

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.
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We beg to remind our Correspondents that no letters will be taken out of the Post-Office, unless prepaid.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7.

ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR.
OCTOBER—1864.

Friday 7—St. Mark, p. c.
Saturday 8—St. Bridget, v.
Sunday 9—Twenty First After Pentecost, Maternity of B. Virgin.
Monday 10—St. Francis of Borgia, Conf.
Tuesday 11—S.S. Denis, &c., m. m.
Wednesday 12—Of the Feria.
Thursday 13—St. Edward, Conf.
The "Forty Hours" Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will commence as follows:—
Saturday 8—St. Francis d'Assise, Long Point.
Monday 10—St. Bruno.
Wednesday 12—St. Gabriel of Brandon.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

All the subscribers indebted to the TRUE WITNESS for "over one year" are hereby notified that unless payment is made within the next twenty days, their accounts will be handed to the clerk of the court for collection with expenses. We give this public notice in order that no subscriber in default may plead ignorance.

None need expect to escape who are in arrears; if sued, they will have themselves to blame. Being desirous to pay what we owe, we trust our friends will see fit to send in the money owing by them. If they do not, they must not blame us for the consequences.

"Parturient montes nascitur ridiculus mus."

PROTESTANT MEETING FOR FREEDOM OF EDUCATION.—It is a strange anomaly that Protestants, who in the United States, and in every country where their numbers assure to them political ascendancy, are the most vehement champions of "State Schoolism," should in Lower Canada turn, as Lord Castlereagh would have said, their backs upon themselves, and come out strongly in favor of "Freedom of Education." What is sauce for the goose, is not, so it would appear, always sauce for the gander; and though State Schoolism is good enough for Papists, it is by no means the thing that suits the Protestant palate, when administered by Catholics.

Yet of this inconsistency we will not complain; neither will we urge it as a reason for refusing or delaying justice to our Protestant fellow citizens. We are in their behalf, as well as in our own, the friend of "Freedom of Education"; and by "Freedom of Education" we mean the right of every man to educate his children as he pleases, without let or hindrance of any kind, direct or indirect, from the State. It stands to reason that, if you compel a man to pay for the support of a school to which is the exercise of his divine right as parent, he does not see fit to send his child, you do, to the extent you tax him, deprive him of the means of sending his child to a school of which he does approve; and that therefore you do infringe upon his rights as a parent, and do offer violence to the sacred principle of Freedom of Education.

Now, our Protestant fellow-citizens of Lower Canada complain that in their case wrong is done to them, in that they are by law compelled to support schools of which they do not approve as places of education for their children. Whether their scruples against these schools are well or ill-founded is a matter with which the State has nothing to do; for their scruples are conscientious scruples, and the State has no jurisdiction in the domain of conscience. All that it has to do, is to establish, or verify the fact, that conscientious scruples do exist; and this fact established, it has naught to do with the reason for, or validity of, the alleged conscientious scruples. The School Question and the Church Question are at bottom, one and the same; and as it would be no answer to the English Dissenter protesting against being taxed for the support of the Government Church, to insist that there is nothing in the doctrines or discipline of that Church to which he can reasonably object; so it is no answer to either Catholic or Protestant, protesting against being taxed for the support of a particular school, to tell him that therein there is nothing taught or done against which he can reasonably entertain conscientious scruples. It is not with the intrinsic merits or demerits of either the Church or the School that the State has to deal; but simply with the fact of the conscientious scruples against such Church or

School; and these scruples it is bound to respect, since over conscience it has no legitimate authority.

These principles we have always applied to the Catholic minority of Upper Canada; and we have justified their demands for Freedom of Education, not upon the intrinsic defects of non-Catholic Schools, but solely upon the broad and intelligible grounds of conscience. In that they the said Catholic minority, did not choose to send their children to the said schools, we urge that irrespective of their merits, the State had no right to tax Catholics for their support.

