

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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The True Witness.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 1858.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE America's mails to the 13th ult., are very barren of interesting intelligence. From India the news is called "satisfactory," which means that British arms have experienced no late reverses, and that Sir Colin Campbell is gradually compressing the insurrection within the limits of the Province of Oude, where the struggle is assuming the characteristics of a national uprising.

There is still much excitement in England about the regimental addresses to Louis Napoleon; but the moderate measure of Lord Palmerston will in all probability be carried by large majorities. A proclamation has been issued offering a reward of £200 for the apprehension of Thomas Allsop, an Englishman, charged as accessory to the Red Republican attempt at assassination; and the British Government, after Louis Napoleon's handsome apology for the intemperate tone of some of the articles of the Moniteur, cannot refuse to remove every reasonable ground of complaint which the Continental Powers may have against England as a "den of assassins."

An augmentation in the French army, the division of the country into military districts, and the measures of suppression adopted by the Imperial Government against the press, would seem to indicate a very unhealthy state of affairs in France. Either these strong coercive measures are necessary, or they are not. If they are not, their wanton adoption must alienate the affections of the friends of constitutional freedom; and if they are, the throne which is upheld only by the bayonets of the army, and which can be shaken by the feeble blast of a newspaper leading article, cannot stand long.

The proceedings in our Provincial Parliament have as yet been dull, but symptoms of a stormy session are not wanting. The Seat of Government Question—that of Representation by Population—and the School Question—will all come up for discussion, and give rise to some strange complications.

VOLUNTARIANISM VS. STATE-SCHOOLISM. "We are not prepared"—says the Toronto Colonist—"to deny the great abstract merit of the principle sustained by the London Times"—that principle being the "grant-in-aid" from Government, as the true solution of the vexed question of State assistance to education in a community whose disunions render a "common" system of education obnoxious to, and therefore unjust towards, a considerable portion of its members.

If our cotemporary would but bear in mind that that which is "just" is always and everywhere "best," he would not attempt to defend his position by such arguments as those given above. The "grant in aid" system is the "best" in England, because it is the only system that is "just" or equitable towards all classes of society in that country; and it would for the same reason be the "best" system for us to adopt in Canada, if equal justice to all were in this country the chief object of our legislators.

In all ages, and under all forms of Governments, tyrants, whether knaves or fools, have drawn, or rather attempted to draw, a distinction betwixt the just and the useful—betwixt right and expediency; and so it is in Upper Canada at the present day. No one, we think, will presume to impugn the perfect "justice" of the "grant-in-aid" system, or pretend that if adopted, the slightest wrong would thereby be inflicted upon any one in Canada; whilst, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that a gross wrong is inflicted by the actual system, which compels parents to pay for schools to which they are conscientiously opposed, and which, to the same extent, deprives them of the means of supporting schools of which they do approve; and yet forsooth we are to be told that the "just" system is to be abandoned for the unjust, upon the tyrant's plea, that the latter is the better, or the more expedient! When will Protestants learn that it is never expedient to do wrong—that the unjust can never be good?—and that truth is one, eternal and universal?—the same in all ages and under every degree of latitude and longitude? Their system of "national" churches, as opposed to "one Catholic" Church for all time and for all countries, is absurd enough, but scarcely more absurd than the theory of the Toronto Colonist that that which is "true" under the meridian of Greenwich, is false under the meridian of Toronto.

Our cotemporary bids us bear in mind the "strong feeling" that exists in Upper Canada in favor of the present iniquitous arrangement, and the "peculiarities" of that "section of the Province;" but in these we can find, after mature deliberation, no reasons for altering or modifying our opinions as to the evils of the present school system, or the advantages of that which obtains in England. The "strong feeling" or decidedly pronounced public opinion of Upper Canada, is no doubt, as is all public opinion when rightly formed, entitled to our serious respect. We entertain the most profound deference for, and are always ready to submit to, "public opinion," when that opinion is a sound opinion, and founded upon reason and justice. But public opinion is but the opinion of fallible men, and may therefore be in grievous error; and when—as is the case with the public opinion, or "strong feeling" of the Protestants of Upper Canada in favor of the actual iniquitous school system of that section of the Province—it is manifestly an erroneous opinion, it is to us but as so much stinking breath, for which we would not so much as to pretend even the slightest respect, or deference whatever; whilst the voice in which that erroneous public opinion finds utterance is in our ears, but as the blatant bellowings of a brutal and ignorant rabble. To their "public opinion," we oppose our "private judgment;" reminding our cotemporary that, if as against the Catholic Church we renounce all pretensions to the exercise of such a faculty, we assert it in its fullest extent as against the whole Protestant world; and that no amount of Protestant clamor shall ever induce us to renounce, or for one moment to forego its enjoyment. In this respect we are Protestants of Protestants; and will assert our right of "private judgment" against

