

The True Witness

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 1872.

ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR.

JUNE—1872.

Friday, 14—St. Basil, B. C. D.  
Saturday, 15—St. Paschal, B. C. (May 21).  
Sunday, 16—Fourth after Pentecost.  
Monday, 17—St. Gregory VII., P. C. (May 25).  
Tuesday, 18—St. Philip Neri, C. (May 26).  
Wednesday, 19—St. Juliana Falconieri, V.  
Thursday, 20—St. Norbert, B. C. (June 6).

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

We seem to have come to the end of the "indirect claims" difficulty at last; and contrary to all expectations a few weeks ago, the Treaty may still be upheld, and the arbitration at Geneva go on quietly. Towards the close of an animated debate in the House of Lords, on a motion by Earl Russell, Lord Granville read a letter from the American Minister, General Schenck, to the effect that the supplemental article, as agreed to by the Senate, is amply sufficient to exclude the claims for indirect damages, and may be looked upon as a final settlement of the question. Earl Derby replied that this put a new face on the matter; and amidst the cheers of the House, Lord Russell withdrew his motion for an address to the Queen. This we hope is the close of the long, and confused controversy between the two countries.

There is nothing of interest from the Continent of Europe to report. Affairs at Rome remain unchanged. The Carlists are not yet crushed in Spain.

The proposed re-arrangement of the electoral divisions of the City of Montreal has created some uneasiness in the minds of some of the leading business men of the City, who are petitioning against it. Opinions differ as to how it will affect the Irish vote, and we cannot presume to offer any opinion of our own upon the subject.

We have as yet heard of no steps having been taken to give effect to the resolution of our House of Commons, to submit the vital question as to the constitutionality of the action of the New Brunswick legislature in the matter of education, to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; until this question be settled by competent legal authority, all political action will be utterly useless. If the School Law be ruled unconstitutional by the tribunal to whose decision the question has been referred, our point is gained; if it be otherwise ruled, we must seek redress in a change of the law, so as to place our fellow-Catholics of New Brunswick beyond the reach of future attacks. This at all events is our view of the position, which we submit to the opinion of our readers. First we must seek redress for the Catholics of New Brunswick in the Courts of Law by legal action, in the hopes that they have the law on their side; if such be the case, all we want is a fair application of that law, which the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council will certainly give us. If however, the law, fairly interpreted, be against us, we must seek redress in the Imperial Parliament, by political action, and must ask for an amendment in the Act constituting our Canadian Government. First legal action; then political action, if necessary: first determine what the law is; then seek to amend it, if it be unfavorable; this seems to us to be the logical order of proceeding: and this is the point on which we differ from some whom we highly respect. To ask the Federal Government to disallow the N. B. School law, even though it be strictly constitutional, seems to us a most dangerous course to pursue; and one that if successful, would at best yield only a temporary and precarious relief to our New Brunswick friends. *Timeo Danaos.*

THE DORCHESTER STREET CEMETERY.—In this appropriation the Commissioners have awarded \$16,000 for the entire plot.

THE MOUNTAIN PARK.—The ladies of the Hotel Dieu have sold 20 acres of their property, near to that expatriated by the Council, belonging to Mr. Stanley Bagg, to the Corporation for \$2,085 an acre.

WHAT NEXT?—It having at last been decided, that the legal question of the competence of the New Brunswick local legislature to pass the school law of which Catholics so justly complain, is to be referred to the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, we wait to see what will be the next step taken to give practical effect to the decision of our Federal Parliament. The questions that we have now to consider are:—"By Whom," and "In What Form," shall the important point of law, raised in the recent debates at Ottawa, be brought before the last Court of Appeal, and highest legal tribunal of the British Empire?

These are questions which it is not for us, citizens of another Province, but for the Catholics of the Province of New Brunswick, to determine. They raise other important questions of law, on which the advice of good lawyers should be taken, so that we may have assurance that the great question at law, to wit—the legal competence of the local government of New Brunswick, to legislate as it has legislated, shall be brought in proper form, and with all due legal observances, before the august tribunal to which we have appealed. It did indeed suggest itself to us, that this might be effected by the combined action of the Catholics of New Brunswick against the payment of any school rates under the iniquitous law; but far be it from us to recommend force, or armed resistance to the law, unjust and tyrannical though that law be.—By this mode of procedure the legal constitutionality of the new School Law might be brought before the notice of the law Courts of New Brunswick, in the first instance; and then, by appeal against their finding, before the notice of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. This question as to the mode of procedure in an affair so important, must not be determined without careful preparation, and the best legal authorities having been first consulted. The battlefield, as we said in our last, is now transferred from the political arena to the legal arena, and we must be careful to put on the whole armor, and panoply of law.

