is a firm and zealous Catholic no doubt, and of his transcendent abilities there can be no question. But he is also a New Englander by birth and education, and not altogether exempt from the prejudices of race and early associations. We, therefore, do not wonder that "State-Schoolism," which is of essentially Yankee origin, and to which his fellow-countrymen are so warmly attached, meets with more tender treatment from his hand, than it would receive from others not subject, in their childhood, to the deleterious influences of Yankee "Common Schools," and of Yankee democracy in their maturer years. The tendency of such a social and political system as that in which the Doctor has grown up, is to squeeze all manhood, all independence of thought, of speech and action, out of its victims; and to engender amongst them a far greater respect for what is popular, than for what is true. And though no doubt since his reception into the Church, the Reviewer has, to a considerable extent, emancipated himself from the bondage of his earlier years, he has not yet altogether acquired the tone and manners of one who was free-born. Democratic despotism, is of all despotisms that which most deeply and permanently marks its unhappy subjects.

There can be no doubt too that of all its peculiar institutions, there is not one more prized by Yankee democracy, than that of its "Common Schools." In the words of a living writer, the "Common School" is one of the stones of the great Yankee mill wherein thousands of bad or lax Catholics are annually ground into good Protestants; and it is for this reason, above all, that it is so highly valued and jealously protected by Protestant democracy. The "Common School" is the chief and most effective instrument of Protestant propagandism, in the nineteenth century; and that it is so is a fact well known both to Protestants and to Catholics. Hence the support given to it by the former, and the opposition offered to it by the latter; and whilst his Catholicity prompts the Reviewer to condemn it, his strong New England prejudices, and his subservience to Yankee public opinion, get the better of his Catholicity, and elicit from him a qualified approbation of a system of education which both reason and revelation repudiate, as dangerous to

faith and morals, and as a gross invasion upon the divine right of the parent over the child.

For after all this is the question at issue. To whom does the child in the first instance belong? to the Parent or to the State? to the Family or to Society? The Catholic asserts the rights of the Parent over the child as against the State; and in the "Conversations of Our Club," is very unfairly represented by O'Flanagan and Winslow. The New Englander stands up, under the name of Father John, for his "Common Schools," and has of course no difficulty in knocking down, one after the other, the men of straw who present themselves as the advocates of "Freedom of Education."

Yet even Father John, who contends for the right of the State to educate the child, virtually admits the impossibility of devising a system of State education which shall not do violence to the rights of the parent; for he says:—

"The State is bound to keep its public schools free from sectarianism, or in other words, such as shall not interfere with the religion in which the parent chooses to bring up his child"—pp. 437, 438.

But this is impossible; for there is scarce a branch of elementary education into which the religious element does not enter largely, and which does not present very different aspects, according as it is studied from a Catholic, or Non-Catholic stand-point. The alphabet, and the simple rules of arithmetic might indeed be got over without difficulty; but the moment we get into the domain of History or of Geography, we cannot avoid stumbling over the rock of offence; we cannot, if we would, keep clear of the shoals of religious controversy. Besides, irrespective of the positive teachings given in "common" or "mixed" schools, their moral atmosphere is tainted; it is not good for the Catholic child that, at an age when he is most susceptible of ridicule, he should associate with those who hold him and his religion in derision, and who point the finger of scorn at him as a little "Popish Paddy Boy." Boys at school learn far more from one another than they do from their teachers; and it is therefore incumbent upon Catholic parents to pay more attention even to the character of their children's school companions, than to that of their schoolmasters. As against the State the right of the parent to determine not only by whom, but with whom, his child shall be educated, is absolute, because this right of the parent is in this instance but another form of expression for his duty towards God; and it is because every compulsory system of "State-Schoolism" robs the parent of this divine and absolute right, that we reject it as tyrannical, as well as "dangerous to faith and morals."

One fallacy runs throughout the reasoning wherewith the Reviewer attempts to bolster up the cause of State-Schoolism. It is this—that, if the State does not foster education, and render its support compulsory upon the people, their children will grow up altogether uneducated.—Now how far this may be true of the Protestant portion of the population, we pretend not to say; but judging by their past, we hesitate not to say that it is altogether false as applied to the Irish Catholic portion, who form the chief ingredient in the Catholicity of the United States. With the Irish Catholic, the desire for education was always so strong, that it required all the penal laws of Great Britain to keep it in check. By those laws education was prohibited in Ireland under the severest penalties; and yet even that hell-begotten code could not damp the Irish zeal for learning; and the thunders of the Protestant Legislature were as ineffectual against the Popish schoolmaster as against the Popish priest. Why then should we fear that, amongst the children of such parents, the cause of education would be allowed to languish, even were it left for support entirely to the working of the Voluntary principle—and if the State were to adopt towards the school, the same policy that it has adopted towards the Church?

