

THE TRUE WITNESS

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED AT

No. 751, Craig Street Montreal, Canada.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Country.....\$1 00

City.....1 50

If not paid in advance: \$1.50 (Country) and \$2 (City) will be charged.

Subscribers, Newfoundland, \$1.50 a year in advance.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1893

SIR JOHN THOMPSON.

In every age and in every land there have been found men of exceptional character and transcendent ability, who appear like those lofty peaks that arise high over the ordinary mountain range of humanity. As there are no privileges nor blessings in life that have not their corresponding sacrifices and troubles, so in proportion as a man rises, by his own gifts and opportunities, above the common level upon which the majority of mortals move, he becomes the target for the poison-headed arrows of jealousy, envy and mediocrity. Such a man is the present Premier of Canada, Sir John Thompson. And high as he may soar into the atmosphere of noble ideas and exalted principles, he, however, cannot ascend out of sight of those who aim their petty shafts at him. We find the Herald of Saturday hastening to reproduce a most silly piece of news, that purports to be a despatch from Montreal to the New York Post. When the logic of his arguments and the truth of his assertions cannot be impugned, that narrow partizanship, which is cold-blooded enough to use any weapon of attack, must seek to injure a grand opponent by means as contemptible as they are foolish. But a wise public is in no way deceived by these methods.

Take, for example, the Ottawa opposition organ; its columns are filled with little hits, mean insinuations, small quibbles that may indicate a certain amount of cleverness upon the part of the waggish writer, but which have no other effect than to show how devoid of sound reasoning and presentable facts the party it represents must be. We are no hero-worshippers, yet we feel that credit must be given where it is due, and when a man's principles and character demand a large share of that credit in justice and despite all petty political reasons to the contrary he should receive what is his right.

Sir John's opponents seek constantly to contrast him with the Hon. Mr. Laurier; but they fail most miserably whenever it comes to a definition of the latter gentleman's policy as contrasted with the unmistakable one of the Prime Minister. We are behind no one in our admiration for the fine qualities and brilliant talents of the able leader of the Opposition; but granting all that, we cannot but perceive how uncertain are his abilities when applied to practical politics, as contrasted with the positive weight and certitude that belong to Sir John and his principles. Hon. Mr. Laurier, with a clear and well-defined policy, would be a tower of strength as well as an ornament to the country; but surrounded as he is, and hampered for want of any fixed principles, the strength vanishes and the ornamental part is dulled. Watching him closely, in his grand tour throughout Quebec and Ontario, we perceive the shifting, varying, interweaving, unstable, and unsubstantial brilliancy of the Aurora Borealis. Shooting bright shafts of metaphor and waving wonderfully captivating curtains of thought, fringed with the splendors

of diction; but all, like the northern lights, prismatic in color and restless in appearance.

On the contrary, take Sir John Thompson's broad, clear and unmistakable pronouncement of a policy, as heard in the Drill Shed of the city some nights ago, and you have something tangible, something reliable, something that cannot be mistaken. Away up, through the vanishing and chilly splendors of the northern lights, we detect the pole star of a principle, and the personification of that principle is Sir John Thompson. The worst that his opponents can say of him is that "he has a judicial mind and is more of a judge than an advocate." And this is exactly what gives him weight, prestige and power. The excitability of the advocate—especially the advocate of a bad and lost cause—is conspicuously absent in the man. He has carefully weighed and deeply studied the divers interests of the people and of the country, and comes not before the public with elaborate excuses, uncertain promises, frantic appeals and illogical arguments: he comes as a judge, who calmly expresses his convictions, and as a man capable of standing by them and proving their stability. His bitterest opponents grant him the gift of a logical mind and the quality of an honest heart. Possessing these we find that by a regular train of reasoning, he came to the conclusion of accepting and advocating a certain policy, in which his eagle eye detected strength, solidity, positive principle, national prosperity and consequently national salvation. That policy has withstood the test of years—years of trial, of national struggle, of Canada's youth and maiden efforts—and is as deeply in accord with the country's requirements at this hour, as it was when first inaugurated. Granting Sir John a broad mind, a profound knowledge of affairs, an unbiased character and a judicial training, we must, if necessity, admit the logic of his principles and the wisdom of the policy he sees fit to advocate.

We are told that his opponents have an equally acceptable if not a more reasonable policy. If so, please define it. You cannot, but you answer by the retort, "define Sir John's." Very well. It is, as we understand it, a Liberal-Conservative policy; that is to say Conservative of all the institutions that have made Canada what she is to day; Conservative of the constitution which has been the talisman of her prosperity; Conservative of the foundations—deep, broad and solid of her nationhood, her confederation, her greatness; Conservative of all that has tended to raise her to her rightful position amongst the nations; but, at the same time, Liberal, in the true acceptance of the term; Liberal in as far as the changes of times and circumstances demand alterations, rearrangements, embellishments, or improvements in the superstructure of her constitution. According as the spirit of the times, or the varying conditions of the age, or the relations with other nations require it, that policy dictates a Liberal re-adjustment of the superstructure; but it is Conservative in the sense that it will not allow one stone to be removed from the great constitutional foundation upon which Canadian prosperity and Canadian nationhood are built.