And the same grounds we take with respect to the Protestant minority in Lower Canada.—As Catholics we may opine that their objections to our schools are very unreasonable, that they do not know what is for their own good, and the good of their children; but we confess that we have no right to obtrude these our opinions on those who as citizens are our equals, and whose rights as parents over their children are held by the same tenure, as that by which our rights as parents are held. Therefore we conclude that if the facts be as Protestants pretend, that if they are by law compelled to pay for schools to which they object, they are entitled to relief, and to exemption from all compulsory taxation for the support of the said obnoxious schools.

This premised, and these general principles laid down, we will proceed to the consideration of the particular grievances of which our Protestant fellow-citizens complain, and which we find embodied in a Report read to, and adopted by, a general meeting of Protestants, mostly Ministers, and little boys, held in this City on the evening of Tuesday the 27th ult. These grievances are five in number, and are thus enumerated:—

1. "That Public Works, Railroads, &c., are taxed for School purposes, and that the sums thus raised are in many instances devoted exclusively to the support of Catholic schools; that Protestant Dissident schools are not allowed to share therein, though much of the property thus taxed belongs to Protestants."

This grievance, if truly stated, should be redressed, if it be the consequence of any positive provision of the Lower Canadian School Law. But in the same paragraph of the Report in which this grievance is put forward we read:—

"This occurs, in some cases, by the proprietors, though Protestants, neglecting to sign the dissent required by law to secure their taxes to their own schools."—*Mont. Gazette*, 28th ult.

From this it would appear that not to the law, not to the criminal partiality of the Superintendent of Education is this grievance to be attributed; but to the neglect of Protestant proprietors themselves, who are so careless that they do not avail themselves of the provisions of the law made in their behalf. On this score nothing can be said against the liberality of Catholic legislation. The second grievance is thus stated:—

2. "Protestant non-residents are, by law, obliged to pay their taxes to the school commissioners, and so for the support of Roman Catholic Schools."—*Gazette*, 28th ult.

This, if truly stated, seems to us unjust. The only legitimate object of a school law is to support and promote education in general by taxing all property for school purposes; and no matter to what school—Catholic or non-Catholic—the sums thus raised are applied, the sole legitimate object of a school law has been attained when the tax on property has been paid, and applied to a school purpose. It seems to us therefore that, where a dissentient school exists, the tax payer whether resident or non-resident, should be left free to determine to which school the amount of his contribution to the education fund should be applied.

The third grievance is thus worded:—

3. "That the provisions of the School Act based upon the Parochial division of the Province are fitted to prevent the formation of Protestant Schools, and to destroy those which exist."—*ib.*

We deny that this was the intention of the framers of the School Act; and for the rest we think that Protestants in Lower Canada should have the same legal facilities afforded them for limiting, circumscribing, or waiving their dissentient school districts, as are by law afforded to the Catholic minority of Upper Canada. We will pass on to the fourth grievance as assigned by the Report:—

4. "That Protestant Schools are examined by Roman Catholic Inspectors, who do not understand the English language, and who cannot therefore make correct reports respecting them though desirous to be impartial."†

The man who framed this grievance was evidently laboring under much mental confusion. He evidently wanted to make out a religious grievance, in that his complaint first turns upon the fact that "Protestant Schools are examined by Roman Catholic Inspectors;" but he succeeds only in establishing a national and perhaps unavoidable grievance, in that his complaint in substance amounts to this:—That the Inspectors, though desirous to be impartial, are often so imperfectly acquainted with the English language as to be unable to make correct reports. Even if true, there is in this nothing to substan-

† This is the substance of the recommendation made to the government by the Superintendent of Education.

† This is false in fact. The truth is that in the Eastern Townships an analogous grievance does exist, but the sufferers are French Catholics, as the School Inspectors are most commonly English Protestants, ignorant of French.

ciate a charge of illiberality against Catholics. It is a grievance to Irish Catholics, as well as to English Protestants; it involves simply a question of race; not of religion.

