

A PRESBYTERIAN "RECORD."

A REVIEW BY "CRUX"

Some days ago I was shown a letter which one of the subscribers of the "True Witness" sent to the management of the paper. The letter contrasted the mildness of the "True Witness" with the opposite quality in a publication known as "The Record of the Presbyterian Church in Canada." A copy of this so-called "Record" came into my hands, and I must say that, on careful perusal of its contents, I came to the conclusion that no greater compliment could be paid a Catholic journal than the one contained in the letter above mentioned.

However, it would not be difficult for the "True Witness" to be milder than the "Record" of the Presbyterian Church in Canada; nor would it be easy for any organ to be as fierce as that publication. If its title has a meaning, I certainly do not envy the Presbyterian Church its "Record" in Canada. It is not a very desirable record for a Christian body to enjoy. Yet, it seems to me that this religious organ has a great deal more to do with India, the new Hebrides, China, Japan, and darker Africa, than with Canada. The only direct reference made, in thirty-two pages, to our Dominion, is the following choice piece:

"Another illustration of the same principle is seen in Canada. A year ago the Manitoba school question with its strife of race and creed, made many anxious for our country's weal. But the very strife has been the means of leading the French Roman Catholics of Canada to think and act as never before; to assert their civil rights and refuse to blindly rest in the submissive ignorance to which the hierarchy would do them. They have themselves taken up the struggle for their rights and Protestants can look on with confidence that manhood against priestcraft will win the day."

To say the least the "Record" was not happy in its selection of a theme, nor in its manner of treating it. I would like to be mild, as well as the "True Witness," but such nonsense as the foregoing would make one feel inclined to do something rash to the man whose knowledge of the situation is so limited that he could really pen stuff of that class. It is not to refute, nor to criticize—the item is beneath both—that I quote it; my object is merely to give the reader an idea of the erudition of this "Record."

Consider it from whatever standpoint you may, the spirit of John Knox comes out in everything Presbyterian. It is to be seen in a Bal-four of Burling just as plainly as the Habakkuk Mucklevrath—it crows up in the Free Church and it sways the unit'd Presbyterian Kirk. It decidedly has an influence upon this "Record," which, to use its own language, thus speaks of the great John:

He was often cast down by bodily weakness and irritated by half-hearted friends or treacherous enemies, but through it all he preached a bold, clear gospel, and though often ready to say, "good night to it all," he would not let his spirit be quenched. He was often cast down by bodily weakness and irritated by half-hearted friends or treacherous enemies, but through it all he preached a bold, clear gospel, and though often ready to say, "good night to it all," he would not let his spirit be quenched.

OUR CURBSTONE OBSERVER ON ELECTIONEERING.

This is a season of elections, and the committee rooms are in full blast in all sections of the city. Men are rushing here and there, big with the importance of their respective missions. I have observed one class of men, whose lot is not a happy one, yet who get very little credit for all the trouble they experience in times of election. I refer to the men, commonly known as canvassers—the individuals sent out by the various committees, in the names of the candidates, to solicit support and ascertain the feelings and intentions of their fellow-citizens. As a rule, it is the poor canvasser who receives all the hard words, the sharp answers, the cold receptions. The candidate escapes, to a great extent, this ordeal. He makes speeches in committee rooms, is cheered by his supporters, and confines his interviewing to some of the leading citizens of his division. It is the man, with the book in his hand, who goes from door to door, that has the big end of the log to lift; and it is he who gets the least thanks when his work is done—no matter how well done it may be.

matters concerning the Catholic Church. If I have not space to go into many details, at least, I will select one passage that is truly characteristic.

