

The True Witness.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JAN. 4, 1861.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE "New Year" dawns gloomily. The political horizon is overcast with clouds, and the mutterings of the coming tempest are already distinctly audible to the attentive listener. The year 1860 has been full of troubles—that of 1861 will in all human probability furnish a still darker chapter for the history of Europe, and of the human race.

Again, as in 1859, France is threatening Austria. This time it is no less than the cession of Austria's Venetian Provinces which the French despot exacts as the price of his forbearance.—Austria must sell Venetia, or Italy, in the spring of '61, shall again be the battle-field of contending nations. To give force to his demands, the French Emperor is stirring up revolution in Hungary, whither we may expect to see Garibaldi soon sent, with another army of filibusters to attack Austria in the rear, whilst in the front she is menaced by the combined armies of Louis Napoleon and Victor Emmanuel. The latter is making but slow progress towards the reduction of Gaeta, and none whatever towards the pacification of his late dishonestly acquired dominions. The name of Piedmont is an abomination to the Neapolitans, the rule of Victor Emmanuel a hated despotism against which they are everywhere rising in arms. It is the old story of La Vendee over again. On the one side we have the brave, loyal, but undisciplined people of Southern Italy rushing against the invaders of their country;—on the other side, we see the army of "foreign mercenaries," against whose discipline and numbers, valor, and patriotism are of no avail. All the well known horrors of the execrable "fusillades" and "noyades" of the first French Revolution are again renewed in Calabria, and amongst the bold peasantry of the Abruzzi; and again, as in the "Reign of Terror," these brutalities are exercised in the holy name of liberty.

With respect to Naples the policy of Louis Napoleon is, as it is in every other respect, mysterious; it is possible, however, that he is not displeased with the disgraces of Victor Emmanuel, and that a Murat dynasty is the "idea" with which the disinterested chivalrous ruler of France is now possessed. He is too clear-sighted to believe in the possibility of "Italian Unity," or in the fusion into one race of the Piedmontese and the Neapolitans, who mutually hate one another. In the abortive efforts of the Sardinian monarch to establish order in Italy, Louis Napoleon will find excuses for again actively interfering in Italian affairs, and in the irreconcilable antagonisms of the North and South, he will discern that "inexorable logic of facts," to which he loves to appeal, and which will justify the establishment of a separate Neapolitan Kingdom under the rule of a descendant of Joachim Murat. This we believe to be the Emperor's real design.

The Pope, humanly speaking, is at the mercy of his enemies. He has nothing left but the words of Christ—"Tu es Petrus," and the everlasting promises of Almighty God. These, to a Cavour, to a Victor Emmanuel, to a Louis Napoleon, may seem but as a rotten reed, but to the Christian they will give full assurance that the Lord will yet arise, and that His enemies shall be scattered. The "gates of hell shall not prevail," nor the words of the Holy One prove a vain and empty lie.

Fresh troubles are brewing in India. Once again revolt is breaking out in the Provinces, whose people are disgusted at the new income tax, and Mutiny is making hideous ravages amongst the troops, both native and European. Whence this proceeds we know not, but it portends no good to British rule in the East.

And on this Continent the imposing fabric of the United States is fast breaking up. Secession is now, though it be but for the moment, *fait accompli*, and it would be presumptuous to speculate even as to the results upon the moral, social, and political future of North America, of this great, long-talked of, but never really believed in, disruption of the most gigantic Confederation of States, that the world ever witnessed. America, as well as Europe, has her troubles, her fears for 1861; the New World, as well as the Old, appears to be on the brink of revolution; and all around us, everything seems to

bode the approach of troubles, such as have not been since the dawning of the first day.

Dynasties, States, Nations, seem as it were to be crumbling away: all, and everything, are and is in a state of transition. One institution alone holds her head erect, and strong in the promises of Her Spouse, the Catholic Church, calmly awaits the progress of human events, and the bursting of the storm. She knows that her Divine founder is ever present with her, even in the darkest and gloomiest hour, and that though heaven and earth may pass away, yet His word shall not fail, nor His right hand be withdrawn. 'Tis the hope of every true Catholic; he trusts not in men, not in princes, but in the Lord of Hosts.