"That in the common schools, so-called, teachers and pupils are sometimes forced to conform to the rites of Romanism, and harshly treated in case they offer opposition."—*ib.*

Two instances are cited in support of this allegation, but neither are attested by the names of the deponents. The first instance is the case of a female teacher who insisted upon reading a chapter of the Bible at the opening of school; upon which the "School Commissioners held three special meetings to turn her off." From this would seem as if the Catholic School Commissioners had appointed a Protestant teacher to one of the schools under their jurisdiction, and that the latter was not allowed to conduct the school according to her peculiar Protestant notions. In this instance we are more inclined to condemn the exceeding liberality of the School Commissioners than their bigotry. The other instance cited *anonymously* of course, is to the effect that "Protestant children have been forced to cross themselves or to recite Roman Catholic catechism;" and that "in one case a smart, little girl refused to cross herself, and after having been scolded and mocked at she was turned out of school by her teacher and she has lost her time since."

This case of the "smart little girl" is the solitary instance of oppression cited by the Report, and as this is given *anonymously*, we cannot of course condescend to notice it. The anonymous accuser is generally a liar and a slanderer, but most certainly a coward.

These five grievances are actually all that the Report insists upon, and we do not think that is therein much to occasion uneasiness. As we have already said there is therein matter that calls for enquiry, and redress if substantiated. Protestants, whether resident or non-resident, should we think be allowed to determine to which school (where two schools exist) their school taxes should be applied; it is but just that they should be allowed every facility for establishing and supporting dissentient schools; and that for this purpose they should be allowed to limit, unite, and circumscribe their own school districts, irrespective of all Parochial divisions. In a word every facility afforded by law to the Catholic minority of Upper Canada should be accorded to the Protestant minority of the Lower Province.

But when all is done, all that is to say that the law can do, both in Upper and Lower Canada, social grievances will remain. A minority, especially a poor minority, must always labor under many disadvantages, must always, no matter what the law may say, be in an inferior position, as compared with the wealthy majority. If all the Catholics of Upper Canada, or all the Protestants of the Lower Province, lived within a short distance of one another, the school question would be of easy solution; but scattered as they are over an immense surface, badly provided with the means of communication it is impossible to furnish them all with schools of their own persuasion. Always will there be natural and social obstacles; and all that our legislators can do is to take good care that they do not increase or aggravate these natural and social obstacles, by injudicious or illiberal legislation.

The *Montreal Witness* is jubilant over the triumph of the Liberals of Belgium over what it calls the "priest party," that is to say the Catholics. It also institutes a comparison betwixt Canada and Belgium, points out the resemblance betwixt Canadian Liberals and Belgian Liberals, and hints that as the latter have triumphed in one country, and are about to carry out therein their policy, so also it is to be expected that they will soon triumph and carry out the same policy to a successful issue in the other country.

We have no objection to urge against the comparison drawn by the *Witness*; we feel flattered at being in any manner or degree likened to the noble hearted and liberty-asserting Catholics of Belgium; we recognise also the striking resemblance betwixt Canadian Liberals and Belgian Liberals, betwixt the designs of the latter, and those of that party in this country of the faithful Toronto *Globe* and *Witness* are the faithful exponents. What manner of men these Belgian Liberals, with whom our Canadian Liberals are, what the policy which they advocate, and what the real feelings of the great majority of the now infidel, and not demoralised people of Belgium are upon the point at issue, we propose to discuss.

The Liberals of Belgium have professedly two objects in view: one to wrest from the Church her property, and the abolition of all convents. The other to wrest the education of the people from the hands of the clergy and to concentrate it in their own hands, or in the hands of Liberal tenders appointed by the State. That the *Witness*, that the organs of Canadian Liberalism should sympathise with the Liberals of Belgium, is no more than what is to be expected.

It must be understood however that the Convents in Belgium are supported solely by voluntary contributions; that they hold no endow-

ments, these having years ago been sacrificed to the clamors of an advanced and aggressive Liberalism. The State gives not one penny to the Belgian Convents, whose revenues are derived exclusively from the voluntary contributions of the faithful.

But these Convents—hated by Liberals—are on the increase, having increased from 251 with 3,645 members in 1830, to 993, with 14,630 members in 1856. Hence the outcry "*we must have done with Convents.*" It is not enough for Belgian Liberals that the Government should abstain from fostering Convents, it must actively repress them, or put them down. On this point the Belgian Liberals are men after Mr. George Brown's own heart, men whom the *Witness* eulogises, whom the President of the Council would delight to honor.