On the front page is a quotation from "Rev. Mr. Noble, an Episcopal clergyman, late of Quebec." The subject is "The Sign of the Cross." What I am about to reproduce is both an evidence of the "Record's" ignorance and prejudice as well as of Mr. Noble's malicious affront. I have a very distinct recollection of the terrible dressing down that the "True Witness" gave this Rev. Mr. Noble, a few years ago. The article was entitled "Ignoble Noble"; and, if I am not in error, the Anglican Bishop of Quebec thanked the author of that article for having dressed up a man who was becoming such a nuisance as has Mr. Noble. The "Record" should have sufficient respect for educated readers not to dish up for them such material as Mr. Noble's article upon "The Sign of the Cross." Only a fool, a blind enthusiast, or an evil-minded man could write such an article. If he imagined that any intelligent person would believe him, he would be a fool; if he believed, what he wrote, himself, he would be a mad and blindly prejudiced enthusiast. If he did not so believe, he would be an evil-minded and dangerous man. I don't think Mr. Noble is a fool, nor yet an evil-minded man; so he must be classed as a blind and prejudiced, as well as uncontrollable creature.

After all this preface, I will now give Rev. Mr. Noble's article, exactly as the "Record" reproduces it. Here it is:

"First, the cross is an ancient heathen idol, and was so used a thousand years before Christ. It was carried in procession at the orgies of Bacchus, and was worshipped as virgin prostitution in Babylon and was worn by the ancient priests of Egypt."

"Secondly, it became associated with corrupt forms of Christianity after Christ, and is now worshipped by Romanists and Ritualists in a man-degrading and God-dishonoring manner."

"Third, as an idol and an incentive to idolatry it was cast out of the Church of England at the Reformation, with many other idols of bygone ages."

"Fourth, an organized band of lawless traitors are seeking to reintroduce it into the Protestant churches of England and Ireland, with other accessories of ancient idolatry."

"It is not, therefore, a Christian emblem, but a heathen idol, and its association with Christianity is contemporaneous with the ingress of a dominant heathenism, in and after the reign of Constantine, when the old obnoxious of heathen Rome were forced into the Christian Church."

Under this flow of blasphemous vituperation, to which I pay no heed, there is an undercurrent of pretended historical knowledge. With the abusive and unchristian language I will have nothing to do; it is too obviously "ignoble" to deserve serious comment. But there are four historical questions raised by the writer, and I am anxious to set him right in regard to them. The first, refers to the cross as a pagan idol; the second, to its adoption after the time of Constantine; the third, to its being cast out of the Church of England at the Reformation; and the fourth, to the attempts being made by Ritualists to revive it. Be it remarked that it is upon "The Sign of the Cross" that Mr. Noble is writing, but that he is careful neither to refer to the sign of the Cross, nor to the "Crucifix," he merely speaks of the Cross—not necessarily the Cross of Christ; any more than the cross on the Union Jack. If I am permitted, I will ask the readers to kindly keep this short review, or rather reference to the "Record," beside them, and to re-read it before perusing my article of next week upon "The Sign of the Cross." I purpose refuting Mr. Noble on all four points; and I here tell him that he is historically wrong on each one of the four.

iginal was the conversation, and so distinct were the tones of both, that I could not fail to catch every word.

Can.—"Good evening, Mr. V." V.—"Good evening, sir."

Can.—"I understand, sir, that you have a vote in this division."

V.—"I believe I have."

Can.—"Might I inquire which candidate you intend supporting in this contest?"

V.—"Decidedly you may ask the question; but I reserve the right to either answer it, or not, just as I see proper to know my intentions."

Can.—"I have been instructed to call upon you and to ask you the question."

V.—"It seems to me that you should begin by informing me which candidate you represent."

Can.—"Certainly; but I can see no reason why you should hesitate to express your opinion."

V.—"I will just give you a reason why I should decline to answer your question. You know me; at least you know my name and my address, and probably my business; you are also anxious to know my intentions and my political convictions. I don't know you; I don't know your name, nor your address, nor your occupation. Does it not strike you that I would need to know something about the man who questions me, before I give him the answer he desires?"

Can.—"That is been strongly enough, Mr. V. I have no objection that I should be upon an equal footing in that regard. My name is H.—I reside in this division, I am a clerk by occupation, and I represent one of the candidates in this contest."

