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THE TRUE WITNESS
AND
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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JULY 7, 1854.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The Mail steamer *America* brings great and gratifying intelligence. Without assistance from the allies, and solely by their own courage and good conduct, have the Turks succeeded in repulsing all the attacks of the Russians upon Silistria; compelling them to raise the siege, and to fall back to the other side of the Danube, with much loss, both of men and reputation. The siege had lasted a month, when on the 13th ult., the enemy delivered a general assault under Generals Gortchakoff and Childers. The garrison, however, having received reinforcements, sallied out, and a desperate hand to hand conflict ensued, which ended in the complete discomfiture of the Russians. Prince Gortchakoff was severely wounded, as were several other Russian Generals; the life of Prince Paskiewitch is also despaired of. On the other hand, the Turks have to lament the loss of their gallant commandant, Musa Pacha.

After their repulse, the Russians retreated across the Danube, where they were waiting their reinforcements. As the Allies will soon be up in force, it does not seem likely that the enemy will re-assume the offensive. Probably, he will content himself with making good his position in the Principalities.

The effect of this intelligence in England has been most beneficial, and has raised the funds considerably. Another piece of news, which must gladden every heart, is that of the great fall in the price of breadstuffs, owing to the favorable prospects of the approaching harvest. Flour, we are happy to say, has fallen 2s., and there are reasons to hope that it may fall still lower.

We read in the *Pilot* of Wednesday the following remarks upon Mr. Hincks' plan for secularising the Reserves:—

"One of our Catholic contemporaries objects to this settlement on the ground that the effect of this measure will be to unite all sections of the Protestant party in Upper Canada in one great league against the Catholic Ecclesiastical Endowments of the Lower Province, and also that it would bring total and irretrievable destruction upon the Separate School system which some of our Catholic brethren advocate. We are sorry to see such objections urged, and the attempt made to enlist such feelings in the cause."

No doubt our cotemporary is sorry to see such objections urged; but can he deny their truth? Can he deny that the effects of secularisation upon Catholic endowments will be what we have predicted, and that the proposed appropriation of the Clergy Reserve's funds will entail irretrievable destruction upon the Catholic separate schools of Upper Canada? And to what other feelings should we appeal in this cause, than to those which every true Catholic must entertain—for the security of the institutions of his Church in the Lower Province, and the sound religious education of his brethren in the Upper?—The *Pilot* will not, we presume, dare to deny that Catholics in Upper Canada, where they are in a minority, have as good a right to separate schools, as have the Protestant minority of Lower Canada to theirs? And how then can he wonder that a Catholic, to whom the interests of his Church should be dearer than any earthly consideration, should protest energetically against a measure which must operate most injuriously upon those interests? Rather should he regret it, if, for the mere sake of retaining certain individuals in the enjoyment of place and salary, a Catholic journalist could be found so venal, so base, as to be indifferent to those perils, and lend the aid of his columns to the perpetration of an act of sacrilegious robbery, and suicidal infatuation.

The two questions, in which the Irish Catholics of Canada are most deeply interested, are, of course, the School Question—and the "Clergy Reserves" Question—or indeed, we may include them both under one head; and speak of them as one and the same question, as truly they are. It is upon this important question—compared with which, your Seigneurial Tenure question, Tariffs, and Reciprocity Treaties, sink into comparative insignificance—that the Irish Catholic constituencies will require precise and definite explanations from the candidates for their suffrages. We know not what trickery may be resorted to, to force through the Bill for "Secularising the Reserves." In defiance of their own promises, in mockery of their own arguments, it is not impossible that this question may be submitted by Ministers to the Parliament about to be elected by a miserable fraction of the constituencies, in which the people of Canada will not, in any sense of the word, be truly represented, and in which the voice of the Irish Catholic population will be scarcely heard. Indeed, it

is rumored that it was to exclude the Irish Catholics from the polls—to which they would have had legal access had the new Franchise Bill been brought into play—that resource was had to the utterly unwarrantable and unprecedented, if not unconstitutional, dissolution of the last Parliament, without permitting its members to do that which they were anxious to do, viz., give immediate effect to the provisions of the new Franchise Law. By this artful and disingenuous dodge, thousands of Catholics whom the law pronounced entitled to a vote, have been practically disfranchised, and effectually prevented from making their voices heard upon questions in which they are most deeply interested. Remember this, Catholic Irishmen, at the polls; and remember how, and why, it is that you have been thus shamefully robbed of your rights as freemen.