On the Education question Belgian and Canadian Liberals are at one; in the sacred name of liberty it must be wrested from the control of the Church, and confided to the State, though the people are most averse to the change, and though the Belgian clergy are the teachers of the people not in virtue of any law, but because the people themselves prefer them to any other teachers. On this point let us hear what the *London Times* has to say:—

"Even according to the accounts of persons not well disposed to the clergy, there seems to be a deliberate preference of them on the part of nearly every class as instructors of youth, and friends in all the difficulties of life. While every Belgian is free to choose his own religion, to choose the school for his son or his daughter, to consort with the ecclesiastic or the Liberal according to his pleasure, he generally prefers the men and the establishments of the Church."—*London Times*.

The professed object of the Liberals is to put a stop to this; to prevent parents from entrusting the education of their children to the Church; to compel them to send these children to the State school to be indoctrinated, or imbued at a tender age with Liberal principles. The political ascendancy of the corrupt and demoralised urban, over the rural population has secured the Belgian Liberals a temporary triumph, and given occasion for *To-Parsons* of the Protestant Liberal press.

The cause of the preference shown by the Belgians of "nearly every class," as the *Times* says, for the clergy as instructors is, as the *London Times* plainly hints, to be found in the well known immorality of the Liberals:—

"Ordinary people, even among those who have no very strong religious convictions, would rather see their children acquiesce in what they consider harmless dogmas, than imbibe the poison which for a hundred years has been distilled by the popular teachers of Europe."

That the *Witness* should sympathise with these Belgian Liberals whose immorality is so notorious that even "ordinary" parents themselves disbelievers in Catholic dogma, should prefer entrusting their children to the Catholic priest with his superstitions, than to the Liberal with his moral poison—is a fact not very creditable to our contemporary's pretensions to super-fine piety, but can strike no one with surprise who has studied the history of Protestantism, and has thus learned its natural proclivities to infidelity and immorality. The lesson however this avowed sympathy teaches us of Canada is important, and should not be forgotten. The *Witness* celebrating the triumphs of the Belgian Liberals tells us that "a lesson may be learned from this circumstance by zealots of the *True Witness* school." Another lesson also may be learned from it by Catholics; and that is, as the *Witness* itself suggests, the striking family resemblance betwixt Canadian Liberals of the *Witness* and *Globe* school and those Belgian Liberals whom every honest father or mother rejects with abhorrence as the teacher of his or her children. Canadian Liberals and Belgian Liberals, both to the best of their ability are doing the work of their master the devil. Both are aiming at the "putting down" of the Romish Convent and of the Romish school, and on the substitution in lieu thereof of these State schools wherein Government professors may safely and commodiously instil into the hearts of their pupils "the poison which for a hundred years has been distilled by the popular teachers of Europe."—*Times*.

We thank the *Witness* for reading us this lesson, for calling our attention to the analogy betwixt Belgian Liberals and Canadian Liberals, betwixt Belgian zealots and Canadian zealots, and for showing us so clearly that the battle, which in Canada the "priest party" are fighting, is the same as that carried on against the Liberals by the "priest party" in Belgium.

THE BISHOP OF THREE RIVERS.—The *Journal* of Thursday says:—We learn that the "faithful" of Three Rivers will be called upon on the 18th of October next, to assist at the celebration in their cathedral, of the 12th anniversary of their venerable Bishop, and of the fiftieth of his priesthood. The Bishops of the Province will be in attendance, together with a considerable number of the clergy from the different dioceses. It is the first time, it is said, that a bishop of Canada has lived to see the 50th year of his priesthood.

It is said that the crops in the parishes below Quebec have been greatly injured by the recent rains, and much hay carried off, by the high tides, from the islands in the St. Lawrence.

CRINOLINE IN THE PULPIT.—The great demand for, and consumption of, men in the Northern States occasioned by the war, have thrown many employments hitherto monopolised by the males, into the hands of the other sex. Many of the farming operations of the Northern and Western States have to be conducted by women, their husbands, brothers, fathers and sons having been conscripted, and hurried South to fatten the vultures of Virginia and Carolina; and we read of whole districts in which all field operations, harvesting and out of door work generally, are performed by women.

