

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 1859.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The problem of "war or peace" remains still unsolved; but from the great military preparations being made by the French Government, and the hostile tone of the press, war would seem to be inevitable in the Spring. Sardinia wants to fight apparently, and perhaps may yet get more fighting than she likes. The spirit of the Germanic races is fully aroused, and, as in 1813, is proud and defiant. The British Government is still exerting itself to prevent a rupture; but it also is increasing its armaments, and reinforcing its fleets.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

In the Legislative Council on the 11th inst., the McLean Divorce Bill was read a third time, only five members voting against it; and that in an assembly composed largely of Catholics, or fellows who call themselves Catholics!

In the Legislative Assembly the proceedings have been chiefly confined to the discussion of the Tariff. Petitions in favor of "Freedom of Education" have been sent in from all parts of the country. M. Cimon has given notice of his intention to move upon the introduction of the McLean Divorce Bill—that in passing such a Bill, the House would destroy in marriage the two characteristics of unity and indissolubility which are the essential safeguards of morality and the Family.

AN ORANGE DEMONSTRATION.—Provoked by the excellent regulations of the Police Commissioners of Toronto to exclude all members of "secret politico-religious societies," without distinction, from the Police force, the Orangemen of Toronto had a great gathering on Thursday the 24th ult., to make known their wrongs to the world at large, and to hurl defiance in the teeth of their enemies. These exhibitions of impotent malice will we think do good; as they must have the effect of convincing all good citizens of their duty to discountenance in Canada the formation of a party which sets itself above the State, and which openly defies the supremacy of the law.

The Chair was taken by Mr. H. Cameron who was received with vociferous cheers. He addressed the meeting at considerable length; dwelling much on the loyalty of Orangemen to "crown and altar"—though what he meant by the latter phrase we are at a loss to discover; and delivering himself of an inordinate quantity of fustian about the "Protestant Faith."

Mr. Nassau C. Gowan came next, who boasted that "he had gone from the Alpha to the Omega of the Orange Society" and therefore ought to know something about it. He pointed out as a fact "patent to every one" that the present "Government of this Province was partly due to the Order"—a fact certainly not very creditable to the members of that Government; and indignantly asked "how long a few autocrats should be allowed to put their heels upon their loyal heads"? Of the sentiments of his Order, to which our present government owes its existence, and which in return it so extensively patronises, the following extracts from Orange Gowan's harangue will convey some notion.—Speaking of the Catholic Church he observed:—

"Why the Roman Catholic Church itself was an immense treason against the whole character and conduct of constitutional Government. (Cheers.)—It was quite natural that men engaged in such a Guy Fawkes plot as that Church was, to imitate the act of the runaway robber, crying 'stop thief,' and shout out 'treason, treason.' It was quite natural to expect this, and it was what they received."

Of the loyalty of Orangemen, and their respect for the authority of law, the "Alpha and Omega" of Orangeism gave, in the course of his speech, the following admirable illustrations:—"The crime of proscribing Orangemen from even petty police offices, was equalled only by the hypocrisy of the excuses set up in its defence. When these efforts were made then to destroy them, would not the query arise 'when does obedience cease to be a virtue, and become a crime?' That such conduct would bring that query to the minds of every member of the Order was evident. The time had come when the Orangemen, not only of this country, but of the whole British empire, must stand shoulder to shoulder, in the defence of their rights. Canada would not permit a body of men, more than 100,000 strong, to be deprived of their privileges—(i.e., the right of shooting down Papists, and the privilege of escaping the gallows, as the reward due to their crimes; through the connivance of Orange magistrates, and the perjury of Orange judges.)" He could here announce as correct, being Grand Secretary, that there were upwards of 1,000 Lodges in this Province, with an average of 100

members—and if even the worst came to the worst the Orangemen would remember 'No Surrender.' That he felt assured they would do, bravely, and if necessary to the very death, rather than be robbed of the privileges and immunities to which they were entitled."