And yet we can hardly bring ourselves to believe that, having so often, so publicly, and so strongly declared the last Parliament incompetent to legislate on the "Clergy Reserves" question, the Ministry will so stultify themselves—will dare so to proclaim themselves traitors, hypocrites, and recreants—as to bring the same question before an Assembly elected by the same pitiful constituencies. For such an audacity of villainy, for such a sublimity of impudence, we are not prepared to give them credit. Rather would we believe that sounder, honester, counsels, will prevail; and that the settlement of the "Clergy Reserves" question will be left to the general voice of the country at another general election, to be held immediately the new Franchise comes into operation. No, it is impossible that the men who have so solemnly proclaimed the incompetence of the last Parliament to decide finally upon the "Clergy Reserves" question, because representing the views of only a small fraction of the community, will presume now "to turn their backs upon themselves," in the language of Lord Castlereagh, and uphold the competency of a Parliament, elected by the same limited constituencies. If they do, they richly deserve to be held up to the scorn and execration of every honest man.

But in a matter of such vital importance, upon which, the security of our ecclesiastical institutions in Lower Canada, and the existence of separate Catholic schools in the Upper Province, depend, it is always well to be prepared for the worst: it is always impossible to take too many precautions. Catholic voters should therefore vote, as if, in the ensuing Parliament, this great question of secularisation—the passing of which will expose all our Catholic endowments to the fury of the Protestant demagogues, and will prove fatal to liberty of education—were to be brought forward, before the new Franchise Bill comes into force; that is, before the voice of the great mass of the people—and of the Irish Catholics especially—can be heard thereon. Even under these unfavorable circumstances—infamously used as the Irish Catholics have been by the unceremonious refusal on the part of the Ministry to allow the requisite formalities for giving effect to the Franchise Law, to be proceeded with—still, if true to themselves, and awake to their best interests, they will but join their votes to the opponents of secularisation, they will ensure the defeat of a measure which, if passed, will forever deprive them of all political influence, and must lead to the "discontinuance and ultimate abandonment of their separate schools."

But by adopting this policy the present Ministry would be in a minority, and obliged to resign. Granted the minority; though the consequent resignation is doubtful, seeing there is no party competent to take their place. But grant the resignation—what then? With all the Ministry's claims upon the support of Catholics, the Church has prior and stronger claims, and it is to these that the Catholic voter should yield. Granted even that the resignation of the present Ministry were to be followed by the accession to power of the Brownites and the most bigotted enemies of Catholicity in Upper Canada—what then? Still that it would be the interest of Irish Catholics to vote against "secularisation," even though it should raise Mister George Brown to office—(a result however, most improbable, not to say impossible)—because the Church would have less to fear from the most violently hostile, and anti-Catholic Ministry—the "Reserves" remaining unsecurarised—than from the most friendly Ministry, after the passing of that measure. The plain fact of the matter is, that whilst the "Reserves" remain "unsecurarised" no Ministry, no matter how ill intentioned towards us can seriously hurt us, or long keep us out of possession of our rights; whilst on the other hand, after "secularisation" no Ministry however well intentioned will be able effectually to protect us, or to procure for us a hearing, when remonstrating against the iniquities of the present School system of Upper Canada. In a word, until "secularisation" be carried, our Catholic institutions are not only impregnable, but cannot be attacked; after "secularisation" they will not even be defensible. Of this no man, not an idiot, can for one moment doubt.

That the *Montreal Freeman*, being conducted by a Protestant, and therefore treating the question of "secularisation" from a Protestant, or Non-Catholic point of view, should be diametrically opposed to the TRUE WITNESS is but natural. We have no right to expect from our Montreal cotemporary that he should altogether refrain from manifesting his hostility to everything truly Catholic; and so far from feeling vexed thereat, we accept it as the best compliment that could be paid to the soundness of our principles. It would indeed be strange if, betwixt the Catholic TRUE WITNESS, and the Protestant *Montreal Freeman*, there were any community of opinion upon the question of "secularisation."

We are glad to see that our cotemporary has frankly adopted the only true principle upon which

the propriety of "secularisation" can be defended—that principle being, that State assistance, in aid of religion, is evil; and that its support should be left entirely to the voluntary contributions of the people. This position is intelligible; and from it, and from it alone, can we fairly conclude to the propriety of "secularisation." From any other premises—such for instance, as, that the Reserves are unequally and partially distributed, and that, in consequence, Canada is menaced with the evils of a dominant State-church—we can only conclude to the propriety of an equitable and impartial distribution of the funds in question, in which the rights of all denominations to an equal share of State support, free of all onerous conditions, would be respected.

