

THE TRUE WITNESS

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

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WEDNESDAY.....FEBRUARY 1, 1893

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

Once more, as January has closed, and a twelfth part of the year is gone, we respectfully call the attention of those subscribers who are in arrears, to the fact that it is most unpleasant for us—and also for them—to be forced to constantly send out accounts with accompanying duns. We are doing all in our power to make THE TRUE WITNESS occupy a first place in the ranks of Catholic journalism, and we ask for that assistance which is not only to be expected, but which justice itself ordains. Please remit whatever is due without further notice.

TO-DAY'S ELECTION.

This is a day of rush! Within the last forty-eight hours, it is wonderful how many important moves have been made upon the chess-board of our civic affairs. In Quebec our Bill hangs fire just at the most critical of moments, and as a consequence the city is flung into a state of turmoil, and the rate-payers are surrounded by uncertainties such as form a combination of circumstances rarely, if ever, met with in the municipal history of this or any other place. In order to avoid a general election on the first of March, to snatch a hurried verdict from the electors before all the aldermanic iniquities would become public property, and to save their positions, at the expense of every just consideration, for a few months more, the "compact faction" to which we referred last week, and which "holds the city in its garrotting hands," determined that—legal or illegal—to-day's election should take place. The citizens took out an injunction to prevent that election; Mr. Justice Doherty sustained that injunction and thereby declared the election illegal; the city fathers determined to proceed with the contest despite the judicial ruling; they appealed to the Court of Review; the Court of Review declared it had no jurisdiction; therefore, the election stands declared illegal, and to proceed therewith would subject the city to a fine of \$2,000 for contempt of court,—a fine that the rate-payers would have to pay. Despite all this, the City Hall has resolved to hold the elections, to expose the public to the certainty of paying the fine, to subject the citizens of Montreal to the humiliation of being made play-the-fool's part in a most grotesque farce, and all this, in order to shield themselves from the fast rising tide of popular indignation, to secure themselves for another term before their evil doings could be thoroughly scattered abroad and the boom of public indignation and exasperation would thunder in their ears. Talk of the scenes of confusion and riot that originated in the tyrannical sophistry of the French Convention, when the

grasping ambition of Robespierre and St. Just brought about the "Reign of Terror," and its subsequent train of disastrous consequences; talk about the Bureau-cracy and the "family compacts," that lashed our own country into a rebellion; but here we have, in proportion to the sphere of their operation, the same selfish ambition, the same disregard for popular rights, the same defiance of the law, the same contempt for the constituted legal authority, the same grasping, all-absorbing self-aggrandizement, the same bold determination in carrying out unlawful measures, the same absence of public conscience, the same reeking corruption, and the same attempts, apparently, to drive the honest citizens and tax-payers to desperation and open revolt against their abominable methods of civic government.

But happily, to-day, the people have a weapon far mightier than the sword of the revolution or the musket of the rebellion; they hold the ballot, and therewith, if awake to the peril that menaces, they can hurl the would-be usurpers from their high seats. How truly the words of Rome's immortal orator apply, "Catiline is at the gates of Rome; and you deliberate!" Seizing upon that classic phrase, Mirabeau once cried out in the Assembly:—"True there is no Catiline here, nor faction, nor peril, but bankruptcy, hideous and glaring is at the gates and you deliberate." To-day misgovernment, maladministration, bribery, and all the satellites of that red meteor of public corruption, flash their scorching beams upon our city, and in the moment of the greatest danger, there is lengthy deliberation over the Bill that would settle everything, and there is illegal and unjustifiable public action on the parts of those who oppose it. The city has become a play-toy in the hands of a clique, and they are bound to toss the ball until their game is entirely played out. But the law is against them; they may defer, but they cannot prevent the day of bitter reckoning. Like Caesar of old, they may all cry: "Beware of the Ides of March!"

Had there been time we would have called upon every anti-boodle candidate to withdraw and thereby protest against the illegality of the contest, and every honest citizen to remain at home and by his action refuse to recognize the election, and consequently bow before the judgment of the courts. But it was too late; time was not given for even calm deliberation; the contest goes on; but if the city is called upon to pay the fine for contempt of court, the citizens should rise in a mass on the 1st March next, and every voter, irrespective of all other considerations, mark his ballot against the violators of the law and the men of corruption. Blackball them, one and all, from the honorable places in public affairs!

WE ARE informed that while receiving the writ of the "Gardes Nobles" on the occasion of the Christmas festivals, Leo XIII. referred to the day when his guard of honor would once more be able to escort the Pope through the streets of Rome, and he said, "That day will come no doubt, but as to the moment, that is the secret of God." If this despatch news is exact, it is a sign that Leo XIII. is still full of vigor and great hope. However, he does not predict that he (Leo XIII.) will be escorted through the streets of Rome, as contended by a non-Catholic contemporary; he merely says that the guard will "be able to escort the Pope." Leo may pass away, but the Pope can never die. "Simon may die, but Peter lives on to the end of time." In any case, it is the hope and prayer of the whole Catholic world that our present glorious Pontiff may live to participate in the triumph of justice.

A JOCLAR ORGAN.