God helps those who help themselves, and the oppressed Catholics of New Brunswick will, we are sure, not be wanting to themselves, and their holy cause in this emergency. To meet, consult, and organize; to form a central committee acting of course with the sanction, and under the direction of their Pastors, seem to us first steps indispensable. Funds will be required, to retain and fee counsel to plead the Catholic cause, and see that all due legal formalities are complied with; and to raise these funds the Central Committee should appeal to the Catholics of the entire Dominion, all of whom suffer when their brethren suffer; and who will be better able to show the sincerity of their sympathy by putting their hands in their pockets, than by any amount of tall talking and tall writing. Fifty cents even of contribution to a "New Brunswick Catholic Defence Fund," will be of more use than a column of indignant writing, or the ablest oration that was ever delivered. Our case—for it should be looked on as the case of all the Catholics of British North America—is now going before the Law Courts, and we all know that without money it is no easy matter to bring matters to an issue in such Courts. It is however, for the Catholics of New Brunswick as principals, whilst we can be but as auxiliaries, to determine the mode in which the legal question of constitutionality is to be brought before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, so as to enforce the giving of a conclusive decision thereon by that august tribunal.

And until that decision be obtained, no victory that by means of party tactics might be won in the Federal Legislature for the Catholics of New Brunswick, would be of any real value. Their triumph would be always precarious, certainly dearly bought, and certainly dangerous. Precarious, because even should a vote of the Federal House of Commons compel the Federal Executive to disallow the, to Catholics, hostile action of a local legislature to-day, the latter would still have it in its power to renew hostile legislation to-morrow; trusting to the chances that a new election, and the certain increase of the anti-Catholic party in the Federal Legislature, would reverse the adverse decision—so long at least as it should not have been determined by a legal tribunal that the action complained of by Catholics was unconstitutional, and must be disallowed. The majority of to-day in favor of disallowing the N. B. School Bill, might, till this decision be given, be turned by means of a new election, into the minority of to-morrow. The sword would ever be hanging over the heads of Catholics; since the fate of their schools would always be at the mercy of a legislature, in which the Protestant element is always, and must be an increasing element, whilst the Catholic element can at best be but stationary.

A triumph for the Catholics of New Brunswick, obtained by a favorable vote in the Federal Government would, unless accompanied by a legal decision as to the unconstitutionality

of the action of their local legislature, be dearly bought; since the price so paid for it would be the explicit recognition of the right of the Federal Legislature to determine all questions at issue between it, and the several Provincial governments—thus virtually reducing the latter to the paltriest of paltry municipalities.

It would be dangerous; for it is as certain as that the waters of the St. Lawrence and of the Ottawa shall still continue to flow towards the sea, that the relative strength of the Protestant element in the Federal Legislature will ever be on the increase; and that if it can obtain to-day, and from Catholics, the recognition of its right to overrule or disallow Provincial legislation except in cases where the unconstitutional action of the latter has been judicially affirmed by a competent legal tribunal, it will to-morrow and at the instigation of Protestants, arrogate to itself the same right to overrule, and disallow at its own good pleasure any Provincial legislation that may be conservative of Catholic rights, and conducive to the promotion of Catholic interests. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

In dealing with the N. B. School question we must try and look beyond the tips of our noses, if our eyes are strong enough to bear so distant a prospect; we must think of to-morrow as well as of to-day, and calculate the more remote, as well as the proximate consequences of our acts.

For these reasons we heartily rejoice, and in the interests not only of the Catholic Province of Quebec, but of the entire Dominion, that the Federal Government has not assumed to determine a point of law in its own favor; and that the question of constitutionality has been transferred from a Court of Legislature to a Court of Law. We never expected an immediate victory, to carry the enemy's position by a coup de main, or to finish the war in a single campaign; and we feel therefore no disappointment because the N. B. School Bill has not at once been disallowed, since a Bill identical in spirit might be passed annually by the N. B. Legislature, until it should at last be favorably received by the House of Commons and permitted to go into operation by the Federal Executive.

No: we feel that in transferring the right of determining the question of constitutionality, from the Federal Government to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, Catholics in particular, and all who are opposed to centralisation, have won a great victory, whose importance can scarce be overrated. The Federal Government has formally admitted its own incompetence to determine questions of law as to the extent of its power; and unintentionally perhaps, but none the less effectually, has it established limits to its own functions which we hope it shall never be allowed to transgress.

The victory we assert is really with us, if we do but know how to improve it, and if we be but quick to push to their uttermost the consequences of this appeal, from the action of a local legislature, not to the Federal Government of the Dominion, but to the highest legal tribunal of the British Empire. In this tribunal, not in the first named, must we look for the real protection for the rights of minorities, when the prejudices of the overwhelming Protestant majority shall be arrayed against them.

