

THE CHURCH NOT IN DANGER.

The *Mail* newspaper has its face against the Catholic Church and has cut itself loose from party exigencies that must needs ally itself to that church for support. It opposes separate schools in this Upper Province, and the tithes system in the Lower. It cries down the right of Catholics to have any voice in the High or Public schools. It condemns any distribution of money for charity that is based on per capita relief to the poor, because there happens to be proportionately more poor Catholics than poor Protestants. The Catholic votes are sold by the Bishops to the highest bidder, so we are told, and this has the effect of putting the purchase into possession and so public morality is gone and has been debased and debauched by both parties. The *Mail*, unable to stand these and other grievances, has turned its back on Sir John Macdonald and Mr Meredith and has become independent. The other grievances are more remote, but not less intolerable. A State Church, an Ultramontane Church, old statutes and the present infant Constitution, the Treaty of Paris and the alarming and irrepressible increase of the French population since the Cession of 1763 till to-day, are matters for reconstruction, for repeal, for destruction or repression.

This course of the *Mail* has not had much effect on the church, the schools, the charities or the French element, but it has left Mr Meredith without a brace of Catholics on his side of the House, and more than decimated that side of its former members. The most blatant of its clerical supporters could not get enough of votes in his own town to secure his election as school trustee, and the Don Quixote who went out in tin helmet to rescue the school children from the giants and dragons of Popery, only added to the triumph of his enemies and the disgrace of those who sent him. The minister who lamented any curtailment in the school books of the story of Potiphar's wife, condoles with the intelligent trustees who wanted "The whole damned Bible." The silence of the Catholics has been ominous in all this fanfare. What effect it will have on Sir John remains to be seen.—It is the truth, however, that he depends on individual Catholic support more than Mr. Mowat does. He rules as Premier amongst other things because the Catholics have never been arrayed against him. So it was and so it will be, but if the Catholics are of necessity driven in a body out of either party, they will inevitably drive that party out of power at Ottawa.

The *Mail* has spoken plainly on the Church question and has not been misunderstood. For its outspoken language and ability in which it has put forth its side, it deserves praise. On the political question we have nothing to say; on the question so far as it is not political, we have something to say, and will continue to say more. We shall endeavour to be equally plain, and hope to be equally understood.

It would be very unfair to the general Protestant public to assume that its feelings have been voiced by the *Mail*. The local elections have decided that in the most complete way. Towards that honest and honorable majority the feelings of the Catholics are sufficiently evidenced, and not a word need be said to the remnant it is probable they have learned their lesson, if learning anything is in their way. The Catholics do not fear these bigots, they simply defy them. Whatever in justice Catholics ought to have as citizens, they will have in defiance of these gentlemen, and whatever the Catholics now rightly have in justice they will keep in spite of them. The Catholics don't want to rule this country, but this country will not be ruled by any party that insults them or refuses them the right of other citizens. Whatever measure of fair play the Catholics in Canada enjoy under the Constitution they hold, not because of the exigencies of Party, but to some extent, in spite of the Party. The right to separate schools, and not the trifling amendments made to the separate school Act, will be found to be at the bottom of the grievances on this school question. For the safety of this right the Catholics have no concern, they do not feel danger from any quarter, they are as secure from the attacks of their enemies as if there were no enemies to attack. The law and the constitution must be altered be-

fore the time comes when Catholics are not to stand as securely as Protestants stand in this country; and it is well to remember that there are only two religious divisions in Canada. We have under the law, schools exclusively for Protestants, schools exclusively for Catholics, and we have Public Schools for both denominations. The Catholic children have the same right and the same privileges in Public Schools that the Protestant children have—no more and no less. Now what the bigots want, is that the Catholics, while they necessarily attend Public and High schools, should give up all claim to have any voice in regard to them. That they will never do, nor will ever be asked to do by any government. If the Protestants would rightly object to Catholic doctrine being taught in the Public Schools, then we hope that it is open to us equally to object to Protestant doctrine being taught in the Public Schools. We have the same right and can insist on the same measure of reciprocal justice.

In regard to the Catholic charities there need be no apprehension, except for the dereliction of those Municipalities whose practice it is that the applicant should be questioned as to his religion before his stomach is relieved. The Catholic Church can again, as it did long ago, take care of its own poor and lend its experience to the new housekeepers in that line.

Going out of Provincial into Federal and Imperial matters, what alarm need be felt over the smashing of Confederation the repeal of the Quebec Act of 1774, and the rescission of the Treaty of Paris? These are large subjects that may be discussed by International Conferences, by the British Parliament and doubtless also by Provincial newspapers, just as one might speculate on the assistance the French Republic would give in such a crisis. The Catholics have found many foes within the last century and a half in Canada in their secured rights, but none of them, nor all of them have been strong enough to turn them out of possession. It is a shame to think they would have to refer to foreign guarantees of their liberties.

The babble that one hears about Gallicanism and Ultramontanism, about a State Church and an establishment should apparently be inconsistent with an erudition familiar with Eusebian letters and the literature of Church Councils. There is no danger from all this, except the danger that comes from ignorance or wilful deception. A State Church or an establishment there never was in Canada and there never will be. Gallicanism, whatever there was of it in Old France or in New France, is dead beyond any revivifying process, and it would be a misfortune to import into this Province an unintelligible something solely for the reason that it appeared to do mischief in the Sister Province.

The cry of the church in danger is a familiar one to those versed in the history of the Anglican Church Establishment. It is a very proper cry in any country where the church is made and unmade by the State. In most countries the State establishes the Post Offices, Railroads and the Telegraphs—England has done better—it established a church. Just in proportion as the people wanted little or much religion or desired to be radical or Conservative therein, the friends of the establishment took alarm, and put up the red lights. That was natural and proper, where the country came first and the church afterwards. The Catholic Church, however, does not hold itself within any such petty limits. It looks as unmoved at the Decrees of the State on questions of religion as at the mutation of States themselves. It measured its Christendom with the territory of the Cæsars and held its own.—It is not likely to be awed into national or municipal units by the greatest temporality of to day. Much of the eminence that Canada enjoys in the present and in the past, is due to the church.—There have been various struggles heretofore for her liberty—it would be ridiculous to magnify into a danger, the little attack made on her to-day. A Militant Church should no more fear danger than a soldier should fear the smell of powder. The smoke in Canada is not worthy of being traced to powder. The Pope has been weeding his garden, and the weeds have fallen in with inflammable material on the other side of the fence. It is not smoke—it is an exhalation.

D A O'SULLIVAN.