

The True Witness.

AND
CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 1859.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—Several communications have been received, which will be attended to when the editor, who is absent, returns.

REQUESTS TO RELIGIOUS CORPORATIONS.—

We have often discussed this question with reference to those Corporations, and to our Clergy; denouncing the restrictive clauses embodied in Mr. Drummond's Bill, supported by M.M. Dorion and Brown, and attempted to be enforced upon us by the Legislative Council, during the late session of Parliament, as "iniquitous and insulting"—as implying that our Clergy and Religious, when ministering to the sick and dying, habitually employ undue influence, and prostitute their sacred functions to the basest of purposes. As an insult to our Clergy, as an uncalled for and groundless imputation on their integrity, and as a foul aspersion upon the honor of the members of our Religious Communities, we have denounced those restrictive clauses, and all who support them. We would to-day consider them with reference to the individual testator, to whom also, we contend that they are iniquitous and oppressive; involving a monstrous and most tyrannical interference with his right to do what he will with his own; so long as he violates no precept either of the natural or positive law; and inflicts no injury upon his neighbor, or upon society.

Let us suppose a case; a case by no means impossible, indeed by no means improbable. And by the action and effects of the proposed restrictive clauses with regard to Religious Corporations in that case, shall we be able to judge of their justice and expediency.

We will suppose the case of one who—as have too many of those who have made fortunes in this world—has lived a life of fraud and injustice; who has wronged his neighbor in his dealings; who has been a usurer, and an extortioner; who has ground the poor to the dust, and made dark the home of the fatherless children and widow. We will suppose such a one on his death bed; and in his hour of sickness remembering that there is a God, before Whom he must shortly appear; and Who will exact from him a strict account of all his actions. We will suppose too, that such a one has been brought up a Catholic, in spite of his constant violation of all his Church's precepts; and that he believes therefore, that, as a condition of his forgiveness, God requires of him, not only a hearty sorrow for his sins, together with, if possible, an humble and sincere confession thereof to the priest; but, in so far as lies in his power, full and ample satisfaction, and a restitution, in some way or another, of all his ill-gotten gains. As a Catholic too, he will believe, as the Church teaches, that there is a purgatory or place of penitential suffering after death for sins not fully satisfied for during life; and that his term of suffering and purification therein, may for him be shortened by the prayers, alms-deeds, and other good works, of his brethren upon earth, and by them applied, in intention, to him.

Now, what under such circumstances would be the natural and earnest wish of the trembling sinner; looking back from the portals of the grave upon the dreary annals of a mis-spent life?—Would we not desire to make satisfaction and restitution? Would we not most naturally desire to leave it in the power of others to perform for him those alms-deeds, to do for him those good works, which he had neglected to do and perform for himself upon earth? Protestants may not be able to appreciate these motives, for they have no real belief in a "communion of saints"; they have no idea of that living union which obtains amongst all the members of Christ's body—whether militant upon earth, suffering in purgatory, or glorified and triumphant in heaven.—But with the Catholic, who believes in that doctrine, to whom all these things are ever present realities, the inducement would be strong, urgent, irresistible, to bequeath some portion of his wealth to charitable uses; and in some way or another, to divest himself of all his ill-gotten wealth; making restitution therefrom to those whom he had wronged, or to their heirs, if they could be found; and if, as is too often the case, the immediate sufferers or the heirs of the sufferers, by his wrong doings, could not be found, giving it to the poor, who in his case would repre-

sent the legitimate heir of those whom he had defrauded, and by his knavery impoverished.