V.—"Have the canvasser named the candidate to whom one it does not here signify."

V.—"Very well; now that we know each other, I may tell you that I positively decline to state for which candidate I will vote."

Can.—"It is not to intrude upon your affairs that I ask; it is merely in order that we may be able to form an estimate of the situation."

V.—"If I were to tell you for whom I intend voting, and every other elector were to do likewise, we would have no need of an election."

Can.—"How so?"

V.—"All that would be needed would be to secure a dozen trustworthy men, on either side, send them out to ascertain how the electors intended voting; then calculate the result upon their joint reports. The candidate least likely to get a majority could retire, and the other

were charged at their ostracism, anti-Catholic sentiment. It was profoundly stated. In words, taking all the circumstances of the situation into account, the course followed. It was doubtless considered carefully, and it seems to have been a shrewd one from the viewpoint of the mere politician whose chief object is an election."

In other words, during a Presidential or other campaign it is quite safe to ignore Catholics. And whom have we to blame but ourselves? It has, then, come to this, that politicians looking over the field and weighing the factors in which success will necessarily depend, do not find that the interests of Catholics, as American citizens, must be taken into consideration. What a sad commentary upon the policy of silence to which we have been so long and so tenaciously devoted!

In my opinion organization should be substituted for this policy of silence. For years we have been trifled with and deprived of our rights, often for no other reason than that we are Catholics, and it is high time to devise and to apply a remedy. A sad experience has convinced us that individual effort is useless, except in very rare instances. Even when those eminent in religious or secular affairs have sought redress they have secured very little, if any—precisely because they were supported by no tangible, organized body which commanded attention and urged just concessions.

As regards freedom of conscience in public institutions, Catholics are better off, perhaps, in New Jersey than in many other States of the Union; yet I have been placed in a similar humiliating position when seeking due representation on the boards of management of public institutions, so that the full religious rights of the Catholic masses might be obtained, exercised, and protected.

"Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just," I found had but a very remote application. The authorities greeted me with exuberant courtesy, but my requests for the enjoyment of undoubted rights were often futile, and probably were not conceded serious attention. The rights of citizenship do not so strongly appeal to the reigning politician as his own interests, and they are dependent upon the political party which he has espoused. At the present time there are not a few in political life who are concerned solely with whatever will either advance or prove an obstacle to their political ambitions.

It was not thought wise, when giving publicity to our grievances, to anticipate public opinion among Catholics by offering, at the same time, a definite plan or remedy. Therefore, in my letters and addresses to societies composed of Catholics, even organization was referred to only in a tentative way. It was suggested that if societies composed of Catholics retaining their identity and pursuing their own aims independently of one another, touched at certain points, the resulting bond of union would enable them to exert

concerted influence, possessing value whenever and wherever bigots attempted the invasion of our rights. Care was taken to state clearly that no movement, purposing to advance Catholics, as Catholics, to political office would be serviceable. In the United States, political office cannot be claimed by the adherents, as such, of any form of religion. Nevertheless, an American citizen should not be discriminated against simply because he is a Catholic, or because he has aided Catholics when there was question of their constitutional rights. Moreover, it was emphatically announced that no organization directed against any political party, merely as a party, could be regarded with favor; that it was not contemplated to interfere with party affiliations, Catholics, in their political and civil relations, must be guided and controlled, of course, by the laws of morality; they cannot admit that there is one code of ethics, one length and breadth of the Commandments for the individual and another for the nation. The words of the Saviour are as true to-day as when He uttered them nineteen centuries ago: "Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." The ballot must be cast in the light of moral principles and conscientiously. Adherence to these principles, however, will not forbid us to oppose ignorant, presumptuous bigotry, or to prevent its followers from entering political life in America.

