



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. VIII.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1857.

No. 14.

"MY EDITORIAL EXPERIENCE."

A BRIEF EPISODE  
By Carl Cantab.

My friend, Mr. Fogg, editor of the Plainville Standard, made me an early call one morning in June.

"My dear friend," said I, "I am glad to see you, and shall be equally glad to serve you, if you will tell me how."

"To tell the truth," he replied, "it is on an errand of that sort that I have come. I want to go out of town for a month—editors need a vacation as well as members of other professions—and I wish you to take my place."

I accepted at once, partly to oblige Fogg, and partly because, having dabbled considerably at scribbling, I conceived that editing a paper would be a light and agreeable business. Shall I go farther, and confess that, excellent as my friend Fogg made the Standard, I thought that if I had free scope, I might be able to introduce some improvements?

The next number of the Standard contained the following:—

"PARTICULAR NOTICE.—The editor of this paper, being necessarily called away for a few weeks, has secured the valuable services of Mr. Carl Cantab as his substitute during the interim. We are confident that the interests of the paper will not suffer, with so able a writer at the helm."

This was very flattering, of course, and I might have felt complimented if I had not known that it was all in the way of business.

One pleasant morning I took my seat in the office of the Standard, clothed in all the authority of editor-in-chief. Requesting the "devil," with an authoritative air, to call at the post-office immediately for such exchange papers as might be due, I was soon busily engaged in reading, or rather running through them.

"Trash!" was my commentary on most. "It really surprises me that there should be so many poor papers when it is so easy to make a good one. So ill-judged, too. Here, for example, is a long leader about 'The Universe.' Now who wants to read about the universe? The great point is to take some every-day subject, and write about it in such a way as to arrest the reader's attention at once. For example, 'Loafers.' What is more common than loafers? I believe I will write an editorial on that subject."

Very appositely to my subject a man entered at that moment, "who thought he'd just drop in, and read a few of the papers, if I had no objection." This being given rather shortly, he began to make himself completely at home, pulling the papers roughly about, this way and that. At length he was absorbed in an amusing story which seemed to tickle his fancy amazingly, to judge from the suppressed exclamations which ever and anon proceeded from my arm-chair in which the fellow had installed himself. Before knowing his character, I had offered it to him, merely from politeness, and he, with unparalleled effrontery, accepted, leaving me to sit on a three-legged stool—the only other sitting article the office contained.

"I declare," said he, at length, "my wife would like to read this. I suppose you have no further occasion for it?"

"Haven't had a chance to look at it myself," said I, somewhat grimly.

"Ah, indeed! then I'll bring it back to-morrow, or maybe next day. Good morning, sir.—It's a beautiful day," and the fellow actually carried off the paper.

I didn't remonstrate. I was glad enough to get rid of him on any terms. I resumed my arm-chair and my interrupted editorial on loafers, of whom I wrote with an acerbity foreign to my nature, and which possibly might have been induced by the personal experience through which I had just passed.

It was about half completed when the door opened, and a young gentleman in spectacles entered.

"Is this the editor of the Standard?" he inquired.

"That is my present position."

"I called on a little matter of business," he proceeded. "I am a graduate of one of our universities, and having just completed the regular course of study, am about to go abroad. As my means are somewhat restricted, I have formed the idea of making an engagement to furnish a weekly letter to some paper. The Standard has been recommended to me."

"Ahem," said I, "may I ask where you are going?"

"I think of going to the Sandwich Islands first."

"I am afraid that our readers would not care sufficiently for letters from that quarter to make it worth while to form an engagement with you."

"My terms would be only ten dollars each for a weekly letter. Perhaps you are not aware that I gained a prize for writing in college.—May I ask you to look at this certificate from our professor of rhetoric?"

"My dear sir," said I, hastily, "I do not question your qualifications. I have no doubt you can form an engagement with some other paper, but I fear that such a feature would not commend itself to our readers."

"Do I understand," said the young man, glaring fiercely through his spectacles, "that you decline my proposition?"

"Really, my dear sir," said I, in a conciliatory manner, "I fear I shall be obliged to do so."

"Then, sir, allow me to say you are throwing away an opportunity which may not again present itself. I pity your taste, and your readers' taste, if they prefer the silly, namby-pamby stories that appear to such a nauseating amount in your paper, to the instructive records of travel, such as an intelligent correspondent might supply you with. I have the honor, sir, to bid you good-morning."

Hereupon the young man departed with a lofty air, and left me at peace once more.

"I wonder," was my internal reflection, "whether Fogg is often troubled with such visitors?"

For ten consecutive minutes I was permitted to labor on my interrupted editorial, when another visitor appeared.

"Is Mr. Fogg in?"

"No, sir, but as his substitute I shall be happy to serve you."

The stranger produced a box of pills.