Whether it is owing to the same cause as that which has driven females to the plough and compelled the maidens of the States to handle the axe and the hoe we cannot tell; but certain it is that the same phenomenon which we have indicated as noticeable in the field, recurs also in the Protestant pulpit. If we have ploughwomen instead of ploughmen we meet also with the startling phenomenon of Protestant ministrisses in lieu of Protestant ministers of which the subjoined paragraph from our American Protestant paper, the *Quincy Patriot* of July 16th offers an illustration:—

"INSTALLATION IN WEYMOUTH.—Reverend Miss Olympia Brown was installed as Pastor of the First Universalist Church in Weymouth on Friday last."

Then occurs a full description of the ceremonies attendant upon the Ordination and Installation of this Reverend and captivating young lady:—

"Invocation by Rev. A. Edwards; Reading of the Scriptures, Rev. G. H. Emerson; Sermon, Rev. Sylvanus Cobb, D. D.; Installing Prayer, Rev. J. E. Davenport; Charge, and Delivery of the Scriptures, Rev. R. A. Ballou; Right Hand of Fellowship, Rev. E. Hewitt; Benediction by the Pastor."

The Rev. Miss Brown, we are further informed, is a sweet artless creature "not quite twenty-four years of age." She is nevertheless "a full graduate of a regular theological institution, and is possessed of considerable talent" to say nothing of her personal charms.

In some respects we think this dodge of our Protestant friends a very excellent one. The young men will no doubt hasten to avail themselves of the spiritual consolation of their young and Reverend Pastress; they will rush in crowds, as the phrase is, "to sit under her" and as a consequence pew rents will go up, and the Church will approve itself a paying concern—always a primary consideration with Yankees who so well know how to reconcile the service of God with that of Mammon. One little inconvenience only do we anticipate, and that springs from the amplitude of young ladies' petticoats, and the narrow limits of the ordinary pulpit constructed for the accommodation of the wearers of the more scanty bifurcated garment. This however can no doubt easily be obviated. Protestant Churchwardens can easily enlarge their pulpit, or failing in this, the reverend young ladies, when about to enter upon their sacred duties may curtail their crinolines, and leave their hoops behind them in the Sacristy.

Certainly our Protestant friends have very strange rules of justice. Take the following as an example, which we clip from the foreign correspondence of the *Montreal Herald*, of the 25th ult.:—

"A famous brigand Crocco, who for more than a year has held the Piedmontese in check, took flight and sheltered himself on the Pontifical territory.—Instead of putting him in prison as a criminal guilty of numerous assassinations, they gave him a passport for Spain."

Apply this principle to North America as well as to Italy—to the territories of Her Britannic Majesty as well as to those of the Pope—and what would be the result? A famous brigand named Lee, or "rebel" as some call him, a Crocco on a larger scale, has for years been keeping the Yankees in check. Now suppose that owing to the fortune of war his army were routed, and he himself pursued by the enemy were to make good his retreat into Canada—would Queen Victoria or her representative for her, deem it her duty to give up General Lee to the Yankees, because he was, according to them a rebel, and had murdered hundreds and thousands of their soldiers? And yet we see not why the Pope, an independent sovereign, should be expected to act as a jailer towards refugees in his dominions from Piedmontese rule; and why, were Queen Victoria to act in a similar manner towards refugees in Canada from Yankee tyranny, her conduct, or the conduct of her Ministers, should be denounced as unconstitutional. Austria and Prussia in virtue of special treaties with Russia, may deliver up to the latter run-away Poles; but we are not aware that the Sovereign Pontiff has concluded any Treaty with the King of Sardinia binding himself to give up to the latter refugee subjects of the King of Naples, who may have taken shelter in the Papal dominions.

It is the boast of Englishmen that British territory offers a sure and safe asylum to all refugees, no matter what their offences, and of all nations; that the victims of monarchical, and of democratic oppression are beyond the reach of their oppressors when once beneath the folds of the British flag; that for no potentate on earth will Britain's Sovereign consent to act the part of jailer. And if a demand were to be made by