So far the *Montreal Freeman* argues fairly and logically; but he errs most grievously in attributing his principles to the Catholic Bishops of Ireland. And had the editor of the *Freeman* been a Catholic, or ever so slightly conversant with the authoritative teachings of the Church, he would never have presumed to misrepresent her Pastors by holding them up as advocates of Voluntarism in religion, and as denouncers of the propriety of State endowments.

The position of the Catholic Bishops of Ireland was peculiar; the offers, made to them by Government, of State assistance were most insidious, and coupled with the most degrading and onerous conditions. Well and wisely did the Irish Prelates refuse to accept them. But betwixt the State assistance offered by the British Government to the Irish Bishops, and the Clergy Reserves, there is no analogy whatever.

A Clergy—the stipendiaries of the State—would be as little independent, and therefore as little competent to fulfil the duties of their sacred ministry, as a Clergy wholly dependent for their livelihood upon the voluntary contributions of their people. And, as of two evils it is always well to choose the less, the Irish Bishops wisely preferred remaining dependent upon their faithful Catholic people for support, to becoming the hirelings, the paid servants, of an anti-Catholic Government; at the expense, too, of the independence of the Church, and of the authority of the Holy See. For, coupled with the offer of State salaries, was the demand on the part of this anti-Catholic Government, that it should have a voice in the nomination to vacant Bishoprics. To have acceded to this would have been at once to degrade the Catholic Church to a level with the Parliamentary Establishment; with one voice, and in accordance with the true principles of Catholicity, did the Irish Clergy therefore refuse such assistance, when accompanied with such degrading conditions.

Very different is it with the "Clergy Reserves." In the first place, the recipients, of these funds, do not become the stipendiaries of the State, because it is not in the power of the State to give, or withhold thereof at its pleasure. It is not from the Treasury that these recipients draw an annual stipend, but it is by the proceeds of their own property that they are supported. Thus they can receive State assistance in this form, without sacrificing their independence. In the second place, an equitable distribution of the funds would not necessitate the imposition of any terms whatever upon the recipient. The State would not acquire, nor would it demand, any authority, or control over the internal discipline of the bodies to whom its assistance would be accorded. It was therefore not to State assistance—such as is implied by the "Clergy Reserves"—that the Bishops of Ireland objected; but to State assistance in the particular manner proffered by the Protestant, and anti-Catholic Government of Great Britain.

That such was the case then, that such is the case now, is evident from the fact, that the Catholic Church in Ireland does accept State assistance, does not, in consequence, lose its spiritual influence, and does, by the mouth of its Bishops, Clergy and laity, object to the withdrawal of that State assistance. We allude to the Maynooth Grant, which, like the Clergy Reserves at present, is a Grant from the funds of the general community to a particular religious denomination. Had the Bishops of Ireland—as asserted by the *Montreal Freeman*—"from time immemorial repudiated" all pecuniary assistance from the State, as derogatory to their dignity, and as tending to diminish their spiritual influence, they would not have consented to accept State assistance in the shape of the Maynooth Grant—a Grant which is made, and employed, solely for Catholic ecclesiastical purposes.

And if we turn to Canada, we shall still find, that the Prelates of the Church have given, and do give, by their conduct, the strongest practical refutation of the position of our cotemporary—that the Catholic Church is opposed on principle to State endowments, and to State assistance in aid of religion. The doctrines of the Church, her maxims, her principles, are in Ireland, what they are in Canada. Catholicity knows nothing of national, or local, truths; with her, truth is one, and universally applicable; and if she asserts the propriety of State endowments in one country, she does so in another; only in both would she refuse State assistance, were it coupled with the degrading and onerous conditions which the British Government attached to its perfidious offers of assistance to the Catholic Bishops of Ireland.

If, however, State assistance be injurious to the spiritual influences of a Clergy, it is clear that our Catholic Clergy in Lower Canada must be in a perilous condition. It is by the payment of tithes, principally, that Clergy is supported; and but for State assistance, but for the positive law of the land, and the aid of the State's Courts of Law, in many instances it would be impossible for the Clergy to levy those tithes, at all. Now, if State assistance be, what the *Montreal Freeman* represent it to be, the Clergy of Lower Canada should refuse to accept that assistance from the State; that they do not do

so, is a proof that they—the Catholic Bishops and Clergy of Canada—do not labor under the impression "that if they received support from the Crown, it would diminish their spiritual usefulness, if it did not wholly destroy it." With the Catholics of Canada this public approbation, by the Church, of the principle of State assistance will have more effect than the dogmatism of the *Montreal Freeman*.