all Protestant "public opinion," no matter how strongly pronounced, even to the death. But what does our cotemporary mean when he prates about "the concession now accorded to Roman Catholics?" A concession means a favor, a special indulgence, but not a right; and in that sense we deny that any the slightest "concession" has been made to the Catholics of Upper Canada, or any claim upon their gratitude established. We hurl back the word "concession" in his teeth; we tell him that what we ask as a right, we would scorn to accept as a favor; and that we look upon the present law for Separate Schools as it stands, as upon a most paltry, as an infernal instalment of our rights—for which we do not feel the slightest gratitude towards those from whom we have wrung it; and that we will never relax in our demands for the payment of the whole debt due to us from those who have robbed us of the precious jewel of "Freedom of Education."

In the course of the same article from which we have already made our extracts, the Toronto Colonist, deprecates any further agitation of the "School Question," because such agitation would result in the overthrow of the present system; in which case we should have to fall back upon Voluntarianism in education, as in religion—for the School as for the Church.

What then? we ask. The alternative which the Colonist proposes, has no terrors for us; for in so far as the Catholics of Upper Canada are concerned, they would in every respect be the gainers by the substitution of "Voluntarianism" for "State-Schoolism." If the Church, if the interests of religion can be safely entrusted to the Voluntary principle, so can the School, so can the interests of education; if "State-Churchism" be irreconcilable with justice in a community like ours, so also is "State-Schoolism." Every argument which can be adduced against the one, is valid against the other; and if it be desirable to abolish all semblance even of connection betwixt the State and Church, it is at the least, equally desirable to abolish all such connection betwixt State and School. We may be told that education, if left to the voluntary efforts of the people for its support would languish, and die out; but is not the same objection equally strong against the adoption of "Voluntarianism in religion? Nay—much stronger; for men are as a general rule, far more easily moved to make provision for the things pertaining to this world, and which will ensure their well being in time, than for those which belong to the world to come, and relate to their eternal happiness. Many a man will be anxious to make his child acquainted with the art of "book-keeping" and to unroll before its eyes the marvels of the ledger, who will care but little about initiating it into the mysteries of revelation, or directing its attention to the glad tidings of salvation recorded in the blessed Gospels. The School then has far less to fear from the adoption of Voluntarianism than has the Church.

But whatever may be the case with other races, this without flattery, we may say of the Celtic races of whom the Catholics of Upper Canada are chiefly composed—that with them, education, even if entirely unsupported by the State, would be in no danger of languishing or of becoming extinct. Amongst the Irish Catholic race, the love of learning, the desire for education, ever have been, are, and ever will be ardent, universal, and irrepresible, and stand in no need of the application of State stimulants. Of this we have abundance of proof in the history of Ireland; where for many a generation the entire force of the British Government was directed, but ineffectually, to the repression of education; and where Protestant penal laws—worthy of their authors, worthy of their cause—treated the Catholic schoolmaster as a felon, and made the educating of his Catholic subjects a capital offence. Yet in spite of these brutal, these thoroughly Protestant laws, the schoolmaster was not banished from Ireland. Driven from his quiet home, and well-ordered schoolhouse, he took refuge in the almost impenetrable recesses of the bogs and mountains of his native land; and there, sheltered from the rude blast by some kindly rock, or a rude turf hut, and secure from the more brutal visitations of the Protestant magistrate, did he impart to the children of the noble but persecuted race, that instruction which the laws of enlightened Protestant England interdicted under pain of death. The "hedge schoolmaster" is one of the specialities, and not the least glorious of the institutions of Catholic Ireland.

And shall we be told that the children of this race in Canada, are so indifferent to education, that unless the State interferes therein, learning will be neglected, and the darkness of ignorance will overspread the face of the earth? In so far as the Catholic Celtic races of this Province are concerned, of this calamity there is no fear.—When long centuries of Protestant persecution could not prevent them from supporting the schoolmaster at home, it is worse than absurd to suppose that Protestant legislation is necessary to compel them to support him in Canada.—Though all around them may be in thick darkness, yet there where Catholics are left unmolested—and this is all that they ask of the State—there will there still be an intellectual Goshen. We therefore fear not for ourselves the adoption of the Voluntary principle for the School

in Canada—though we do not necessarily advocate it; believing that betwixt "State-Schoolism" and "Voluntarianism" there is a third alternative possible: one which shall combine the advantages of State assistance to the School, with perfect "Freedom of Education." But if our opponents insist upon leaving us no such alternative—if with them it must be, either "Voluntarianism" or the present degrading, demoralising, and tyrannical system of "State-Schoolism"—then we hesitate not for one instant to accept the former; not as the best, but as the only possible system. For come what may, "State-Schoolism" must be crushed.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