"You must know, sir, that I have been laboring for some years past on the preparation of a remedy for consumption. At length, after immense labor and research, I have prepared a pill which, I venture to say, will prove an infallible cure in the most obstinate cases. I have the pleasure of presenting you with a box of Dr. Elias Forbes' Anti Consumptive Pills."

I endeavored to appear grateful, though, never having been afflicted in that way, I was somewhat doubtful as to its value in my own case.—At all events, the gift seemed disinterested, and I thanked him.

"By the way," said Dr. Forbes, as he was about leaving, "I suppose you will favor me with a notice?"

The secret was out.

I hesitatingly answered in the affirmative.

Immediately upon the departure of Dr. Forbes, I sat down and penned the following puff:—"We have just received from Dr. Elias Forbes a box of his Anti Consumptive Pills. He says they will cure the most obstinate case of consumption. Perhaps they will."

Congratulating myself on my success, I at once summoned the "devil," and entrusted him with this "copy."

Again I resumed my article on loafers. In the midst of a brilliant passage, another visitor appeared. Not overjoyed at this new interruption, I looked up and encountered the bashful glance of a young lady with red hair, turn-up nose, and a countenance delightfully variegated with freckles.

"Please, sir," said she bashfully, "I am Seraphina Sunflower, the authoress of Lines to a Deceased Fly."

Never having heard of the "Lines" in question, I supposed I looked puzzled. "I am delighted to see you, Miss Sunflower," I remarked,—"Did the—the poem you speak of appear in the Standard?"

"No, sir,"—surprised at my ignorance of so celebrated a poem; "it was contributed to the Weekly Rambler. I have never written anything for the Standard; but should be willing to do so. What are your terms?"

"Two dollars a year," said I, blandly.

"I did not mean the subscription price of the paper, but how much do you pay your poetical contributors?"

"We—ahem—that is, our friends are kind enough to make us a free gift of their productions in that line."

"But don't you pay for superior poetry?" said Seraphina, insinuatingly.

"It is against our principles. The Muses should never become mercenary."

Seraphina was somewhat taken aback, and looked slightly disappointed.

"I have brought a poem with me," she said, "which I should be happy to see transferred to your columns. It is, if an authoress may judge of her own productions, superior even to the 'Lines on a Deceased Fly,' which you are aware, made a great sensation."

I took the poem from the hand of the fair poetess with an instinctive foreboding. They proved to be seventy-seven very plaintive stanzas, entitled, "In the cold, cold grave I faint would lie."

It was exceedingly dismal, and I found it difficult to realize that such a prolonged wail could have proceeded from the not over romantic looking young lady before me.

"Your poem, Miss Sunflower," I observed, "is undoubtedly a—very remarkable production. It is somewhat longer than we are accustomed to publish. You couldn't shorten it?"

"Not without marring its proportions, and

impairing its symmetrical beauty," said Miss Sunflower, haughtily.

"Perhaps," said I, with mild deprecation, "you might find some other journal where length would not be an objection. Seventy-seven stanzas make three hundred and eight lines, and that would fill two columns or more."

"The same objection," said Miss Sunflower, sarcastically, "which you urge against my poem, applies to 'Milton's Paradise Lost,' and to a much greater extent."

"But Milton did not offer Paradise Lost to a newspaper. My dear Miss Sunflower (she began to relent) though your poem is too long for a newspaper, it is not too long for a magazine, or a book, when, as I have no doubt you will wish to do at some future time, you gather your poems and publish them in a collected form."

I hope I may be forgiven for these hypocritical words, but I was in a scrape, and took the easiest means to get out.

This adroit flattery appeased Miss Sunflower, who soon after left the office. She was kind enough to say that she would bring in a shorter poem to-morrow. I internally resolved to mislay it—accidentally, of course.

"Copy!" shouted the imp.

My editorial was not yet finished. In my perplexity I handed him a scrap of paper, without looking at it, supposing that it contained an item which I had written a few minutes before. When the paper came out, I was horrified to find that I had unwittingly published a letter from a dissatisfied subscriber, to the following effect:—

"Mr. Editor, Sir—You needn't send me your paper any longer, as I shall not take it out of the office. It is in my opinion the most worthless paper in the country, so far as my knowledge extends. During the period for which I subscribed I have not been able to discover anything in it worth the trouble of reading, and consider it a contemptible swindle upon the community.—Yours, &c.,

"JOHN BRIGGS."

This was a sad mistake, but I remedied it as far as possible, by insinuating in the next number that it was from a non-paying subscriber, and off setting it by two or three laudatory letters from different parts of the country, which I wrote myself.

My article on "Loafers" was duly completed and appeared, likewise the puff of Dr. Forbes' pills.

