

## SIR FRANCIS HINCKS ON THE ORANGE QUESTION.

I am glad that the discussion of this most important question has been shifted from the unhealthy dust and noise of the streets—where the unreasoning and irresponsible persons attached to factions fall to riot—into the clearer, and it must be allowed somewhat calmer, atmosphere of law and reasonable debate. The sacred cause of right was never yet served by violence. Justice was never vindicated by recourse to arms. "Trust in God, and keep your powder dry," is an effort to bring the poles together—Christianity and barbarism. Right can never be attained by wrong methods. Reason has never yet spoken by gunpowder. A triumph gained by mere violence is a disaster to those who have won as much as to those who have lost. So that flaunting banners, walking in procession, shouting defiance, flourishing sticks and pistols, must go for less than nothing to those who earnestly desire and seek after peace based upon even-handed justice.

It is scarcely to be expected that this discussion upon which we have entered will be carried on without some display of a roused temper and a deep feeling—when a fire burns in the grate, the air in the room will get heated; but I earnestly hope that we shall not import a Griffintown spirit into our speech. Personal and violent abuse has already done much harm. I may be allowed to tell the *Montreal Evening Post* that by its abusive language toward Orangemen—by its misrepresentations of them and their object—by its false statements concerning the oath they have taken, it has driven honest and honourable Orangemen, who had begun to hesitate, if not to doubt the expediency of Orangeism in this country, back upon the old lines, and welded them together in the determination not to yield an inch while they are branded with names which carry such infamy with them. Whether the *Post*, and papers of that class, have decided to eke out a precarious existence by keeping Orangeism alive and fanning the flame of Catholic hate I do not know; but I do know that if they desire the well being of Catholic and Protestant society, they will refrain from violent language and misrepresentation. Madness of speech never ends with itself.

In the same way I would ask for justice toward Sir Francis Hincks when he ventures to express his opinion on the question before us. I presume it was not through any desire of his own that he gave evidence the other day before the Police Magistrate. I think it is worse than a pity to impute corrupt motives until we are sure that they exist; and I am certain that it is something so bad that I do not care to characterise it, when we say "Lady Hincks is a Catholic, and therefore, &c., &c.," when the whole thing is absolutely false. If Sir Francis has any sinister motives, I do not know what they are, nor whither he hopes they may lead; but I do know that Lady Hincks is not "a Catholic, and therefore, &c., &c." I have not got a brief for Sir Francis; he has not got a pew in my church; he is not in any way identified with the *SPECTATOR*; nor have I had, nor do I expect to receive from him, anything more than the ordinary courtesies of everyday life. Therefore I say this in the interest of free speech and fair judgment.

But I am distinctly at issue with the Hon. Knight in the opinions he expressed before the Police Magistrates, and in the letter which he has addressed to myself. Why he should have been called upon to give evidence in the Court at all I cannot understand. The case is not a civil, but a criminal one. The Orangemen were arrested and are being tried upon the assumption that they have broken the law; the decision must rest with the presiding Magistrate; such decision being based upon his interpretation of the statutes of the realm as bearing upon the ascertained facts of the case. But in the wisdom of counsel for the prosecution he was called upon to give evidence as to the relation of Catholic and Protestant to the State, and the methods to be adopted in certain cases of emergency. And the evidence—or rather opinion as it should perhaps be properly called—was of a startling character. While I agree in the main with Sir Francis Hincks in his reading and interpretation of the history of Ireland since the rupture between England and the Papacy, I think he has mistaken the nature of Orangeism in Ireland. We should remember that the pendulum had been oscillating between the zone of Catholicism and that of Protestantism. The battle of the Boyne fixed it in the zone of Protestantism, so far as Europe was concerned. It was one of those great and decisive conflicts which come as shocks to the world, giving new and strong impulse to life. But like all such violent events the work accomplished was only partial. Roman Catholicism still existed in Ireland; broken indeed, but not crushed—and what remained of it rose up in fierce and bloody antagonism. The Irish Catholics got to regard, not merely England and Englishmen, but Protestantism and Protestants as their most deadly adversaries, opposed to their tranquillity, their prosperity, their very life upon their own soil. What reason they had on their side I have told before in the *SPECTATOR*, and need not tell again; but it is easy to imagine what would be their attitude toward Irish Protestants. And we know how great reason existed that those Irish Protestants should band together for mutual protection as it regarded their property and their lives. As Sir Francis

has put it in his letter—the Orange Association was organised "chiefly for the purpose of defence." Banding together thus it was quite natural that they should honour the name of him who had so materially aided their cause. It is true that they were often guilty of most excessive cruelty—that they often abandoned the defensive and assumed the offensive—and that they identified themselves with all—or nearly all—the measures adopted by the English to oppress or suppress the Irish Catholics. I am quite willing to allow that Orangeism was at one time a much-needed institution in Ireland—but the need for it there has long passed away, and the need for it here has never come.