What "immunities" they are, that Orangeism claims, the slaughtered corpses of hundreds and thousands of the unhappy Catholics of Ireland, and the blackened ruins of Catholic chapels, burnt by the hands of Orange incendiaries, do but too plainly tell; but why should they be allowed to claim those "immunities" in Canada? Can not these gentry see, that as Orangemen, that in their capacity of members of a "secret" society, unknown to the State, they can have no rights, no privileges, no "immunities" whatsoever! By contracting secret, and extra legal obligations, binding themselves by oath to the performance of those unknown duties, they forfeit, and justly forfeit, many even of those political privileges to which citizens not so bound, are legally entitled. They are setting up an "imperium in imperio;" they boast that they number 100,000; they more than hint their determination to appeal to the sword as umpire betwixt them and the legal authorities; they taunt the Government with being the creature of their Order; and they have the insolence to expect that to them, the sworn enemies of Catholics, shall be entrusted a portion of the administration of the laws, as betwixt themselves, and the objects of their undying hatred, and relentless persecution! And they claim this as a right forsooth! as a privilege, as an "immunity," to which, as Orangemen, numbering 100,000 in their ranks, they are entitled! They claim that for them the hands of the Avenger of Blood shall be manacled, and that the Papists of Canada be given over to them for a prey! This, divested of the verbiage in which the speakers at the Orange gathering indulged themselves, is the plain English of their clamor for "rights, privileges" and "immunities."

The question then as to Orangeism simply resolves into this. Is Canada henceforward to be governed by the Orangemen, or by the legal and constitutional authorities? This is a grave question; one in which every honest citizen is interested; and it were well therefore that it should be speedily settled. It is for Catholics to answer it; it is for them to say whether they will submit to the foul yoke beneath which the people of Ireland have long groaned; whether a band of secret conspirators, composed in great part of knavish tradesmen, rowdy ruffians, and the very dregs of society, are to control the destinies of their fair land; to taint with their foul breath our free atmosphere; and to blight the future of Canada, as they have blighted the past of Ireland. If, as we suppose they are, Catholics are prepared to answer in the negative—then should they also be prepared to enforce upon their representatives and their rulers, the duty of discountenancing all "secret politico-religious" societies, as the curse of every country where they have obtained a footing.

EVANGELICAL MORALITY.—That Protestants have furnished many noble examples of the natural virtues, and of a faithful obedience to the natural law, no honest man will deny; but amongst a section of the Protestant world—that which arrogates to itself the title of evangelical—the opinion seems to be prevalent, that, as against Catholics, Protestants are not bound by the ordinary laws of morality; that in virtue of their peculiar sanctity, they are absolved from the obligations of truth and justice; and have "freedom" to lie, to calumniate, and to bear any amount of false witness. This, we say, seems to be the prevalent faith or opinion of the "evangelical" world; and it certainly is its constant practice. In this instance at all events, "evangelicals" draw no line of demarcation betwixt their faith and their works.

All Catholics for instance, amongst Protestants most of the "unregenerate," and amongst Non-Christians, all gentlemen, believe and act upon the principle that—as no one is bound to make a public statement to the prejudice of another—so every one having made it, and the truth of the statement having been impugned by the aggrieved party, its author or propagator is bound, when called upon, either to make it good, or publicly to retract it. This rule is so perfectly in accord with the precepts of the natural law which Protestants, as well as Catholics, recognise as of constant and universal obligation; its justice is so self-evident that we do not propose to attempt its vindication. Our object rather, is to show how it is habitually violated, to the prejudice of Catholics; and how its infraction is systematically defended by the orthodox professors of the "evangelical" faith. For this purpose we will cite two instances: one from the Toronto Colonist, the other as we find it reported in the Montreal Witness.

From the Colonist we confess that we expected better things; and though opposed to him on almost all politico-religious questions, we have always been accustomed to look upon him as upon an honest and straightforward opponent; as upon one who would scorn to take an unfair advantage, or to misrepresent the acts, of his political adversaries. We regret that his contro-

versy with the TRUE WITNESS upon a simple question of fact—as to whether Mr. McGee, as stated publicly in the columns of the Colonist, has, or has not been aiding in the formation of "secret" societies in Canada—has greatly shaken our former opinion in the good faith, and gentlemanly feelings of our Toronto cotemporary.