Now there is but one way in which, under the circumstances supposed above, the penitent could make satisfaction, could make restitution; and thereby comply with those conditions which the Just One exacts as the conditions of forgiveness for Christ's sake; conditions with which the sinner must, in so far as it is in his power, comply, ere the all-cleansing stream of that blood which was shed for all upon the Cross, can be applied to him in particular. The sinner, *must*, we say, conceive hearty sorrow for his sins; he *must*, if possible confess those sins; and, if possible—and as far as lies in his power, he *must* make satisfaction for them. Above all, he *must not* leave the world with the stain of ill-gotten wealth still clinging to him; as would be the case, if any portion thereof were to be retained for the use and benefit of his children or family; for neither living nor dead, can a man be permitted by the Just One, to exercise right of ownership over, or to dispose of that which is not rightfully his own, because in whole, or in part unjustly acquired. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the dying sinner to make restitution; but often the only way in which he can make restitution, and divest himself and his family of his ill-gotten gains, and the curse attendant thereupon, is by making over those gains to some religious or charitable institution, in default of the natural or legitimate heirs of the victims of his frauds. He gives, therefore, or bequeaths as an act of restitution, and as a means of sharing in the good works of his fellow-Christians upon earth, a portion of his wealth to some charitable Society or Corporation, for the relief of the poor and the benefit of his soul.—This done, and having thus complied with his God's conditions, he would lay him down, and close his eyes in peace, resigning his soul to Him who formed it.

But at this stage the Protestant Legislator, with a smirk, or official smile upon his face, steps in; and interposes his unwelcome presence between the dying sinner and his Judge. "Stop," he says to the former—"here is an Act of Parliament against bequests for superstitious uses, such as we deem prayers for the dead, and the relief of the souls in purgatory to be. Here too is a clause prohibiting, or making invalid, any bequest by you made within a period of less than six months before your death. Your intentions therefore of making satisfaction, and restitution, must be abandoned; and your wealth must be left—not to the Sisters of Charity who would fritter it away upon the poor, in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and in drying the tears from the eyes of the desolate, and oppressed; but to honest Tom Hellfire, your seventy-third cousin, who is a jolly blade, and will spend it like a true Protestant upon his own pleasures; in filling his own belly, and clothing his own back." Thus speaks the Protestant law-maker; with what of comfort and edification to the poor expiring wretch, anxious about his soul, our readers can easily imagine. We leave it to them also to judge what estimate such a one, in his dying hour, would form of the honesty, justice, and Christian charity of Protestant legislators, and of those who abet Protestants in their anti-Christian system of legislation. Let us however suppose another case, equally probable, equally possible, indeed we may say one that may occur any day of the week.

We will suppose the case of one grown to man's estate; of ample fortune, and with no near connections by blood or marriage. This man—we will suppose, as is often the case with even our wealthy citizens—had been left an orphan when young; and in this desolate and helpless condition, had been laid hold of, and brought up by, some charitable or religious society. What more natural, what more honorable, what more advantageous to society in general, than that this man having, by means of the gratuitous education given to him in his youth, risen to opulence, should desire to show his gratitude to his benefactors by bequeathing to them some portion of that wealth which, under God, he owed entirely to them? We will suppose then such a will made, for the benefit of the Charitable Corporation, by which he in his destitute youth had been adopted, brought up, and educated.

Within five months, however, and twenty days after making his will business calls the testator to a distant part of the county. He jumps into the cars and sets off upon his journey. But alas! for him, and his charitable intentions, an accident occurs, the train is hurled off the track; and he himself is killed on the spot, whilst in consequence of the clauses placing restrictions upon bequests for charitable or religious purposes made within less than six months of the testator's death, his honorable intentions towards the benefactors of his youth are altogether frustrated.—And this is what Protestants call justice! And these restrictive clauses are supported by M. Dorion, one of our City representatives!

But whilst the law thus sets its face sternly against bequests for the relief of the poor, it is most indulgent in all other respects; and here again we will suppose a case.—That for instance of a married man, with a family; but who has left his wife for the impure embraces of a kept

mistress. He, under the influence of the latter, makes his will a few days before his death; making over to her the bulk of his disposable property, and leaving his widow and children in a state of poverty. Such a bequest the law would accept as valid, nor would the Protestant legislator dare to treat a testamentary disposition of property in favor of a prostitute, as he proposes to treat all bequests made in favor of the poor, or in aid of works of charity and mercy.