The object desired is evident enough, although we may not so clearly perceive the means leading up to its attainment. We may learn a lesson from our Protestant fellow-citizens. They stand up courageously in defense of their rights. If the National Administration, the State Legislatures, or local boards, attempt to interfere with the smallest claim of the sects, their protests are heard in clarion tones throughout the length and breadth of the land, and delegation after delegation of their representative laymen besiege the halls of legislation. As a rule, they have been victorious. Very few politicians care to withstand determined public opposition. In fact, public sentiment, properly manifested, is often necessary to enable them to obtain justice for their constituents. The advice given by General Grant, when President, may serve as an illustration:

"These people get together, call meetings, get up petitions, and send petitions down here, and thus they annoy the executive. Now, that is what you Catholics should do. Get together, make out a statement of your case, and back it with as much force as you can muster."

This is good advice; it is brief and right to the point. It is likewise in perfect harmony with our form of government. The citizen is acting strictly within the rights of citizenship when he resorts to such measures to obtain or to defend his rights. Indeed, he may be justly accused of neglect if he does not exercise this prerogative when the occasion demands.

It is the goal to be reached; in what manner can we best advance towards it? The federation of all societies composed of Catholics has been debated for several years, and certain leaders among the laity, belonging to the principal organizations, have over and over again taken steps towards its consummation by calling meetings and by outlining constitutional. This movement has not been primarily inaugurated for the redress of grievances; there are many other reasons given why such a union is desirable. Through federation we could have a body of men trained by experience in the management of organizations, many of whom are anxious and ready to employ their knowledge for the purpose suggested. Shall the movement which they have begun be assisted and directed, or shall it be allowed to languish and probably expire, mainly because it has not received that counsel and encouragement which would have brought success?

It is alleged that the difficulties and dangers connected with societies would be multiplied in a general organization. If we are to be discouraged by obstacles which, after all, are not insurmountable, then we have departed far from the spirit of our heroic ancestors, who sacrificed life itself rather than surrender either religious or civil rights. But why should we fear? American Catholics are worthy of their forefathers. Point the way; let legitimate, constitutional means be selected, and they will give most cheerful support. No one can deny that the American Catholic possesses the courage of his convictions.

It is well to remark that any organization taking up the redress of religious grievances must be under wise control, else many mistakes may be made, and it cannot hope to enjoy, what is very necessary, the confidence of conservative, prudent leaders among the clergy and laity.

In some places diocesan unions already exist. Shall federation be accomplished by the formation of other unions, and their aggregation, all leading up to archdiocesan unions, all under spiritual direction, and culminating in a national union? Such a union having been accomplished, religious grievances existing only in a State, after all ordinary means had been exhausted, could be brought to the attention of the diocesan unions within the same, for the benefit of their combined action. The influence of all the societies constituting the national union would be exerted in a question possessing national importance.

Should this plan not meet with favor, might the end be attained by a national board elected by the societies of the United States, this board being under a spiritual director? Again, if the latter plan is not suitable, would the following prove satisfactory? The International Truth Society, of Brooklyn, N. Y., has already organized. The society has selected several boards for special duties. One board, composed of pro-

minent archbishops, bishops, priests, and laymen, is kept informed of the work of the society, and consulted in all important matters.

The work in which the society is engaged may be briefly summed up as follows:

1. The refutation of all misrepresentations, calumnies, etc., against the Catholic Church; 2. The creation of a demand for Catholic literature; 3. The distribution of Catholic literature in sparsely settled districts, among Catholics and non-Catholics, by requesting Catholics to re-mail their Catholic papers and magazines. This society is willing also to assist in remedying injustice when called upon, and its executive committee will gather together all data relating to a case presented, obtain legal advice, and, when satisfied that action is necessary, quietly bring the question before the proper authorities. Should this prove futile, the matter will be brought before the directors of the society. When their approval has been obtained, a formal protest, previously submitted to them, shall be sent to the chief officers of every Catholic organization in the United States. These having been made aware of the justice and urgency of the case, and the authoritative source whence the protest arises, could sign it. Such a protest, representing the sentiments of the thousands of members belonging to Catholic organizations would, beyond doubt, have very great weight, and effect that which individual effort had been unable to obtain.