On the morning of publication I was somewhat startled by the sudden entrance of the doctor, an evidently a very excited frame of mind. He had in his hand a copy of the Standard. His finger was upon the obnoxious item.

"Did you write that?" he asked foaming.

"Yes," said I, coolly. "I hope it suits you."

"Suits me! Confound your impudence!—Suits me! What do you mean by that, sir?"

"You seem angry—why, I am at a loss to guess."

"Sir, in impugning my medicine, you have insulted me."

"Impugn your medicine! How?"

"Here, read that," and he placed the paper within two inches of my nose. "He says it will cure the most obstinate case of consumption.—Perhaps it may." "I demand an explanation, sir."

"It is very easily given. I only meant to say that, personally, I had no experience of the matter, and not being able to speak positively, I said 'Perhaps.'"

"If that is the case," said he, suspiciously, "you will perhaps recall the expression, which you must admit is equivocal."

"With pleasure."

Accordingly in our next issue I inserted the following item:—

"We stated last week that perhaps Dr. Elias Forbes' pills would cure consumption.—On further reflection we have decided to recall the statement."

Whether this proved satisfactory I never had an opportunity to learn.

But still another incident remains to be chronicled. When engaged in writing my leading article on "Loafers," it will be remembered that a visitor took the liberty to rummage the exchange papers, and finally carry off one without leave. One part of the article read as follows:—

"But, perhaps, the meanest description of a loafer is one who enters an editor's sanctum on no ostensible business, and without leave or license takes possession of his papers, for which he is too mean to subscribe, and spends the morning in reading them, to the discomfort of the rightful proprietor, who cannot order him to leave without incurring the charge of impoliteness.—Perhaps friendly reader, you may never have met with such a personage. We have. There is one, even now, sitting in our office, laughing over papers which we have not had a chance to look at. Of a verity, the loafer who frequents the newspaper office is the most obnoxious. We

are happy to state that the individual in question has just left, taking with him one of our most valued exchanges. We can dispense with it, since he goes with it."

This was too pointed to escape the attention of the person intended. It was not long after the issue of the paper before he entered the office in a great heat.

"Did you write that, sir?"

"I did."

"And did you mean me?" with still greater ferocity.

"Mean you, dear sir? What should make you think it meant you?"

"Why, I was in the office one morning."

"And so have fifty more been here. But why should you suppose I meant you in particular? Of course you didn't take my seat, and read my papers, and carry one away before I could read it, and then never return it."

"Good morning, sir," was the hasty reply, as he left the office, conscience stricken, I hope.

Within an hour the paper taken from the office was returned in a tattered and dirty condition. The only use I made of it was to consign it to the flames.

I will not narrate my numerous other experiences. At the end of the month Mr. Fogg returned. I was delighted to see him. I told him so.

"How do you like editing?" he inquired.

"Delightful as a recreation, my dear Fogg, but as a permanent thing—ahem!"

"That was all."

"When next I wish to get into hot water, I am going to take Mr. Fogg's place for another month.—True Flag."

REV. DR. CAHILL

ON THE LORD CHANCELLOR AND ORANGEISM.

It is not in any spirit of malignant triumph that the Catholics of Ireland rejoice at the steps now taken by the Irish Government to put an end to the disgraceful and unjust system of Orange ascendancy in Ireland. The persecution which this Institution has inflicted on the people of this country, since the year 1795, is written with the tears of the nation; and no Irish Catholic, or indeed no man of right feeling of any class or creed, can recall the anniversaries, the public processions, the professional dinners, the speeches, the galling music, and the other insulting items of this harassing confederation, without being grateful to the head of our Local Government for dissolving this most mischievous combination against the peace, and, in fact, against the very lives of the Queen's subjects. It is not with any view of opening old wounds that I make allusion to the past unhappy career of this Society; but it is a record which can, perhaps, be never entirely obliterated from the Irish heart—namely, that the bitterest remembrances of our history, the most dismal and disastrous memories of our creed and our race, are associated in the national mind with the rampant insult of Orangeism.

And this scheme of sanguinary ascendancy, this offspring of former cruel legislation, not only oppressed the Catholics of Ireland, but its spirit has evoked new persecutions in other countries; and in Glasgow, in Liverpool, in Manchester, in London, and, in fact, in every Scotch and English city or town, the Northern anti-Catholic hostility has been imported wherever an Orangeman resided, and has everywhere presented the same characteristics which it developed at home. Even in the United States of America, and in the Canadas, some of the most melancholy calamities of these countries have been legally traced to the existence in their cities of this Irish Northern Confederacy; and it is true to say, on authority which cannot be disputed, that the greatest obstacles to his advancement which the poor Irish emigrant meets on the other side of the Atlantic is the hatred, the vindictive malignity, which crosses his path at every step, from the same rabid bigotry which oppressed him at home. In fact, the North of Ireland was the great parent seminary where this anti-social sentiment was taught and encouraged; and its disciples, in going to the Western Republic, carried with them no feeling which urged them with such offensive zeal, and which lived within them with such undying vigor, as their hatred of the Irish Catholic. As a matter of course, this sad spirit awakened on the other side (as in 1795) an organized antagonistic resistance (namely, a combined defence of life and property,) which, up to this time, has, at home and abroad, branded the Government which patronised the aggressors as amongst the most persecuting and bigoted Cabinets of Europe.