By the adoption of this policy, the Catholics of the United States would, in every respect, be the gainers; for they would be released from the burden of supporting the State Schools, and would thereby be the better able to contribute liberally to the support of their own schools. Of the disadvantages to which the children of Irish Catholic parents are at present subjected, one of the speakers in "Our Club" gives the following details:—

"Save in the large cities and towns, where Catholics are numerous and have votes"—(and where for the most part, thanks to the zeal of the Episcopacy and Clergy of the United States, Catholics have their own schools)—"little fairness or justice is done to the Catholic child, especially if the child of foreign-born parents. The children of the laboring Irish suffer a great deal."—p. 440.

Of course they do; and the consequence is that being thus exposed in their youth to all manner of ill treatment and ridicule, they too often grow up ashamed of their national origin, and of the religion of their parents. This is the complaint that Catholics here in Upper Canada, where the social position of the Catholic minority is very analogous to that of the Catholic body in the United States, urge against being compelled to pay for "common schools," whose atmosphere

"In the above we find a satisfactory answer to the naive question with which the "Conversation" opens—"why do the Catholics of this country so generally oppose the Common Schools, established and supported by the public?"—p. 425.

the Reviewer shows, is unfitted for the preservation of a healthy Catholic constitution. Those schools may turn out first-rate Yankees, we admit, and will find favor in the eyes of those who think it of more importance that the child should be a good "natyve," than a good Christian; but we hardly expected to find the chief Catholic publicist on this Continent giving them his support, in opposition to the express teachings of the Pastors of the Church, both in Europe and America. Great, therefore, as is our respect for Dr. Brownson, and deep as is our sense of the services he has rendered to the cause of Catholicity, we cannot but express our regret at the qualified approval that he gives to a system of education which all that is most liberal and religious in the Protestant world has loudly condemned, as a curse to every country where it has been introduced.

Of the other articles in the Review before us, we cannot speak too highly. When his national prejudices are hushed, the staunch uncompromising Papist enforces our respect, by the vigor and earnestness which he displays in vindication of the privileges of the Holy See. Especially does he insist upon the essentially "Papal" character of the Catholic Church; that without the Pope there is and can be no Church; and that the only effectual defence against heresy and schism consists in a bold unflinching defence of the Chair of Peter. A brief notice of "An Exposition of the Apocalypse"—a work of which the Reviewer speaks highly—is succeeded by an admirable article on "Domestic Education," which is worthy of the attentive perusal of all Catholic parents; and the number concludes with the usual Literary Notices and Criticisms of recent publications.

Num, et Saul inter prophetas?—has the Montreal Witness cast in his lot with the friends of "Freedom of Education? Almost were we inclined to answer in the affirmative, when our eyes rested upon an editorial of our cotemporary's issue of the 13th, under the caption of "The Education Question." A ray of light has indeed dawned upon the poor creature, and a vision, faint indeed, but still a vision, of truth has presented itself before his unaccustomed eye—under whose influence he breaks out in the following strain:—

"If the State then can upon this ground legitimately supply and direct education, it may with apparently equal propriety include religion."—Montreal Witness, 13th inst.

Here then is one point gained, that we have forced our opponents to admit the perfect analogy betwixt the Church Question, and the School Question; and the essential identity of "State-Churchism" with "State-Schoolism." The logical and consistent man who supports the latter, must inevitably support the former; and he who like the TRUE WITNESS, condemns the one, must also, if logical and consistent, pass the same sentence upon the other.

So far we agree then with the Witness; but our cotemporary is altogether wrong in asserting that we have "raised the cry of Voluntary Education in order to get rid of Common Schools." This is not true; for as we have never ceased to repeat, we do not look upon the "Voluntary Principle," as applied either to the religion or education, to the churches or the schools, of the people, as desirable per se; and have always contended that it is the duty of the State, and is in the interests of society, that the former should undertake to make material provision for both School and Church; provided only that it does so in such a manner as to do no violence to the conscientious scruples of any of its citizens.

The Witness, however—and in this respect his error is generally shared by his brother Protestants—confounds two things that are essentially distinct. He always assumes that it is one and the same thing, for the State to make material provision for, and to control and direct, the religion or education, of the people. For the first we contend, as perfectly compatible with our right as citizens, as parents, and as Christians; but the latter, or control over either school or church, we altogether refuse to the State; preferring, if no other alternative be left us, to dispense altogether with State assistance than to give the civil magistrate the slightest authority either in religion or in education.