It will be seen that this plan is substantially the same as the others. It possesses, however, an advantage which should not be overlooked, viz., an organization already formed, and capable of immediately entering upon the work. It may be well to observe that, while this society is independent of the federation of Catholic societies, it could employ that organization in the accomplishment of this special work.

Again, it has been suggested that a Truth Society might be established in every archdiocese, and diocesan branches added as might be found feasible, all tending to a national organization formed for the same ends, and employing methods similar to those of the International Truth Society.

It will be noticed that the plans here outlined are merely suggestive, and that they require development. This would naturally come after the adoption of a specific plan. In the object to be obtained they agree and their methods are alike. They differ only in the formation of the organization.

It is possible that none of these plans may meet with universal favor. Let, therefore, others be proposed. Every Catholic ecclesiastic, and layman recognizes the need of a remedy. Let us have an earnest discussion of the subject, give it our best thought, and, having found a legitimate, honorable and wise solution of the problem, reduce it to practice and prosecute it to a successful consummation.

CATHOLIC GRIEVANCES--THEIR REMEDY.

By Right Rev. J. A. McFAUL, Bishop of Trenton.

Reprinted from the American Ecclesiastical Review, December, 1900.

The editor of the "Ecclesiastical Review" has requested me to initiate a discussion on the best manner of redressing the religious grievances suffered by Catholics in the United States. It will not be necessary to enter again upon the ground already passed over in my addresses and articles relating to the existence of the grievances themselves. The light of public opinion has been strongly focused upon them, and whatever ignorance existed regarding them has now been dispelled.

Fortunately the press has given great assistance. Newspapers and periodicals, Catholic and non-Catholic, religious and secular, have eagerly participated in the discussion. Opinion, whether favorable or unfavorable, has been very conducive to the dissemination of the truth—the main object proposed from the outset of the agitation. A campaign of education was begun and continued with such earnestness and unanimity on the part of Catholics that they are now very few, even among non-Catholics, who do not realize that our grievances are many and weighty—such as demand serious consideration, and the adaptation of effective means towards their redress. Briefly, they are:

Freedom of conscience in public institutions, the public school question, the treatment of Catholic Indians and the like along with numerous other evils already in existence or certain to arise in our new possessions.

Up to the present the public attention has been occupied with the exposition of grievances. Their remedy has been referred to, but not presented in any definite plan.

It is surely not necessary to accentuate the need of organization for the purpose of executing any plan selected. Nevertheless, it may not be out of place to touch upon the subject. While bigotry is not by any means dead in this country, most of us will agree with Mr. James E. Wright, who, in the August number of Donahoe's Magazine, expresses the opinion that the "careful exclusion of Catholics from any of the Commissions" (to our new possessions) "has not been instigated by bigotry, but by a carefully considered move in the political game. Under the instruction of astute advisers" Re-election was of the first importance; everything else must be subservient to it. "Had there been appointed," continues Mr. Wright, "even one prominent representative American Catholic on each of the Commissions to the Catholic peoples of the new possessions, the reports submitted would quite likely have been different and probably would have led to considerable public discussion upon the subjects of education, of marriage, and of the various complex questions arising from the abrupt severance of Church and State. All danger of this was avoided by the selection of exclusively non-Catholic Commissioners. For a similar reason. . . Protestant superintendents of schools have also been appointed for each of the new territories. If American Catholics

were charged at their ostracism, anti-Catholic sentiment. It was profoundly stated. In words, taking all the circumstances of the situation into account, the course followed. It was doubtless considered carefully, and it seems to have been a shrewd one from the viewpoint of the mere politician whose chief object is an election."

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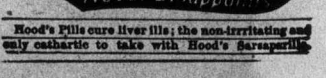
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Rheumatism—I was badly afflicted with rheumatism. Consulted several doctors without relief. Was persuaded to try Hood's Sarsaparilla, and five bottles gave me relief and enabled me to go to work. WILLIAM L. BOYD, Margaretville, N. S.



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