That journal, we say, having made a most positive and damaging accusation against Mr. McGee, and the truth of that accusation having been denied by the aggrieved party—was in honor bound to do one of two things; either to make good his accusation, by giving to the world the authority on which he had made it; or failing in this, to acknowledge his error, and to retract.—To the Christian, to the gentleman, there could be no other mode of procedure open; and we naturally expected therefore, that, in reply to Mr. McGee's letter denying the charges made against him in the Colonist, the latter would at once have boldly stated his authority for accusing Mr. McGee of aiding and encouraging the formation of "secret" societies in this country.—Instead of this however, in the Colonist of the 7th inst., we find the following paragraph; in which we are at a loss to know whether the writer's contempt for the known laws of honor and morality, or his ignorance of those laws, is the more remarkable:—

"The True Witness thinks we ought to retract our charge against Mr. McGee, unless we can prove it thoroughly"—[and so are we bound, does every honest man, whether Catholic or Protestant.] "The only thing we have said that can be retracted, is, that the existence of such societies and Mr. McGee's connexion with them was known beyond denial. Their existence the True Witness proves abundantly. As for Mr. McGee's connexion with them, we only knew it on the information and assurance of others; but these others are thoroughly reliable, honorable men, interested like the True Witness, in concealing rather than publishing an unwelcome truth."

Well then, Mr. Colonist, your course, if you expect to be considered or treated by your cotemporaries as an honest man, is clear before you. Publish the names of the "thoroughly reliable honorable men" upon whose "information and assurance" you made a charge seriously affecting Mr. McGee's honor and Christian character; and one which, could it be thoroughly proved, would for ever ruin him amongst the respectable portion of his fellow-countrymen and coreligionists. But perhaps you will say that you are not at liberty to give up the names of your informants; that they are cowards, and dare not meet in the broad light of day, him whom they fear not to malign and stab in the dark. But then neither were you at liberty, according to the laws both of honor and of Christian morality—to publish their statements to the world. You had no right to bring a charge against a fellow-citizen upon such an authority; and until you give up the names of your informants you, and you only, are both legally and morally responsible for the truth of the accusations made in your columns against Mr. McGee. If the laws laid down for its own guidance by the Colonist were generally to obtain amongst journalists, no man's honor or reputation would be safe; and therefore is it that every editor—being a gentleman—before making a charge injurious to an individual, or calculated to blast the reputation of another—insists upon liberty to publish the name of his informant, if the charge be denied, or if called upon by the aggrieved party so to do. If the informant refuses this liberty, the gentleman will treat him as an anonymous and cowardly slanderer; and the law, which is founded upon reason, would rightly punish as the author of the slander or defamatory statements, the stupid or unprincipled newspaper editor who should act otherwise—that is who should act as the editor of the Toronto Colonist has acted in the case of Mr. McGee.

The "reliable and honorable men," upon whose authority the Colonist brought forward specific charges against Mr. McGee; and who in that they are so anxious to conceal their names, are certainly cowards, and in all probability liars and slanderers—(or why do they not speak out boldly in their own names and in the face of day)—may be "interested in concealing rather than publishing an unwelcome truth;" but we can assure the Colonist that the only "interest" that the TRUE WITNESS has in the matter of "secret" societies is, that the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, should be published concerning them. We detest, because Catholics, all "secret" societies, without exception; and are prepared to hold up any man, whether Catholic or Protestant, whether in office, or out of office, to the execration of his fellow-countrymen and co-religionists, who shall have been proved to be guilty of directly or indirectly aiding or abetting in the formation of such societies. This we are prepared to do; but we cannot allow to pass uncensured the vile artifices by means of which, and on the strength of information received from some sneaking skulking informants, the Colonist seeks to blast the reputation of a political opponent. Again then we call upon the Toronto Colonist to prove his charges against Mr. McGee; to publish the names of those "thoroughly reliable men," upon whose authority he made those charges; or else to retract them, and confess his wrong-doing. Sure are we that there is no honorable man in Canada, whether Catholic or Protestant, who will venture to deny our right so to call upon the offending journalist.

We will now pass to another late instance of "Evangelical Morality."

The culprit in this instance is a hardened and abandoned offender; one in whom we do not expect to find the sentiments of either a Christian or a gentleman; in a word—he is an "evangelical" Judge in New Brunswick, rejoicing in the name of Wilmot, and of whose proceedings we glean the following details from our evangelical cotemporary, the Montreal Witness.