By "Freedom of Religion," we mean the perfect independence of religion of all State control; and we use the words "Freedom of Education" to signify the same thing—viz., the total emancipation of education from the shackles of the State. But because not controlled by it, does not therefore follow that neither Church nor School should be assisted by the State; which of course, in giving its material assistance, would have the right of insisting upon certain conditions to be observed by those to whom that material assistance was given. Thus, in Lower Canada, the State gives material assistance to the Church by giving its aid to enforce the payment of tithes, and other dues, to her Ministers; yet does not this imply any right on the part of the State to direct or control the religion of the Catholics of Lower Canada. Nay! rather than submit to such a degradation, to such a profana-

tion of holy things; which the hands of the civil magistrate should never be allowed to touch, we feel assured that our noble and high-minded clergy would renounce all State assistance, and throw themselves for support on the voluntary contributions of their people. Thus we see in Lower Canada that the State does give material assistance to religion, without pretending, in virtue of that material assistance, to control or direct it. Now we contend that what is, may be; and that what has been done for the Church, may also be done for the School.

Thus the State, despairing on account of the discordant views upon the proper nature and the legitimate objects of education amongst its subjects, might, and should abandon the insane attempt to enforce upon them one "common" school system; which cannot be satisfactory to all, and must indeed be most galling to many. But it would not thence follow that the State should withdraw all material assistance to the cause of education; or that all the schools of the country should be abandoned to the action of the "Voluntary Principle" for their support. A grant in aid, impartially distributed under certain conditions, would meet all the exigencies of the case; and the State might thus promote the intellectual progress of its citizens, without infringing upon the principle of "Freedom of Education."

We said "certain conditions;" for of course in giving its material assistance, the State would have the right to exact the performance of certain duties by those schools, in favor of which its assistance was given. The State would have of course the right to exact from every school claiming a share in its annual grant in aid of education, proofs that it had been kept open and in operation during a specified number of days.

That it had been attended throughout the year by a minimum number of pupils:—

That a minimum of secular education had been therein given. And—

That there had been nothing taught therein contrary to the natural law, or good manners.

Every school—Catholic or Non-Catholic—complying with these terms, and adjuvating satisfactory proofs thereof, should, upon our hypothesis, be entitled to share in the State grant in aid of education, in proportion to the average annual attendance of pupils, as compared with the average attendance on the other schools throughout the country, putting in their claims for a share in the said grant. By the adoption of some such plan, we contend that the rights of the parent to the sole control over the education of his child, and the selection of its teachers and school associates, would be preserved in their integrity; the sacred cause of "Freedom of Education" maintained unimpaired; and, at the same time, very effectual material aid given by the State to the intellectual improvement of its citizens.

We would therefore beg the Witness clearly to understand that it is not as admirers of "Voluntarism," either in religion or in education, that we attack the "common" school system, and seek its destruction; but because it is a tyrannical invasion by the State on the right of the parent and the family; because it is an outrage upon civil and religious liberty; and because it is altogether of pagan growth—a fragment of that accursed social system which once obtained throughout the Gentile world; of which a Lycurgus and a Plato were the apostles; and which it is the great object of our modern socialists and republicans to substitute for that system of Christian civilisation for which we are indebted to Jesus of Nazareth.

At the same time we confess that, as freemen, as parents, and Catholics, rather than allow to a Non-Catholic State the slightest control, direct or indirect, over the education of our children, for whose souls we are responsible to Almighty God with our souls—rather we say, than sanction any such usurpation of our divine right as parents to the sole control over the education of our children, we would cheerfully dispense altogether with all State assistance, and fall back on the Voluntary system pur et simple—imperfect though that system be in many respects. Only and in this we agree with the Witness, it should be really "Voluntary"—that is, unaccompanied with any restrictions upon the right of the individual to do what he thinks fit with his own. To this of course the Witness would not agree, for with him, freedom means restriction upon Catholics to dispose of their own property; and it is because we have so little faith in the honesty or intelligence, in the good faith, or love of liberty, of a considerable portion of our Protestant fellow-citizens, that we shrink from advocating the application of the Voluntary Principle to Canada.