As we have always said, and as our cotemporary clearly sees, the question of "secularisation" involves the whole question of State endowments, and involves therefore the stability of all our ecclesiastical institutions in Lower Canada. He who votes for "secularisation" for Upper Canada, but is not prepared to vote for the abolition of tithes in the Lower Province, is but a sorry logician; and if, when Mister George Brown brings forward his Bill, he shall be found opposing it—he will cut, indeed, but a very contemptible figure: he may save perhaps his Catholicity, but only at the expense of his logic. Tithes, and the "Clergy Reserves," must stand or fall together; "secularise" the latter, and the other will not be worth three years purchase. This the secularisers well know; of this every man of common sense, is intimately persuaded; and it is to avoid this abolition of tithes—a measure which will be destructive of the independence of our country Clergy, subversive of all ecclesiastical discipline, and fatal to Episcopal authority, that the TRUE WITNESS is so earnest and so constant in its appeals to the Catholics of Canada, to oppose "secularisation." We can easily understand why it is that the Protestant *Montreal Freeman* adopts a totally opposite line of policy.

It is certainly to be regretted that lay editors of journals cannot discuss the political questions of the day, without incessantly endeavoring to drag the Bishops of the Catholic Church into the midst of the fray, and thus exhibiting them in the odious light of active political partisans. But a week or two back, we had to condemn the infamous conduct of the *Canadien* and *Montreal Freeman* in this respect, and to refute their abominable falsehoods against His Lordship the Bishop of Toronto; and to-day, we cannot but express our deep regret that the *Journal de Quebec* has been so wanting in the respect due to his ecclesiastical superiors as to compromise them with the public, most seriously, on the subject of the "Clergy Reserves."

We read in the *Journal* of the 27th ult. the following paragraph over the signature "Un Catholique":—

"It is asserted that the Address, placed by His Grace the Archbishop of Quebec in the hands of the Governor-General, on the day of His Excellency's arrival in Quebec, and in the lobby of the Government House, contained a forcible protest—'protestation energique'—against the secularisation of the Clergy Reserves, and in favor of Separate Schools. This Address bore the signatures of the nine Bishops of the Province."

Whence, or by what means, the correspondent of the *Journal* obtained his information, we are not informed; but this much we may say—that he did not obtain it from the Archbishop, or through the "nine Bishops of the Province," about whose sayings and doings he seems so well informed; and that it certainly cannot be acceptable to these venerable Prelates to find a secular journalist taking such unwarranted liberty with their names. Seriously, this practice of appealing to Episcopal authority on every occasion—whether by the *Canadien*, or the *Journal de Quebec*—whether in the interests of the Ministry, or of the opposition—is highly indecorous, offensive to delicacy, and injurious to religion. The Bishops—as we have before said, when denouncing this practice—the Bishops themselves, if they deem it at all requisite to do so, will publish their political sentiments on the "Clergy Reserves" at the proper time; of that time, and of the manner in which to declare themselves, they only are the competent judges. Perhaps they may not deem it opportune, or necessary to take any part whatsoever therein. How scandalous then—how subversive of all ecclesiastical discipline—how opposed to that respect and deference with which the Pastors of the Church should be treated by all her children—is the conduct of the *Canadien* and *Journal de Quebec*! Can they not fight their own battles, without compelling the Prelates to descend into the arena, and to take part in the unseemly fight?

On questions upon which—as directly involving no point of dogma—the Church has pronounced no authoritative and definitive decision, she leaves her children free liberty of discussion. The *Canadien* is at liberty to bring forward his arguments in favor of secularisation; as the *Journal de Quebec* and the TRUE WITNESS are at liberty to bring forward theirs in opposition to it. But what neither *Canadien*, nor *Journal*, nor yet TRUE WITNESS, has the right to do, is to speak in the name of the Bishops of Canada, unless by them specially authorised so to do. No such authority, no such permission has as yet been accorded; this should satisfy our cotemporaries that our Prelates do not deem it expedient to implicate themselves with the troublesome political questions of the day. Delicacy then, respect for their ecclesiastical superiors, should have prevented, and we trust may prevent for the future, the improper use of the Bishops' names, for political purposes. We have already condemned such conduct in the *Canadien*; we cannot but condemn it, when resorted to by the *Journal de Quebec*.

We see by the Upper Canada papers that Ogle R. Gowan, Esq., has been elected, without opposition, Grand Master of the Orangemen of Canada. Mr. Benjamin, his former competitor for the honors of the "Scarlet," having been convicted of fraud, withdraws this year from the contest.