Two weeks ago we expressed our opinion upon the tone in which the New York Catholic Union and Times referred to the members of the American hierarchy and even to the Holy Father himself. That very Catholic organ, in reply to our criticism, furnishes its readers with half a column in which we are informed that The Union treated the subject in question "in a tone of light jocularity, which our serious Canadian contemporary takes as little short of vulgarity or downright irreverence." We are pleased to know that our esteemed American contemporary was only joking, but we were too obtuse to be able to see the point in the wit. The Union should label its jokes, otherwise, ordinary and uninspired individuals, like the editor of THE TRUE WITNESS, may be led into error and be uncharitable enough to accuse The Union of intentional disrespect to the Church and its prelates. A boy-at school once drew some lines upon a slate, and under his work he wrote, "this is a horse." Had he not informed the observer of the fact, no one would ever have suspected that the object was intended for a horse. So it is with The Union's jokes.

Our New York friend tells us that the following testimony to the Union's worth has been given by "Bishops who have been reading every issue of The Union for twenty years." Evidently, when the testimony was given, The Union had not entered into the joking period of its career. The recommendation runs thus:

"In these days, when so many laymen who make their office stools Papal chairs are doing grave harm, you (The Union) have always been on the side of due authority and of Christian charity."

This is the evidence that The Union has been, for twenty years, worthy of the highest approval. But it was not in the habit of joking during all that period, or else its jokes were taken at their full value, and were sufficiently pointed not to allow of their being confounded with its serious expressions of opinion.

In asking The Union to label its jokes, we are in downright earnest. Here is the very last number of our esteemed contemporary, the issue from which the foregoing extracts are taken; we are at a loss to know whether the following is intended for a joke, or whether it is a sample of The Union's ordinary style. If serious we must conclude that if "many laymen make their office stools Papal chairs," the editor of The Union is trying hard to turn his seat into an anti-Papal chair.

"Satolli has the call. Let us all make the best of the situation."

If a joke, we can see the point; if serious, The Union evidently thinks it an unfortunate situation. Take the next editorial note:

"The Hierarchy was solid in France, but Leo put down his foot for the Republic, and the G. O. M. had his way. In America there is a break in the phalanx and here surely the Pope will have his way."

Unless this is a joke, it looks very much unlike "the lash of the Union," under which "these strife-breeding screeds and rumors" are scourged. Take another sample, from the same column:

"Kicking against the pricks" is a bad exercise. After Leo may come a new regime; while Leo resigns wise people will glide in with the authorities. The average layman, "every time he opens his mouth puts his foot into it" in a ticklish crisis like this.

Probably another joke; but to the dull mind of THE TRUE WITNESS editor it savors very much of a regret that the "new regime" does not come, so as to obviate the necessity of "gliding in with the authorities," "while Leo resigns." Let us take another sample:

"A very obstinate man" is the remark applied to Gen. Grant by Mrs. Grant;

this at the time when Grant was in the wilderness. Pope Leo XIII. is likewise "a very obstinate man." Opposition but strengthens his purpose" says one who knows him well.

This may possibly be a joke; still we fail again to see the humor of it. If serious, it is open to more than one interpretation. Either the Union commends the characteristic of obstinacy in the Pope, or else it classes that obstinacy (which it gratuitously attributes to Leo XIII.), in the category of his shortcomings.

But it is useless continuing quotations: almost every column contains some phrase, so peculiarly constructed, that it becomes almost impossible to say whether it is a shaft seriously fired at the occupant of the Holy See, or an intended, joke that is only comprehensible to the jocose editor of The Catholic Union. One more remark and we have done. The Union begins its reply to our article, as follows:

"Our esteemed contemporary, the Montreal True Witness, while remarking that it 'knows but very little about the subject,'"

Exactly; we are not in the secrets of the Vatican, nor of Mgr. Satolli, nor of the American, nor Canadian Archbishops; we therefore honestly admit that we are not posted in the details of the question at issue. Evidently The Union knows all about the subject: it is a pity it should give its information in a jocular style.

FRENCH EVANGELIZATION.

Some few numbers back we referred to the peculiarly indefinite document purporting to come from four Quebec ministers on the subject of the Bible in Roman Catholic hands. It was certainly a model of audacity, and wild, reckless, and false statements. It was a combination of what Junius called "assertion without proof, declamation without argument, and violent censure without dignity or moderation." Since then we find *The Presbyterian Witness*, one of the official organs of the "Board of French Evangelization" giving an account of the work done during the past year. It is signed by Principal MacVicar, D. D., and S. J. Taylor. Amongst other things the report says:

"An ever increasing number of children from Roman Catholic homes has been attending the mission schools. In some of these almost the total attendance is Roman Catholic. For example, in one school fourteen out of seventeen are Roman Catholics; in another fifteen out of sixteen; in another twenty-three out of twenty-eight. In fact, except in one or two schools the Roman Catholic attendance is not less than one-third and often more than one-half."

"A few days ago one of our missionary colporteurs was permitted to hold a service in the Roman Catholic chapel at St. Germain de Kamouraska. He had an audience of fifty Ropian Catholics, ten of whom were women, and all expressed themselves as greatly pleased with the service. There is a wonderful movement going on, and the priests and bishops are making strenuous efforts to control it. The missionary is still on the ground, and the district has discovered six families who call themselves Protestant, and were evangelized by former missionaries of the Board."

That seems to be a very out-spoken statement. There are no insinuations in it, they are broad assertions. It is evident to any Catholic that such statements are of a questionable character. The enterprising and able editor of the *Antigonish Casket*, wrote to a priest in Levis College, Quebec, for authentic information on the subject. Here is the reply that was sent to the *Casket*:

"Please excuse inevitable delay in