And to him who holds firmly by this hope, the year now entered upon will prove, no matter what it may bring forth, a "Happy Year." He who has his foot firmly planted upon the eternal verities, beholds without anxiety the revolutions which time brings forth. We must be prepared to hear the premature songs of triumph with which our enemies expect this year to hail the downfall of the Papacy; we must be prepared for many a trial of our patience, and of our faith; we may expect to see the wicked prosper, the liar held in honor; and we must bear the taunts of our foes with Christian indifference. We may marvel perhaps sometimes at the long suffering and patience of God towards His enemies and the enemies of His Church; but it must be remembered that if God is patient, it is because He is eternal.

When we wrote our article headed "Reciprocity" which appeared in our issue of the 14th ult., we entertained the hope that the Toronto Freeman would reply thereunto: in the same spirit as that in which that article was conceived; and that we should be enabled to lay our Upper Canadian contemporary's reply before our Lower Canadian readers, as an argument why the latter should exert themselves to extort from the legislature a full concession of the reasonable demands of the Catholic minority of Upper Canada on the School Question. In this hope we have been disappointed, for our Toronto contemporary either cannot grasp, or else willfully perverts, our meaning.

The drift of our article was this:—That the Catholics of Upper Canada cannot reasonably expect to obtain the desired amendments in their School Laws without the active co-operation of French Canadians; that this co-operation the Catholics of Upper Canada cannot reasonably expect, or rightfully claim so long as they allied themselves, or allowed themselves to be represented as in any manner allied with that political party, which, under the name of "Protestant Reformers" and the leadership of Mr. George Brown, has long distinguished itself by its bitter hostility to everything Catholic, and to everything French Canadian; and that therefore to secure the essentially requisite co-operation of French Canadians on the School Question, it was essentially requisite that the Catholics of Upper Canada should, through their recognized organs of the press, repudiate all sympathy with the policy of the said "Protestant Reformers," and should openly evince their hostility to Mr. George Brown, and to all Mr. George Brown's political friends and supporters, by their votes at the next ensuing general election. In return for the aid to be by them given to the Catholic minority of Upper Canada, French Canadians reasonably insist as the condition, *sine qua non*, that the former shall not again help to swell the clamor against "French Canadian domination," and shall refrain from giving any support, any countenance, direct or indirect, to any man or any party who or which avows the object of his or its policy to be, the giving a preponderance to Protestant Upper Canada in the legislature, under the pretence of regulating Representation by Population—a measure which, if carried, would not only be fatal to the Catholic interests of Lower Canada, but would effectually deprive us, of the Eastern section of the Province, of the power of again effectually interfering in behalf of our Western brethren. Our demands, which the Toronto Freeman represents as exorbitant, amount to this:—That the Catholics of Upper Canada shall not cut their own throats, and shall not be guilty of political suicide, by putting arms into the hands of their worst enemies—that is to say of George Brown, of the "Protestant Reformers," and of any man who directly or indirectly gives any semblance even of countenance to George Brown and his rabid No-Popery followers.

That the French Canadians are not only justified in making this stipulation, but that they are bound by duty to themselves, to their country, and to their Church to impose it as the condition, *sine qua non*, of any future interference on their part with the Upper Canadian School Question, must, we think be evident from the following considerations. That, through their professed organs of the press it has been publicly and frequently proclaimed that Mr. George Brown and the "Protestant Reformers" are the "natural allies" of the Catholics of Upper

Canada; and that at the Toronto Convention—whereat resolutions treating a spirit of inveterate hostility to Lower Canada, and her peculiar institutions and protesting against her interference with the School Laws of Upper Canada, were passed unanimously, and without a dissenting voice—Catholic delegates, professing to be the representatives of the Catholics of Upper Canada, openly assisted, with the apparent concurrence and approbation of their co-religionists throughout the Western section of the Province. These are facts which cannot be denied, of which the importance and deep significance cannot be exaggerated, but of which the effects upon the French Canadian mind can scarcely be appreciated by any one not familiarly acquainted with the aversion which all honest French Canadian Catholics most justly entertain towards all whom they may reasonably suspect of hostile designs upon their glorious and ardently cherished nationality. The policy of the Freeman should therefore be to eradicate from the French Canadian mind the impression that his friends are favorably inclined towards George Brown.