We have all read the story how the farmer, whose corn was nibbled by the hare, called in the huntsman with his hounds to destroy the vermin. The huntsman came with his hounds at request, and delivered the farmer of his enemy the hare, but at the cost of the latter's entire crop. This is the fable; there is a moral to it, which we would do well to meditate, and apply, before we call in the Federal Government to overrule, *proprio motu*, the legislation of a local government, even though by so doing we should win a slight temporary advantage.

Had we any doubts as to the character of the school law in New Brunswick, of the intention of its framers, and of the justice of the opposition offered to it by the Catholic minority, those doubts would be dissipated by the language of the Montreal *Witness* with respect to it; and by his unintentional but frank admission of its merits as a measure of State proselytism. In his issue of the 25th May, the *Witness*, deploring the opposition the Bill has encountered, and its possible repeal or modification, thus insists upon what may be hoped for from it, should it be allowed to go into operation; he describes it as "a measure,"— "which, if allowed to stand, might result in giving Roman Catholics a sound education, emboldening them, perhaps, to exercise the dreaded Protestant right of private judgment."

Translated from the *verbiage*, or cant of the meeting-house, into plain English, the meaning of the *Witness* simply is, that those schools against being compelled to pay for which, the Catholics of New Brunswick protest, are so contrived as to render it probable, that, through their instrumentality, Catholic children who

should attend them, would be encouraged in religious matters to throw off the authority of the Church, and to adopt the Protestant principle of "private judgment." If this be true, if this be what may perhaps be expected from the New Brunswick schools, the Catholic minority are in duty bound to oppose them by every means in their power, and the men who enacted them are a set of hypocrites as well as tyrannical bigots; hypocrites in that they pretend that their school law does not interfere to the prejudice of Catholics; tyrants and bigots in that they try to force Catholics to pay for schools established for the purpose of apostatising their children. This—though they may deny it on oath—was, and is, the design of the framers of the law: and if they deny it, they do but add to their offence against justice, the rank offence of falsehood.

One word as to "private judgment." The *Witness* often makes profession of his belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. We would ask him: whether it is simply by the exercise of his private judgment; or by submitting his reason to what he believes to be authority—that he has arrived at the conclusion that God is One in Three Persons?

The London *Times* takes occasion to sneer at the "superstitious results of priestly teaching," as displayed in the public prayers of the people of Naples during the recent terrible eruption of Vesuvius. The *Catholic Opinion* has some appropriate remarks:—

It is certain that no mortal skill can contend against the lava that now threatens their beautiful city with the fate of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Mortal skill was also defied by the desperate disease which threatened the life of "England's heir;" yet when England, menaced with a lesser calamity than destruction, formally prayed with a similar intention, we read in the same organs that print these irrelevant letters much that was, if not religious, at least emotional, sentimental, or counterfeited, on the subject of a "Nation in prayer." The Neapolitans, with "their expiatory Masses, lighted candles, and long wailing processions" strike us as being more terribly in earnest than our "National supplication" of which the finale was the gorgeous procession that stopped at St. Paul's for just fifteen minutes. The Neapolitans pray that He who at the bidding of the prophet made the sun "stand still," may quench those fierce internal fires that threaten them with hot destruction. They have the reality of faith. Is devotion only respectable in proportion as it is affected?

WRITTEN FOR THE TRUE WITNESS.  
SHORT SERMONS FOR SINCERE SOULS.  
No. I.

"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land."

So explicit are the words of this commandment, that none can deny that length of life has been promised to those who honor their parents. The Angelic Doctor assigns many reasons for this, and amongst others he thus argues. "He who acknowledges a benefit received, deserves others; now a good son who is grateful to his parents for the life which he has received from them, deserves that God should prolong for him that life, which he has used in the service of his parents." Nor is this indeed the only reward which is promised to dutiful children. As of all the curses with which God has afflicted the world, a bad child is the worst, so good children are without doubt the greatest of temporal blessings which God has in His gift to bestow. And this is in effect the blessing which God has promised by the mouth of the Holy Spirit, to those who honor their parents. "He who honors his father shall be rejoiced in his sons" say Ecclesiastes. And indeed this is only consonant with the general providence and justice of God. He punishes the sinner by the sin he has committed. The proud He gives over to infamy and disgrace—the lovers of riches to poverty and want—the uncharitable and the restricted giver, He punishes by being in their turn refused what they have refused to others. And so with virtue. God rewards the virtuous through the virtues they have exercised. Thus the son who has honored his father is in his turn honored by his own sons, thus reaping the reward of his filial piety.