What now is the policy opposed to this? Will Mr. Laurier, or anyone else attempt to define it? They have never dared do so as yet. It is a pick and shovel policy; one of destruction, not erection; of tearing down, not building up. It seeks to undermine the constitution, to wrench every stone from its foundation, and to pull down the whole

fabric in a heap, in order that upon the ruins its advocates may plant the standard of so-called Liberalism, and over its debris they may climb into office. It means—if it means anything—the selling of Canada's birthright for a mess of political pottage. Call it by whatever name you choose—for its name is legion, call it Unrestricted Reciprocity, Commercial Union, Independence, Annexation, or merely Free Trade, it comes to the same thing; the destruction of an edifice that has been a quarter of a century in building, and not one guarantee of even a shed to replace it, while the new possessors of the public purse are devising means whereby to fulfil their promises.

There is no position, in the gift of the crown, that we would not rejoice to see conferred upon Sir John Thompson, in consideration of his great talents and matchless integrity; but, as Canadians, we would lament the loss that the country would suffer in his separation from us. Equally glad would his political opponents be to see Sir John raised to any office, in the Imperial realm, provided it necessitate the removal of such an invincible antagonist from the arena of politics.

LORD ABERDEEN.

We publish to-day a sketch of Lord and Lady Aberdeen. It is meet that the new Governor-General of Canada should receive a hearty welcome to our Dominion. Apart from that respect, honor and devotion which, as subjects of a great empire, we owe to the representative of the Sovereign, there are other reasons, of a personal nature, which give Lord Aberdeen and his Lady a claim upon Canadians and which challenge our admiration while awakening our sentiments of affection.

If his popularity in Ireland, when Lord Lieutenant of the country, is any indication of what may be expected of his administration in Canada, we can safely predict that never Governor-General was more in accord with the people of this Dominion. In that down-trodden land, governed by Castle influence, where the viceroys have ever been looked upon as representatives of a tyranny that has ground the race for long years, Lord Aberdeen was considered the friend of the people, and on the occasion of his departure he received a demonstration such as Dublin never before witnessed, even in the days of O'Connell. And if Lord Aberdeen's popularity was great, what can we say of that enjoyed by his noble wife? It is not necessary that we should here repeat all she has done for the old land, for the industries of the country, for the happiness of the people, for the prosperity of the nation's future. We need but refer to the Irish village at the World's Fair; long after the great Columbian event shall be over, that Irish village will remain a perpetual monument to the great liberality, the warm heart, the noble patriotism of Lady Aberdeen.

But apart from all that our new Governor-General and his lady have done to endear themselves to the people in the old world, we must remember that they are not strangers in Canada. The beautiful volume just published by Lady Aberdeen, and entitled "Through Canada with a Kodak," is an evidence of her thorough knowledge of the country and her appreciation of its beauties and attractions. Lord Aberdeen is perhaps the Governor-General whose acquaintance with Canada, previous to his appointment, is the most thorough. He comes to a land in which he has real interests as well as with which he has living sympathies. In fact we might say that he is the nearest approach to a Canadian Governor-General that we have ever had. No other

representative of the Sovereign was a Canadian, inasmuch as being a landed proprietor in this Dominion. This, in itself, apart from all his other claims, is a guarantee that the one who now takes in hand the helm of State, is heart and soul attached to the country and interested in her greater prosperity and glory.

In extending to Lord and Lady Aberdeen a hearty welcome to our shores, there is not a Canadian citizen, no matter what his creed, origin or social standing may be, but can join in the great chorus of rejoicing. In these two eminent personages we behold the exemplification of religious tolerance, of national liberality and of cosmopolitan generosity. The bigotry that too often apes religious fervor is a stranger to them, the prejudices of nationality that maim real patriotism they know not, and the poor as well as the rich, the lowly as well as the exalted, the honest peasant and the wealthy representative, are all alike in their eyes and are treated with a democratic kindness that savors little of the high and titled. There is abroad to-day a grand spirit that strives to bring into accord the interests of the different classes of society and to create a harmony between capital and labor, wealth and poverty, the aristocrat and the plebeian, and that spirit animates no human beings more powerful than Lord and Lady Aberdeen. In Canada there is ample room for the exercise of that grand liberality of mind. Here we have not the bloated possessors of enormous fortunes, the millionaires with their gigantic accumulations of wealth, neither have we any extreme poverty, nor great indigence and misery; the Canadian millionaires are generous and the Canadian poor are comparatively happy; and of both we have but few. In a country like this a man and a woman of Lord and Lady Aberdeen's ideas and principles have ample opportunity of endearing themselves to every individual in the Dominion, and we can prophecy that their term of sojourn here will be one of national prosperity and individual happiness. Welcome!

WE HAVE received a very elegant letter, in a disguised hand, and signed, "A Believer in Truth," and in which we are informed that our recent article upon Mr. Papineau is "malicious, unmanly," and "has cast derision upon" ourselves. The writer says that we "openly rejoice at having been the author of a very mean article and the possessor of a very low mind." We find also that the anonymous writer feels great pity for "the Church for which we have so exhibited" ourselves to the world. We feel completely crushed by this magnificent epistle. Since receiving it we have been considering the advisability of taking lessons from our disguised friend in order to polish up our "low mind" and educate our Church in the ways of Christianity. We would read with pleasure a panegyric on apostacy and infidelity from our correspondent; it should certainly be well written, considering his professions, and if we mistake not the gentleman, his doubtful connection with our Church.

IT may not be generally known that Monday next, the 25th September, will be the fiftieth anniversary of the laying of the corner stones of St. Patrick's Church. On the 25th September, 1843, seven stones were laid amidst great ceremony and rejoicing. In our issue of next week we will give some interesting facts connected with that occasion. The revival of olden memories is always of interest and instruction to the rising generation.