We contend therefore that a system of legislation, which might, under any circumstances, conduce to the results by us above described—which, if enforced, would deprive the dying penitent of the only means in his power of making satisfaction for his frauds, and restitution of his ill-gotten gains; which would thwart the benevolent and honorable intentions of him, who, owing all he has on earth to the tender cares bestowed upon his youth, by our Catholic charitable institutions, would fain make some return to those bodies, by making them partakers of his good fortune; and which, at the same time, would accept as valid the act whereby, at the expense of his wife and children, the profligate husband enriched the partner of his guilty pleasures—must needs be cruel, oppressive, and insulting; that the abettors of that system of legislation should receive no countenance from honest and honorable men; and least of all from Catholics, against whose clergy, against whose Religious Orders it is mainly designed, and who themselves would be the chief sufferers by its operation.

We contend finally that every man has the right, as against the State, to do what he will with his own, so long as he thereby violates no precept either of the natural or positive law, and does no injury to his neighbor. We demand that Catholics be left free, therefore, to give or bequeath of their own for religious, charitable and educational purposes, and subject only to those restrictions which are imposed upon all other bequests—viz., that the testator be of sound mind when making his will, and not subject to any undue influences. Now as every man has the right to be considered and treated as innocent until found guilty, so also we maintain, is the State bound to assume the mental sanity of the testator and his immunity from undue influences, until the contrary shall have been proved by those who contest his will. For the State to suppose, or act as if under the assurance, that every man who makes a will in favor of a charitable or religious society is under undue influence, and incompetent to manage his own affairs, is as monstrous an outrage upon common sense, as it is destructive of the civil and religious liberties of the individual. It is, therefore, as an invasion upon our rights as freemen, as well as an insult to our Church, that we repudiate the clauses imposing special restrictions upon bequests for charitable purposes—restrictions from which bequests for all other purposes are exempt; and that we denounce as unworthy of the political support or countenance of Catholics, all those who directly or indirectly, by themselves or others, sanction their introduction into Canada. If in this we are fighting for the honor of our Church, we are making a stand also for the liberty of the individual, against the encroachments of democratic tyranny; for ever will it be found that the interests of the Church, and the interests of the individual, are identical.

THE CHINIQUY AFFAIR.—Our readers may have seen in the Protestant journals a statement to the effect that M. Chiniquy had instituted an action for defamation of character against the Rev. P. Brunet, of the Society of *Pere Oblats*; and that a Protestant jury in the United States had found a verdict for the plaintiff with damages of Four Thousand Dollars; thus completely vindicating the reputation of the lost and degraded priest against the aspersions of his enemies. A few facts, however, connected with this business, which we hasten to lay before our readers, will show how far this whitewashing of M. Chiniquy by a Protestant jury has been attended with success; and manifest to what vile artifices that bad man is compelled to have recourse, in order, if possible, to conceal the infamy of his true character from the eyes of the world.

Though decency compels us to throw a veil over a great portion of M. Chiniquy's history—over all that portion indeed which relates to the cause of his leaving Canada, and to his subsequent suspension, excommunication, and degradation by his ecclesiastical superiors in the United States—at the same time there are but few who doubt the real significance of those facts; or who are in ignorance as to the nature of the offences which led to M. Chiniquy's final apostasy; although as to the details they may be in darkness; and though, as we said above, decency and respect for the modesty of our readers compel us to avoid entering into those details.

Suffice it then to say, that very ugly rumors, with respect to M. Chiniquy's moral character, had long been circulated; and that that eminent apostate at last felt himself obliged to do some thing to neutralize the effects of those rumors upon his adherents. For that purpose he determined upon indicting somebody, for something; if he could only find somebody whom he might

indict, and invent something that he might lay to his charge. Of a favorable verdict, he felt confident, for he knew that he would have a Protestant jury; and he knew also that, as the *Times* truly observed with respect to the verdict in the famous trial of Achilli *ver. Newman*—Catholics cannot expect truth or justice from a Protestant jury, when the anti-Romish prejudices of the latter are concerned.

So looking about him, M. Chiniquy pitched upon the Rev. P. Brunet as a victim to be offered up as a sacrifice of propitiation. The choice was a good one; because the intended victim was a priest, a French priest, and with Protestants a most unpopular priest, because a member of an exemplary society for the conversion of infidels and heretics. The next step was to find an accusation against, on the "something" where-with to charge, the intended victim of a foul conspiracy.