Lord Carlisle does deserve the sincere and wide-spread applause of every man of liberal opinions in Ireland for the suppression of this most unjust conspiracy; and it must be very gratifying to his Excellency to read the testimony from all quarters of the almost universal approbation of the country for this masterly, though

long-delayed stroke of social wisdom and sound national policy. The letter of the Lord Chancellor had scarcely been one day published when men of former high Orange principles acknowledged their hearty concurrence in the official communication; and the journals which were once the organs of a furious ascendancy principle have been loud in their praise of the Chancellor, and have owned that the time is now come for the total annihilation of a class who never at any period did much good to the State, but who, at the present time, are the fruitful source of national discord.

Although no man of principle can justify any scheme which produces riot, or social ill will, yet the greatest praise is due to the Catholics of Belfast for their firmness in bringing the confederacy to a final issue. They armed themselves legally in mutual defence, and they laid down their arms the moment the Government guaranteed their protection. This conduct of the Catholics of Belfast is, in its own sphere, somewhat resembling the conduct of O'Connell at the first Clare Election, before the act of Emancipation was granted: by his masterly policy he forced the cabinet of England to an issue on the question of Emancipation; and he gained, like the men of Belfast, justice and government sanction for the cause for which he struggled. The honest, firm, true-hearted Catholics of Belfast deserve the thanks of the people of Ireland for their legal conduct in this now happily ended affair: their combined defence of themselves and their properties was free from any charge of social or religious malice; they have not braded themselves with the awful crime of spilling blood; and their voluntary extinction of their Gun Club the moment the Government came to their assistance, is an act of submission to the constituted authorities, which earns the esteem and merits the respect of all classes of the community.

The next desirable act of the Government would be to confine the degradation, the malignity and the ribald infidelity of street preaching within the conventicles built and set aside for the purpose. I do not mean any insult to the doctrines taught in these places of (what is called) worship; and I should be the last person in the world to restrain the liberty of publishing truth in any place one chooses to utter it without offence to others. But, on referring to a sermon lately delivered by an old correspondent of mine, in the public streets of Belfast, I do think that the Protestants of that town are not so destitute of respect for their principles, nor so bewildered with bigotry towards others, as to concur in the literary, charitable, Christian and winning address of the Rev. Mr. McIlwaine, as published in the Northern Whig. The extract which the Whig furnishes was spoken by the Reverend gentleman on the day of public humiliation; and most truly humbled should be the enduring congregation to be compelled to listen, as they believed, in the presence of God, to an Orange rhapsody from a pulpit, in which falsehood in fact, coarseness in feeling, indecency in language and slander in religion, all seem struggling for the mastery in this apostolic discourse, delivered for the advancement of virtue! the glory of God! the propagation of Christian truth! and the salvation of souls!! This singular combination of political malignity and social discordance with evangelical pretensions may be fairly considered as the palpable cause why the churches of Belfast are not half filled, while the Catholic population has increased within fifty years from 1,500 to 50,000! The extract is as follows:—

"After the prayers were read, he drew a comparison between Irish and Indian idolatry, stating there was something respectable in the latter. They had gorgeous idols to worship; there was really something national about the idols of the Indians. The religion of Heathenism was respectable when compared with the religion of Romanism. He would ask them what were the idols of Rome—what would they think of those who held their God in their hand? What were the members of the Church of Rome doing? There was not an organ of the Catholic religion that was not inviting its followers to rebellion. He went on to say that the religion of Rome was not Christian, and that much of the present miseries and sufferings now endured in India were owing to the encouragement, on the part of the British, to idol worship in that country and in Ireland."

No way discouraged by the extinction of Orangeism, the Belfast sowers have redoubled their street preaching: not less than nine open-air sermons were delivered in Belfast on last Sunday; and the work of the Lord, which in this town means throwing brick-bats, fighting with staves and stabbing with knives, goes on with success.

If one could guard against the social mischief of this insane street bigotry, there can be no doubt at all that it tends to lessen and degrade Protestantism; and in the same proportion, by the contrast, to elevate Catholicity. The converts from Oxford were first led to examine the tenets of the Catholic Church from daily witnessing the absurd pretensions of their own Church; and some of the very first men in the county Limerick, in the county where I write