Nor is this the last of the blessings, which God has promised to the dutiful. Do you wish your prayers to be heard in the hour of your need? Do you wish to be all powerful at the throne of God? Be obedient and dutiful to your parents, for the Holy Spirit has declared that he who honors his parents shall be heard in the day of his prayer. Do you wish that the foundations of your house shall be strengthened? Secure by your dutiful conduct your father's blessing—for "the father's blessing establisheth the houses of the children, but the mother's curse roots up the foundation." Do you wish that in the day of wrath your sins should be forgiven? "Support the old age of your father and grieve him not in his life; and if his understanding fail have patience with him, and despise him not when thou art in thy strength, for the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten \* \* \* and in justice thou shalt be built up, and in the day of affliction thou shalt be remembered and thy sins shall melt away as the ice in the fair warm weather." Christian children! these are splendid promises! these are noble rewards! they are your's as surely as God's word is true, if you

but earn them by that filial duty which nature alone should prompt you to give.

Nor have we even yet exhausted all the blessings promised to the dutiful son. You remember that Christ has said "with that measure you mete it shall be measured to you again." (Mat. VII. 2.) Behold here a pressing motive, Christian Children! to induce you to honor your parents. What you do now for your parents, your children will one day do for you. All the honor with which you honor your parents now—all the respect you show them—all the obedience you offer them, the same will your children in their turn measure out to you. Honor for honor—respect for respect—obedience for obedience—love for love; for it is Christ who has said "with that measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." Do you wish to be surrounded by obedient and docile children? be obedient and docile to your parents. Do you wish the closing days of a long life to be sustained and rendered happy by the kind attentions, and love, and tender nursings, which children alone can give, and which strangers can never give? be attentive and loving and gentle in your conduct to your parents now. Nay more! St. Mark has added a further promise. St. Matthew records only measure for measure. St. Mark tells you your reward shall be "added unto." "In what measure you shall mete, it shall be added unto you." It is not for me, Christian child! to determine how much this "more" shall be; but if a cup of cold water shall not go without its reward—if alms given to God's poor, who are not near us in relationship, are to be repaid with good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, how much more will God add unto those who do higher and greater works, for those who are so near akin to us that we have taken our being from them?

But if alas! children instead of honouring your parents—instead of loving them—instead of obeying them and forestalling all their wants and desires—if instead of all this you respect them not—if you hold their commands of no account—if you refuse to profit by their advice and despise their wishes—if in the depth of infamy you abandon them to their own resources, and sustain them not in their necessities—if you assail them with reproaches and abuse them with oaths, depend upon it as God's words are true, this same will your children do to you. With that dishonor with which you have dishonoured your parents, your children will dishonor you. With that disobedience and want of love and disrespect with which you have offended your parents your children will disobey and disrespect you: they will hold your commands of no account—they will refuse to profit by your advice, and in the depth of their iniquity they will leave you to starve on your own resources, and will have for you only reproaches and oaths and imprecations. *With that measure you shall mete, they will measure for you again.*

Parents! who daily lament the troubles and disappointments which your unruly children cause you—place your hands upon your hearts and ask of your conscience this question—whether you have not drawn upon yourselves by your own unruly conduct to your parents, these misfortunes which you now deplore? If your conscience answers in the affirmative, cry out with the Royal Prophet (Ps. 118.) "Thou art just O Lord and thy judgments are righteous." Adore these terrible judgments—receive them as from the hand of God—bow under them with a spirit of resignation and of penance and of reparation of your faults. And you! Christian Children! learn at the expense of others, never to fall into like faults; or if you have unfortunately already fallen, hasten to repair them speedily, lest God should chastise you by permitting your children to treat you as you have treated your parents. Listen to St. Bernard of Sienna. There was, he says, a certain perverse and libertine youth, who led a dissolute life. In spite of every effort of his father to reform him, whether by punishments or admonitions, this youth continued in his career of crime. Nay! at length worn out by the admonitions and corrections of his parents, he seized his father in a fit of anger and dragged him towards a flight of steps in order to cast him down. After having dragged him to a certain point the unhappy father thus cried out. "Stop! my son, I pray stop! go no further! for know that I myself in a like passion with which you are now carried away, once dragged my father to this very point in order to cast him down." So no further than I beseech you, lest Almighty God should hereafter permit your children in their turn to cast you down." Learn from this example Christian Children! that with what measure you mete it shall be measured out again to you. Learn that in proportion as you respect your parents, in like proportion, *with something added*, will your children respect you. With what dishonor you dishonor your parents, your children will dishonor you. *Measure for measure with something added.* Honor then your parents—love