On Thursday the 25th ult., the first session of the Sixth Provincial Parliament was opened by the Governor General; who having taken his seat in the Legislative Council Chamber commanded the attendance of the members of the other House, and informed them that the first thing they had to do was to choose a Speaker, after which he would make known to them his reasons for calling them together. Having retired to their own chamber, it was moved by Att.-Gen. MacDonald and seconded by Att.-Gen. Cartier that Mr. Henry Smith take the chair as Speaker. This motion was supported by the friends of the Ministry upon the plea that according to the principles of the "double majority" system the Speaker should be selected from the Upper and Lower Canadian members alternately, and that the last Speaker was a gentleman representing a Lower Canadian constituency. The Opposition brought forward no other candidate, but ridiculed the argument based upon the application of the "double majority" system, because in fact a Lower Canadian majority were forcing an obnoxious Speaker upon the majority of the members from the Upper Province. After the usual amount of talk, a division took place, the numbers being Yeas—79; Nays—42; majority for the Ministerial proposition, 37. Mr. Smith was then conducted to the Chair by his proposer, and seconded, and having returned thanks to the House and received assurance from Mr. G. Brown of the support of the Opposition, the House adjourned.

On Friday, 26th ult., His Excellency having again commanded the attendance of the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Council Chamber delivered himself of the following speech:—

Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council; Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly: I am happy to meet you as the representatives of the Canadian people, in this the first session of a new Parliament. When I closed the last session in the month of June, we supposed that England was at peace with all the world, but at the very time a fearful mutiny was raging in the heart of our Eastern Empire, a mutiny which for the moment seemed to peril all that we had won in India, whilst by the atrocities committed in its course, it roused the indignation of the whole civilized world. The people of Canada, as they have sympathized with the dangers and sufferings of their fellow subjects, will, in like manner, rejoice at the vigor which has checked this rebellion, and will appreciate the steadfast courage and perseverance which have distinguished our countrymen in the East. It is a source of pride to the British Colonies that with Havelock and Outram is associated the name of Inglis, and that we have sent from Canada some who fell gallantly fighting at Delhi and Lucknow. The issue of this struggle is in the hands of Providence. We may, however, without presumption, anticipate success to our arms, and the firm establishment of the British rule in Hindostan.

Towards the close of last year, commercial relations, both in Europe and in America, have been very much disturbed. In these matters, as you well know, the welfare of every country is more or less affected by the condition of others, and thus an effectual remedy for such evils is rarely to be found within the reach of any community. We have reason to congratulate ourselves on the prudence of our commercial men, and we may be proud of the position of our banks, inasmuch as they stand almost alone on this Northern Continent in having continued to meet, without shrinking, their obligations in specie. Yet there is no doubt the pressure has been and still is severe on our merchants, our land-owners, and our farmers. There is no doubt, too, that much may be done to amend and improve our commercial legislation. I earnestly recommend these matters to your attention, and I therefore solicit your consideration of the following subjects:—The expediency of assimilating the Commercial Law of Upper and Lower Canada. The law of imprisonment for debt, and the law of insolvency in Upper Canada. The law regarding fraudulent assignments and preferences, and that relating to the interest of money in commercial transactions of every kind. It appears so me also that the Usury Laws require revision, and that the Municipal Law of Upper Canada may be with advantage amended and consolidated. There are no statutory provisions more important than those which regulate the franchise and the law of controverted elections. Being of opinion that the present acts require amendment, I trust that you will do all in your power to improve and simplify the existing system. I believe, too, that it would be expedient to secure the proper registration and protection of all qualified voters.

A measure will be laid before you for amending and simplifying the whole system of management of our Public Lands and facilitating their occupation by industrious settlers. I am glad to state that the number of emigrants in the course of the year just ended, was considerably in excess of that of the previous year. A large extent of territory in different parts of the Province has been surveyed for the purpose of immediate occupation. Experience has proved that the opening of roads through the forest has much facilitated the settlement of our wild lands. By making these roads on a system at once uniform and comprehensive, there is every reason to expect the best results from the aid granted by the Legislature.—The subject of the fisheries in both sections of the Province is one which deserves your attention, as I believe that they may be so dealt with as hereafter to become a source of revenue. In Lower Canada the legislative changes made in the judicial system have been brought into operation. I trust that more ready access to justice and the speedy termination of civil suits will be the result of these provisions.—I congratulate you on the continued success of the Canadian Line of Steamers; they have already placed our intercourse with Europe on a new footing. I look forward with pleasure to the establishment of a weekly line to the St. Lawrence during the next summer.—I recommend to your notice the increasing value of the Lake Commerce of