This Judge Wilmot, a Methodist it appears, taking part in an anti-Catholic or "Swaddling" meeting lately held in St. Johns, regaled his audience with a highly spiced story about the Priest of Miramichi; and how the said Romish priest had cruelly beaten a young man for reading the Scriptures. This story the Hon. Judge related upon the authority, as he pretended, of the young man himself, who had become a convert to the Holy Protestant or Denying Faith.

Upon this, the Rev. Mr. Egan, of Miramichi, the Priest alluded to, justly offended at the manner in which he had been attacked in public, publicly denied the charge, and called upon his calumniator for proof. Of course, as with the Toronto Colonist, no proof was forthcoming.—The honorable slanderer contenting himself with reiterating his slanders upon the very next occasion that presented itself; still sheltering himself behind the back of the young convert; but declining to enter into any examination of the alleged details. In the words of the Montreal Witness, "The Judge"—who publicly repeated, and assisted in giving circulation to, a very serious charge against a Romish Priest—"very properly declined a controversy, feeling that he was under no obligation to prove Power's"—the pretended convert's—"statements, which might, or might not be true."—Witness, 12th inst.

We call attention to this singular illustration of evangelical morality. A person in a high official situation hears a story strongly prejudicial to the character of his neighbor—which story he recognises "may, or may not be, true." And this calumnious story which for any thing he knows to the contrary may be a malicious lie, he feels himself at liberty to publish and circulate; but does not feel himself obliged either to substantiate, or to retract, when called upon so to do by the aggrieved party. This may be the moral code that obtains amongst Methodists; and it is lauded as "highly proper" by the Montreal Witness; but amongst gentlemen, whether Catholics or Protestants, and indeed amongst all honest persons not being regenerate or "evangelical," the retailer of a slander—"which may, or may not be true"—that is an accusation of whose truth he who retails it is not firmly convinced by strong proof—is to all intents and purposes as bad as, if not worse than, the original author of the lie; upon the universally admitted principle "that the receiver is as bad as the thief." According to the Montreal Witness, however, the Judge who publicly repeated a serious charge against a priest, of the truth of which he was not convinced—was only "contending for truth and righteousness!"—Witness, 12th inst.

The Witness also cites the action of the Judge as illustrative of "that freedom of speech which Protestantism delights to uphold." In this there is some truth; for the "freedom of speech" for which "evangelical" Protestants contend, and which they "delight to uphold," is freedom from the restraints imposed by the natural law, as well as by positive or revealed law, upon the tongue of the liar and slanderer; "freedom" from the obligation to speak the truth in clarity; "freedom" from the restraints of honor, honesty and Christianity. The liberty they contend for, is liberty to assail the character of their Romish neighbors with impunity; and license to invent and circulate any amount of slander against Popish priests, without being under any obligation either to substantiate their charges by proof, when called upon to do so—or else to retract them.

AN EXPLANATION.—If by absence of "cordial Irishism"—with which the Toronto Freeman reproaches the TRUE WITNESS—our cotemporary would imply that we are indifferent to aught that concerns the material or spiritual welfare of the Irish emigrant and his descendants upon this Continent, he is certainly in error, and unjust towards us; but if he means only that the TRUE WITNESS is a Catholic, rather than an Irish, journal; that it is religious, rather than national, his complaint is well founded. It is our ambition to be Catholic, without distinction of race or origin; for it is our firm belief that the interests of the Church demand that all her children, whether French or Irish, by descent, whether Scotch or English, should be closely united in the bands of brotherly love.