But Sir Francis has broadened this question in a most extraordinary way. With regard to that part of his evidence which bore upon the interference of ecclesiastics in elections, and in which he declared it to be in his experience and judgment that the Protestant clergy busy themselves in that way just as much as the Catholic, I have only to say that Sir Francis must be perfectly well aware of the vast difference in the position of the two. The Protestant clergyman can only speak his judgment and advice—he can only exhort or persuade; the Catholic priest can command. He may say nothing of the bishop, nothing of the Pope, and nothing of eternal hell for those who disobey, but all those things are there—great, real, though invisible forces wielded by him who speaks.

And when Sir Francis, going further, declares that in his opinion Protestantism is no more tolerant and liberal in matters political, civil, and religious than Roman Catholicism, he utters that which is not only incorrect but is dangerous to society. I am not ignorant of the narrowness and intolerance of Puritanism; I know that we still have to suffer for the sins of our fathers in that respect; I know that some among us have what they are pleased to call "principles," which are so narrow that nobody can see them, but are so meddlesome that everybody can feel them; but the genius of Protestantism is toleration. It must be so, for the whole system is based upon the idea of individual freedom and responsibility; while Roman Catholicism is based upon individual obedience—is, in fact, a vast ecclesiastical hierarchy. It may be that Sir Francis is still smarting from blows received from some of the Protestant clergy; but if he will forget his own pains, and look beyond the necessarily limited range of his own experience, I am sure he will confess that while as to isolated facts he was correct, as to the main point at issue he was wrong.

But I am the more grieved to find that Sir Francis is just as limited in his ideas of public right and justice as he is in his interpretation of the teachings of the two opposing Churches; for he says: "I am unaware of a single reason that can be given to justify the formation of even a Protestant or Civil Rights Alliance, which I regret to observe you think desirable." And again: "You favour a Protestant or Civil Rights Alliance, the chief object of which, as far as I have been able to comprehend it, would be to unite Protestants in a crusade against Catholic institutions, although it cannot be shown that Protestants suffer in the least from the laws which are in force in the Province of Quebec." I wish Sir Francis had been a little more definite. A crusade against what institutions? Oh yes, here is one—the Seminary of St. Sulpice; and our object is to drag forgeries and fraud to the light of day, and put an end to the wrongs which the poor Oka Indians have had to suffer. The Civil Rights Alliance never contemplated interference with any Catholic institutions which do not interfere with the civil rights of the people. Will Sir Francis state what action of the Alliance he deems objectionable?

Surely it is strange doctrine for any man to teach in this year of grace that it is "anything but fair that the Protestant minority in Quebec should not only claim perfect equality with the majority, which has always been conceded to them, but should further claim to dictate to the majority how they are to manage their own affairs." And what are "their own affairs"? According to Sir Francis the matter of a real education is their own affair, in which we have no right to interfere. I deny that. Education is a State affair, and concerns us all. If public money is spent to maintain priests and inefficient teachers, that is an affair in which we must interfere. I am a part of the community, and have to bear my share of the burden entailed upon it by that poverty and vice which spring from the root-soil of ignorance. Does Sir Francis believe that a general and real education would promote the welfare of this country? If so, then we all have an interest in this affair, since we all have an interest in the prosperity of our country. Does Sir Francis believe that a better education would tend to the better culture of the land—to the building of better houses, and to the general advance of our industries? Then I am concerned about that education, for I want to see and to share in a general increase of material good.

Says Sir Francis: "You are in favour, as I understand, of abolishing the payment of dues for the support of the clergy in the Province of Quebec, although no complaint has been made by the people interested, and Protestants certainly have no cause of complaint on that ground." I protest against that conclusion. My cause of complaint is this: Some of Her Majesty's subjects enjoy privileges denied