Canada. Our trade with Chicago and the Western States, promises to be important alike to the Upper and Lower sections of the Province. During the recess a correspondence has taken place with the Imperial Government, and with the sister Colonies of New Scotland and New Brunswick, in which the importance to Imperial interests of an Inter-Colonial Railway and Military Road to Halifax has been pressed on the attention of the Home Government. This correspondence I will cause to be submitted for your consideration.—As this Province has already gone to the utmost limit of pecuniary aid to the Grand Trunk Railway Company, it affords me pleasure to state my confident expectation of the proofs sufficient to secure the advantages promised by the completion of its works, and I doubt not that the Community at large are fully sensible of the benefits derived from this great and important undertaking. Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly:

The commercial difficulties to which I have already alluded will be found to have affected our revenue.—This was to be expected, but the diminution was such as to inspire us with no fears for the credit or the future prosperity of the country. I believe you will find that the economy has been used in the expenditure of the funds entrusted to the Executive Government—that effectual supervision over the public accounts has been maintained by the Board of Audit. I have to ask of you, in the present session, such supplies as may be required for the public service. Hon. Gentlemen and Gentlemen: Correspondence in relation to the Hudson's Bay Company and the Territory will be laid before you, as well as an answer to your Address presented to Her Most Gracious Majesty on the subject of the Seat of Government. On the first of these subjects it is for you to consider the propositions made by Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies for the Company, and to what will be the bearing of these propositions on the interests and rights of Canada.—Papers will also be submitted to you showing clearly the steps taken by the Provincial Government for the assertion of these interests and rights and for their future maintenance. I now leave you to the performance of your respective duties.

Having listened to the above discourse the members of the Legislative Assembly returned each man to his own place.

On the 2nd inst., a Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council by Mr. Patton to provide for the rendition of verdicts by a majority, in cases where the Jury is not unanimous. On the same day petitions were presented in the Legislative Assembly complaining of the conduct of Judge Mondolet on the presentation of the petition against the return of M. Cartier; and from Mr. McLeod complaining that his petition against the return of Mr. Burton could not be proceeded with, that gentleman having evaded the service of the required notice. This petition was ruled out of order by the Speaker. The Clerk of the Crown in Chancery was ordered to bring up the Poll-books and other papers connected with the Quebec election. The Address in answer to the Speech from the Throne was moved by Mr. Talbot and seconded by Mr. Morrin. Notices of amendments thereto were given by the Opposition; of these one to be moved by Mr. Brown will assert the necessity of giving "Representation by Population." The debates on the several amendments will occupy several days, but the Ministry will probably carry their Address by large majorities.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.—After a keenly contested, but orderly struggle, the elections for the office of Mayor of Montreal concluded on Saturday last, leaving M. Rodier in a majority of 769 over the rival candidate, Mr. Day. The numbers polled by each candidate were 3,092, and 2,323, respectively. The following gentlemen have been returned as Councillors for their several wards:—

- Centre Ward.....Dr. Bernard. West Ward.....Mr. Corse. St. Antoine Ward.....Dr. Leprohon. St. Mary's Ward.....Mr. Goyette. St. Lawrence Ward...Mr. Rennie.

The result of the contest having been made known on Saturday evening, Mr. Rodier was conducted home by a large procession through the principal streets. Everything passed off quietly, in spite of the efforts of a few fanatics to excite religious and national antipathies. The Montreal Witness, with its usual disregard of truth, asserted that during the polling, "all the fraternities of the Church of Rome, open and secret, were at work against Mr. Day"—although it is well known that amongst that gentleman's supporters are to be found the names of a large number of our Catholic population; and by way of climax he strongly hinted his suspicions that M. Rodier was a "brother of the Order" of Jesuits!!! All these falsehoods and puerilities failed however in provoking any disturbance, and the election concluded in a quiet and orderly manner. The silly, though malignant insinuations of the Montreal Witness are of course beneath the notice of any man of common sense; and we do not therefore call upon him to prove that any one of the Catholic religious fraternities of Montreal, took any part, or indeed any interest whatsoever, in the elections just terminated.—Every body knows that the statement is a lie, and we can afford to laugh at it; but, when he complains that "no Protestant can ever be Mayor of Montreal," we would remind him of the fact that but a very few years ago a Protestant gentleman occupied the Civic Chair; and we would ask what chance a Catholic would have of being elected Mayor of the City of Toronto?

We have been requested by the Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice to state that the Rev. Mr. Murphy, over whose name a communion appeared in the Toronto Mirror of the 18th ult., is not a member of St. Sulpice, and consequently not one of the Pastors of St. Patrick's church, Montreal, though he is employed as an assistant to the regular Pastors of that church. We are also requested to state that the letter in question was written and published without the knowledge or authorisation of the Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice of Montreal.