Instead, however, of admitting the facts, and recognising the apathy of French Canadians towards Upper Canadian interests as the inevitable consequence of those facts, the Toronto Freeman of the 27th ult., assails our logic in that we have attributed to the entire Catholic body, the acts of a "few" of some one or two silly individuals, without weight or influence in the Upper Canadian Catholic community. Thus the Freeman says:—

"Because a few Catholics of Upper Canada allied themselves with the 'Clear Grits' as a forlorn hope! All the Catholics and their innocent children must be sacrificed for that sin! Good! A few in a city revolt; therefore, all the inhabitants must be killed, their city destroyed, and not even their children spared."

But it we have erred in this matter, to whom is the fault attributable? To the Toronto Freeman, himself, we reply; to the Freeman who, professing to be the organ, and exponent of the sentiments of the Catholics of Upper Canada, was the warmest advocate of the Clear Grit alliance, and the most strenuous champion of the principle by us assailed, that Mr. George Brown and the Protestant Reformers were the "natural allies" of the Catholics of Upper Canada. If we have erred, it is merely because we too readily credited the pretensions of the Freeman to be far representative of those in whose name he addressed the public. Had the Freeman told us at first, as he virtually does at last, that the partisans of the Brown alliance were but a paltry "few" who by no means adequately represented the Catholic body—had he warned us that he spoke, not in the name of the Catholic body, but merely in the name of two or three individuals, we should have attached no importance whatever to the Freeman's sayings, but should have treated them with the contempt with which, according to the Freeman's own showing, they deserved to have been treated. Henceforward we shall be more prudent; and warned by the Freeman himself of our previous error, we shall not again commit the blunder of accepting the Toronto Freeman as in any sense, the exponent of the political views of the intelligent and respectable Catholics of Upper Canada.

So too with the Toronto Convention. The Catholics who thereat assisted did so as delegates from the entire Catholic community; they professed to be the representatives of the entire Catholic body, and we took them at their word. We learn now, and with much pleasure, that they were in no sense such representatives and had no more a right to speak or act in the name of the Catholics of Upper Canada than had the Toronto Freeman in his strenuous advocacy of the "Clear Grit" alliance, and in his reiterated laudations of Mr. George Brown and the "Protestant Reformers" as the "natural allies" of Catholics.

In short, of two things, one, either the Toronto Freeman was, or he was not the organ, or exponent of the sentiments of the Catholics of Upper Canada, when he advocated an alliance with the "Protestant Reformers," endorsed their policy, and declared them to be "our natural allies." If he was, then were we perfectly justified in attributing the opinions of the Toronto Freeman to the general body of Catholics in Upper Canada; if he was not, and since he professed himself to be the exponent of the political views of that body, then are we justified in treating him as a mere pretender, and as therefore one not entitled to our respectful consideration.

For this reason we might well be excused if we took no notice of his vague protest against "Clear Gritism" couched in the following terms:—

"In the name of the Catholics of Upper Canada, we do protest against the sayings and doings of that convention, as far as they are contrary to the real and just interests of Lower and Upper Canadian Catholics."

This is not the language of an honest man; for even George Brown himself would say as much; for the most rabid "Protestant Reformers" does not profess to advocate any measures in so far as they are unjust to Catholics. But what does the Freeman, what does George Brown, what does the "Protestant Reformer," consider just to the Catholics of Lower Canada?

This is what we want to know, and what we of Lower Canada must know before we again interfere in behalf of those who have already plainly told us to mind our own business, and treated our good offices with something worse than mere ingratitude. Is Representation by Population just, as towards the Catholic interest of Lower Canada? Is the outcry against the Catholics of Upper Canada should continue to support, or encourage, any man who, by maintaining a political connection with Geo. Brown, approves himself the political friend of the enemy, and therefore himself the enemy, of the Catholics of Lower Canada, and of those in whose name the Toronto Freeman professed to speak, when in a recent article, he proclaimed "THE TRIS SEVERED" betwixt the Catholics of Upper Canada and George Brown? These are the questions to which we demand clear, explicit, unambiguous answers.