For this purpose M. Chiniquy engaged the services of one of his adherents, whom he induced to go to the Rev. P. Brunet's confessional; and there, under pretence of deep contrition for the schism into which he had been led astray, entraped the Rev. P. Brunet, if possible, into some unguarded expression against the character or reputation of M. Chiniquy; or failing in this, to invent, and swear to such expressions having been used in his hearing. The pretended penitent did as he was bid. He waited upon the Rev. P. Brunet, but failed to provoke the latter into saying anything that might serve as whereon to base an action. So as the last resource, he undertook, at M. Chiniquy's suggestion, to swear that the Rev. P. Brunet had told him—the pretended penitent—in the confessional, "that it was M. Chiniquy who burnt the Church at Bourbonnais in order to have an excuse for establishing himself at St. Anne's. Thus then did M. Chiniquy find both a victim and a charge. Of the verdict of his jury he had of course no doubt; for he was sure of a Protestant jury, who would swear black was white for the greater honor and glory of Protestantism.

Well, at last, the case thus carefully cooked, was laid before the Protestant jury. The services of three lawyers were engaged by M. Chiniquy; and of two others in behalf of the defendant by the Rev. P. Brunet; and then the battle commenced.

Two witnesses in support of the charge were brought forward; but they, unfortunately, could not agree; and at the critical moment their courage seems to have failed them; for in spite of hints and insinuations from the prosecutor, counsel for the prosecution, and the Protestant jury, or in other words, the agents for the prosecution, our two witnesses could not be prevailed upon to swear that they themselves heard the defendant make use of the defamatory language imputed to him. Somebody had told them, that somebody else had said, that the defendant had accused M. Chiniquy of burning the Church at Bourbonnais. Their evidence in short broke down completely; and nothing was left to the plaintiff but to make, through his counsel, a strong appeal to the Yankee and Protestant prejudices of the jury, against foreigners and Papists.

This appeal was made. The jury were called to remember that the eyes of all Yankeedom, of all Christendom, were upon them; that the rowdy in the drinking-saloon, and the Pope upon his burning throne, were alike anxiously awaiting the result of a trial, in which the religion of their spiritual fathers, of Luther, of Calvin, of Titus Oates, and of Belial Achilli, was at stake; and that the world, and above all the rowdy portion of the Yankee world, who in drinking rooms do mostly congregate, to drink strange drinks, to swear strange oaths, and to vent strange, indeed, incredible oceans of saliva, expected from them—a truly Yankee and truly Protestant jury—such a verdict as should vindicate the civil and religious liberties of the Great Republic; and make the great American eagle flap its monstrous wings with joy. These, with a few appropriate allusions to "indulgences to St. Bartholomew's Day," to the "Middle Ages," the "bells of Rome," the "Star Spangled Banner," and other topics equally relevant, and as intimately connected with the immediate question at issue, formed the staple of the learned counsel's address to the jury; at the close of which, of course, like true Yankees, and sound Protestants, the latter found a verdict for the Plaintiff—damages Four Thousand dollars. But this was only the first act of the play.

This iniquitous verdict delivered—which we should observe in justice to the Judge who tried the case, was given in direct opposition to his "charge" to the jury—M. Chiniquy went off in an ecstasy; the bells of his schism-shop commenced, and kept up throughout the day, a hideous noise; whilst the abettors of the apostate priest gave full vent to their excited feeling by insulting all those whom they suspected of fidelity to the Church. But lo! scarce had these sounds of triumph died away, when an ominous rumor made itself heard and felt. Soon that rumor acquired consistency; and it was at length fully known that, acting under the advice of the Bishop of Chicago, the Rev. P. Brunet had appealed

against the verdict; and oh! unkindest blow of all! that the judge had granted a motion for a new trial.