And when we say "united," we mean of course a "union," not a "fusion" of the different nationalities. The very term "union" implies that, in so far as it interferes not with that love which all Catholics should bear towards one another, each section of our community should preserve for itself, and respect in others, its, and their several distinctive nationalities. God forbid, that ever the day shall dawn in Canada when

the sons of Old France shall forget their mother tongue, the songs and traditions of the old fatherland, or cease to take pride in their national origin. God forbid too, that the sons of Irishmen should ever so far degenerate from their noble ancestors, as to be indifferent to the land where their forefathers sleep in peace, and where so many of those forefathers have suffered martyrdom for the faith once delivered to them by St. Patrick; or that they should cease to hail with joy, and with holy pride, the anniversary of Ireland's Patron Saint. All these holy memories would we cherish, both for French and Irish; but we would still exhort both to remember that they have a common mother, who has the first claims on their affections; to remember that they are alike children of one Catholic and Apostolic Church; and remembering this, to lay aside all sectional jealousies, to discard all occasions of strife, and to live together as it becometh the children of one mother to live. Be Irishmen, be Scotchmen, be French Canadians, or what you will; but do not forget that you are, above all, Catholics; that the Church is your mother; her friends your friends; and her enemies, always and everywhere, your enemies.

Believing in the necessity then of union betwixt Catholics of all races, and always respecting and honoring the national feelings both of French and Irish, we cannot recognise that either has in this country any peculiar interests in which the other does not share. We do not believe that, abstraction made of the religious element, there is any Irish interest as distinct from the interests of French Catholics, or Scotch Catholics, or of any other class of the Catholic community; and we think that he who would seek to isolate the Irish in Canada from the rest of their co-religionists by persuading them that there was a distinctive Irish policy, or Irish interest, which it behoved them to pursue, would be doing but poor service either to French or Irish. In this sense only have we exposed ourselves to the reproach of being deficient in a "cordial Irishism."

But remembering what Ireland has done for the faith, and—if we may be pardoned the egotism—remembering that it is to the missionary labors of that land that the convert from Protestantism to Catholicity owes, under God, his birth from darkness unto light; remembering that Ireland has been, in the hands of God, the means by which, during the long dreary night of apostasy, the torch of the faith has been kept ever burning in the British Isles—cold we say and ungrateful should we be, did not our hearts yearn towards Ireland, and the children of Irish mothers. They may have their faults even as other men have; and Irishmen would be the first to laugh in his face who should attempt to blarney them by denying it; but their virtues, their unwavering fidelity to the Catholic cause even in the worst of times, their generous enthusiasm for their religion, and their noble self-imposed sacrifices for every good work, must endear them to every true Catholic, no matter of what origin; but especially to him who having been brought up an alien from his mother's house, owes to those virtues, to that fidelity, to that enthusiasm and to those sacrifices, the happiness of being their fellow worshipper in the One Holy Catholic Church. And it is precisely because we do take a lively interest in the honor and happiness of the Irish in Canada, that we will not consent to hold them up as an "alien" race in this country; having an interest and a policy different from, or opposed to, the interests and the policy of the other races of whom its Catholic population is composed.

We regret—deeply regret—that there should be any, the slightest appearance even, of coldness betwixt the Canadian Freeman and the TRUE WITNESS; and it shall not be our fault if that misunderstanding continues. We declare, therefore, once for all, that our ambition is to make the TRUE WITNESS a Catholic journal; advocating Catholic interests, or interests common to all Catholics, without discrimination of national origin; and wishing our Toronto cotemporary a long and prosperous career in the advocacy of the same cause, we would beg him to lay aside all doubts as to our warmest sympathies with his generous efforts to ameliorate the social and political condition of his fellow-countrymen in Upper Canada. But if there must be a jealousy, a rivalry betwixt us, let it for the future be, as to who shall approve himself the more zealous in good works, and the more faithful to the teachings of the Church. This is the only contest in which we will ever consent to engage with our respected cotemporary; whose future we hope may be as serviceable to the cause of Catholicity in Upper Canada, as his past has been creditable to himself.

"When an unfortunate Protestant lapses into Catholicity, he is received with open arms, and the word 'apostate' is never mentioned; but when a Roman Catholic changes his faith, nothing is too bad for him, and no name so ugly, for him to be called. They can't see that if the one be an 'apostate,' the other is so also."—British Whig.

Not so, good Whig; your reasoning is defective, from your ignorance of, or inattention to, the meaning of the words "apostate" and "apostasy." An "apostate" is one who is guilty of "apostasy;" and "apostasy" is defined as the renunciation of one's faith or religion, but does not necessarily imply the belief in, or profession of a positive faith, or the adoption of some form of positive religion. Thus the Christian, who