HEAR BOTH SIDES.

(Translated from the *Minerve* of the 29th ult.)

"The Brantford Courier, a Ministerial paper of Upper Canada, takes it upon itself to assert that the Ministry are in favor of Representation by Population; that they are waiting for a favorable opportunity in order to impose this measure upon both sections of the Province.

"We, for one, give a formal denial to this assertion. Never will we assent to any compromise upon a principle so intimately connected with the existence of our nationality, of our religion, and of all that still remains to us of the inheritance transmitted to us by our forefathers. Either Equality of Representation for both Provinces, or dissolution of the Union. This should be, and shall be undoubtedly the programme of all Lower Canadians, whatever may be their religion or their origin. All who should sacrifice one iota of this programme would thereby be traitors to the cause of justice—traitors to the cause of Lower Canada, and false to their country.

"We are sick of these threats proceeding from a people who are indebted to us for their prosperity and their progress; our rights are unquestionable and imprescriptible. We will maintain them in spite of all the efforts of their assailants. Once for all, either Equality of Representation for both Provinces, or dissolution *pure et simple* of the Union.

"But it is not true that the Ministry are in favor of Representation by Population. The Attorney-General for Canada West has energetically declared himself in favor of the Union.—But to maintain the Union, Mr. McDonald is perfectly aware that justice must be rendered to Lower Canadians. On that question we are, and will ever be intractable."

As it is our invariable custom to render impartial justice to all, and always to give both sides of a story, we feel ourselves bound in duty, after our remarks of the 28th ult., to publish the above formal and quasi-official repudiation of the policy attributed to the Ministry by their Upper Canadian organ, the Brantford Courier. This duty we perform with the more pleasure because we recognise in the prompt action of our French cotemporary a firm determination, on the part of the *Minerve* and of its patrons, to oppose by every means at their command any invasion upon the legitimate right of Lower Canada to an amount of Representation equal to that of the Western section of the Province, so long as a Legislative Union exists between them. This is all we ask; but, with less than this, no Catholic, no friend of Lower Canada, should be content. Let the Clear-Grits, and Protestant Reformers, of the West rave as they will; we, strong in our rights, strong in the justice of our cause, and strongest of all in our union, may well despise their threats. They are, and we have long known them to be, our enemies; therefore, we fear them not, for we fear only our false friends. From the latter, from our friends, our litany runs, "Good Lord, deliver us." We can protect ourselves from our enemies.

Only this would we add—that we trust that the bold and determined attitude of our Canadian Statesmen, at the next ensuing, and all subsequent sessions of Parliament, may justify the brave words of the *Minerve*. If upon this question of Representation by Population the Ministry will for once appraise themselves men not to be daunted by threats, every true Catholic should be prepared to do them justice by giving to them his support at the hustings.

On the other hand, the *Montreal Pilot*, also a Ministerial paper, in its issue of the 29th ult., speaks in a very different strain from that adopted by the *Minerve*. This discord betwixt the organs would seem to indicate that, on the all-important, and to Catholic Lower Canada, vital question of "Representation by Population," very different views exist, as betwixt the French and English portions of the present Ministry.—The *Pilot* says:—