It was now the turn for the Rev. P. Brunet's friends to have their innings; and so well did they employ their time and advantages that the result was the reversal of the verdict given by the first jury, to the joy of the faithful in Canada, as well as in the United States. We do not say that this is the end of the affair; for M. Chiniquy is a desperate man, an unprincipled man, and a destitute of all sense of shame, as of modesty, or any other Christian virtue. His cause, which is the cause of vice and falsehood, based upon conspiracy and supported by perjury, is to a considerable extent the cause of Protestantism, and his Protestant friends are numerous, wealthy and energetic. We may, therefore, expect from him and from them, renewed efforts to crush the innocent priest, who has been, by God's blessing, the successful instrument for rescuing many of his fellow-countrymen from the foul slough of heresy and schism in which they had been wallowing and into which M. Chiniquy had plunged them; and we should not, therefore, be surprised if M. Chiniquy makes another attempt to obtain from a Protestant jury, a certificate as to his high moral character.

THE SWADDLERS.—Our respected cotemporary the *Courier du Canada* gives his readers some good advice with respect to the proper mode of receiving the *Colporteurs*, or hawkers of irreligious, immoral, and anti-Catholic publications; should any of those gentry force, or attempt to force, an entrance into the houses of Catholics. Our Quebec cotemporary says:—

"When therefore one of those distributors of Bibles and Tracts comes into our houses, he should be shown the door, as being an ill-mannered ignorant person. These men abuse everything and especially the hospitality and amenity of our people. They introduce themselves into our families as travellers, to execute afterwards, their diabolic mission. Our population must therefore be on their guard against them, and refuse to accept or to buy any book which does not come from a well known and pure source."

After all, these "Swaddlers" do, thank God, but little harm. Their only victims are from amongst those who, though still nominally Catholics, were virtually Protestants, long ere the shadow of the *Colporteur* had fallen across their doors; and who by their vicious, immoral, and degraded lives, had long ceased to be living members of the Catholic Church? There is not a case on record of a *Colporteur* having ever succeeded in making a proselyte—either in Canada or in Ireland—except from amongst the utterly impure and demoralised members of the Church.

And it would seem too, as if in spite, indeed we may almost say as if in mockery, of the efforts of Protestantism to destroy the faith, that Catholicity thrives best, there and then, where and when, the devil's agents are most numerous and active. We have before us the report of the "Protestant Reformation Society" in England; whose 32nd anniversary was celebrated a few days ago in London, and a copy of whose proceedings was published in the *Times*.

From this document we learn that not only has the "Protestant Reformation Society" not done anything to check the progress of Popery; but that that "plague spot" upon the Protestant face of Great Britain was steadily and rapidly spreading and gaining ground in every direction. Thus, though the *Report of the Society*—as these documents always do—congratulates the public upon the eminent success with which the labors of the Society have been crowned; it, in the next paragraph, most ludicrously, and as if with the express design of giving the lie to the paragraph preceding—calls for the support of the Protestant public, and for more money from the Protestant purse—"on the ground of the alarming increase of Romanism in this country." The *Report*, as published in the *Times*, then proceeds to give the statistics of this "alarming increase of Romanism." These statistics tell us that:—

"The number of Romanists now in Great Britain was estimated at 2,000,000. Since 1850—the period of the Papal aggression—there had been an increase of 306 chapels and stations, 250 priests, 57 nuns, and 17 monasteries. There were, moreover, numerous schools, brotherhoods, guilds, associations, and reformatories, each of which was a hotbed of proselytism. Above all, their efforts were unappreciated, but most effectually, aided by that Popery which, under the name of 'Tractarianism,' had infected the minds of many members of our truly Scriptural and intensely Protestant Church."

And this "alarming increase" was continuing, we were told, in spite of the "annual distribution of 16,253 copies of books, tracts, &c.; and of 120 public meetings held and lectures delivered at most of the important towns of the Kingdom." Such being the result of such stupendous efforts, incessantly maintained by the wealthiest community upon earth, we see how little cause we have to dread the puny struggles of the French Canadian Missionary Society, if we be but true to ourselves. It is not the *colporteur*, with his tracts, whom we fear; for amongst a moral and virtuous community, he can do no harm. It is the grog-seller, the preacher of universal license, and the dealer in obscenity, of whom we stand in dread; because, until the latter have done their work, and first corrupted the morals of the people, the assaults of the F. C. M. Society against their faith will be in vain.