If language be given to man to enable him to conceal his thoughts, and to envelop the truth in obscurity almost impenetrable, it must be admitted that the Minerve makes a good use of the talent confided to it. Thus we asked our cotemporary in our last—how it was possible for a sincere Catholic to give a conscientious support to a Ministry, the members of which had voted for a measure embodying, as is admitted by the Clear Grit press, "the whole" of Mr. Brown's anti-Catholic policy; and who sanctioned the gross insult offered by the Governor-General to the

Catholics of Canada, when he officially received the Orange deputations of Toronto on the 12th of July, '56? Hereupon our cotemporary replies to us in the following rignarole, which we translate to the best of our ability:—

"In the first place, we avow frankly that we do not believe our cotemporary open to conviction in political matters; however, we will tell him that if a sincere Catholic can judge betwixt 'the good' and 'the bad,' he can equally well distinguish betwixt 'the bad' and 'the worse,' and make his choice when necessary. Now we must have a Government, and with our constitution this must be a Government of party. A sincere Catholic should then choose betwixt the contending parties, and give his support to that which to him seems the least bad. The TRUE WITNESS calls himself a sincere Catholic, and has lately adjudged all political parties to be equally bad, equally corrupt (with the exception of the Irish who are not all corrupt, as witness the late elections).—If he is convinced of what he says, where is the reason of the change he demands? If the party which desires to obtain power, after the overthrow of the present Ministry, is not better than the last, it is not in the interests of the country to hasten a change. Thus even with the opinions of our cotemporary on political parties, we understand not his desire to overthrow, before public opinion is reformed, and an honest party formed. This would be to escape from Charybdis into Scylla, and nothing better. But we who have the presumption to be as sincerely Catholic as our cotemporary, do not look upon all parties as equally bad; we believe in the good intentions of the Ministerial party, and we have more confidence in those who having at first voted for Mr. Drummond's Bill, afterwards obliged that gentleman to drop it, having foreseen the consequences, than in those who voted with M.M. Brown and Dorion for restricting the rights of religious corporations, to take away the right of bequeathing property to those corporations, and for the establishment of a system of Mixed Schools throughout the Province. As to the act of the Governor-General alluded to above, we sincerely believe that Ministers were never called upon to approve it, and still less so the entire Ministerial party."—Minerve, 19th inst.

It will be seen from the above that our cotemporary does not even venture upon an excuse for the support given by the members of the present Ministry to Mr. Drummond's infamous Incorporations Bill; but contents itself with urging the plea, that, if the said Ministry be bad, their successors would be worse; and that if the present administration be a Charybdis, that of Mr. Brown would be a Scylla. Now, admitting this to be true, for the sake of argument, it would merely follow that the present Ministry should be tolerated as a necessary and inevitable evil; not that it could be "conscientiously supported" by the sincere Catholic.

But we do not think so meanly of Lower Canada—we do not believe that it is so destitute of able and honest men, as to conclude that if the members of the present Ministry—(whom by implication the Minerve admits to be bad)—were to be consigned to their pristine obscurity, it would be impossible to replace them; and we have too much respect for the Minerve's fellow-countrymen to admit that there is no alternative possible betwixt a Brown and a Cartier administration, or, as the Minerve would say, betwixt Scylla and Charybdis.

But even if there were no other alternative, we contend that the cause of religion and public morality has more to fear from a Ministry composed in part of bad or time-serving Catholics, than from the most rabid Clear Grit administration that could be formed; and though we defy any one to cite a simple passage in the columns of the TRUE WITNESS wherein we have spoken favorably of Mr. Brown's short-lived Government,—though we have always denounced an alliance with him as neither possible nor desirable—we frankly admit that we cannot forbear from smiling at those silly old women, who imagine that, if Mr. G. Brown were in office, the Church, founded by Christ Himself upon a Rock, would be in danger. However, we all know that it is not for the Church, but for their salaries, or anticipated salaries, that the "friends of order and good principles" manifest so much nervous trepidation.

On the other hand, a Ministry supported, or apparently supported by Catholics, is capable of doing a great deal of harm, by making Catholics contemptible for their venality in the eyes of the Protestant world, and by engendering amongst the former a disregard for the rules of common honesty, and the obligations of an oath. Thus when a Brown, or an avowed enemy of the Church, votes for a measure like that embodied in Mr. Drummond's Incorporations Bill, we are perfectly indifferent; because Protestants cannot thence draw any conclusions derogatory to the honor of the Church and her Ministers.—But it is different when the same measure is supported by men who call themselves "friends of order and good principles," and who are held up before the public as the "representative" men of the Catholic community. For, argue Protestants, and quite logically—"What a set of consummate knaves and swindlers these Romanish Bishops, Priests, and Nuns must be, when such good Catholics, and men so respected by the Catholic laity—as the Honorable M. Tardiffe and his Ministerial colleagues, deem it necessary to impose legal restrictions upon the right of individuals to dispose at their pleasure of their own private property." Such restrictions are necessary, argues the Montreal Witness; and it is in the votes of our excellent Catholic representatives, the "friends of good principles," that our evangelical cotemporary finds the proofs of that necessity.

Nor is it any excuse of the conduct of those representatives that, after having supported the mea-