"Without pretending to know what are the intentions of Ministers, or what is their policy in regard to the Upper Canada cry for Representation by Population, we think the suggestions of the *True Witness* of yesterday, on the subject, very unwise and very injudicious.—We do not know how far the authorities it quotes can be taken as reliable, but we should be sorry if Ministers were to shirk the question, or be unprepared to take action upon it, if it is forced upon them. It is true that at the time of the Union of the Provinces, Lower Canada did not assert that numerical superiority in representation which, from its population, it might have been entitled to. But because this on its part was not done, it does not follow that the sister Province, if she thinks that she is wronged, should not seek by every justifiable means to have these wrongs put right. Should the census of 1861 show that Upper Canada in respect of population is far in advance of Lower, and should the "superior race," as our contemporary inferentially terms them, seek to be represented in the Legislature in proportion, we do not conceive the demand an unreasonable one—at any rate one that the Ministry should shun to meet. Nor do we think that any injustice or detriment to Lower Canada could be caused thereby, should the principle be recognised, and the demand conceded. So far as spiritual matters are concerned, it was but the other day that the Premier of Upper Canada admitted that the rights of the Roman Catholic Church, as set down when Canada was ceded to England, had to be maintained. That Church enjoys its revenues; is guaranteed the full and free exercise of its religious rites and ceremonies,—and all this it is likely to hold in perpetuity. At any rate no enactment of the Provincial Legislature can over-ride the solemn League and Covenant so long entered into; and the most bigotted or timorous Roman Catholic has nothing whatever to dread on this head. With regard to other religious denominations, Church and State, have long been separated; members of Parliament are not very fond of embarking in discussions *adum theologicum*; and Christians, whether orthodox or sectarian, have nothing whatever to fear from Representation by Population being carried. Nor in secular affairs do we think any apprehension need be entertained. Neither Upper nor Lower Canada are likely to eat up each other. People are more clear-sighted and clear-headed than they used to be; and it is found the best policy to work as far as possible with, rather than against our neighbors. When Mr. Brown made this measure a plank in his platform, the working of it was to be guarded by checks and guarantees. If, when the Census is taken, the Ministry are satisfied that the measure is a necessary one, why should not they take the same precautions, and see that in no shape shall the material interests of Lower Canada suffer? It is unfair, we think, to anticipate their policy; and altogether unjust to condemn them, or even suspect them, before it is announced. The *True Witness* may depend upon it, Lower Canada will not be lost sight of, nor its contentment and prosperity jeopardised in any shape or form, whatever comes of Representation by Population. But the advocates of the measure are unquestionably entitled to a hearing; and if the Ministry are in favor of it, with modifications, let it be brought on."

Can it be possible that "Representation by Population" is openly countenanced by the Upper Canadian section of the Ministry, as a measure calculated to gain votes for Ministers in Upper Canada—but openly discountenanced by the Lower Canadian section of the Cabinet, as a measure which would draw upon its advocates and abettors, the scorn, and execration of every sound Catholic, and Canadian patriot! We know not what to think; we know not how to harmonise the semi-official notes of the Ministerial *Minerve* with the equally authoritative warblings of the Ministerial *Pilot*.

The only solution of the difficulty that presents itself is this. That on the question of Representation by Population there is disunion in the Ministerial camp itself; that the French Canadian portion of the ministry are opposed and the English portion of that body is favorable to the measure, and that consequently we must expect to see it treated as an *open question*. But for the ministry, or the French portion thereof, to leave this question "open" is to abandon the principle upon which alone the actual system can be successfully defended. It is not as a measure of detail but as a measure of principle that we oppose Upper Canadian claim for Representation by Population, and upon the principle involved in the axiom that no one can urge, in his behalf, a principle which, however true in the abstract, he has violated, or allowed to be violated in his own behalf. Now the Upper Canadians have for years allowed the principle of Representation by Population to be violated in their own behalf, and therefore cannot now be permitted to urge it when its application might be favorable to their pretensions. If therefore the French Canadian Ministers have agreed to leave the question an open one in their Cabinet, they must have abandoned a principle, for if they were prepared to maintain that Representation by Population was unjust towards Lower Canada and therefore, as is all injustice *malum per se*, they could not in conscience consent to leave it an open question.

We have returned, and will often again return, to this subject, because it is a subject which more than any other, concerns the Catholic interests of Lower Canada. The *Pilot* and other servile members of the press may deplore our indecorous zeal, but this shall not deter us from our duty or from doing our best to put the Catholic public on their guard against the danger which evidently menaces the laws, the language, the Religion, and all that constitutes the distinctive nationality of Lower Canada. This is no time for silence; Representation by Population is a question which too nearly affects us to be treated with indifference. Our opinion as to the duty of Lower Canadians to refuse, to entertain even for a moment, the degrading proposition is unchangeable and unchangeable.

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