

The Catholic Record.

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London, Saturday, June 2, 1894.

MR. MEREDITH'S PRONUNCIAMENTO.

As we announced in last week's issue of the RECORD, on Monday evening, the 21st of May, Mr. W. R. Meredith delivered in the London Opera House, his long expected speech opening the political campaign which is to show whether Sir Oliver Mowat's Government has retained the confidence of the people during the last four years.

The complications introduced into Ontario politics by the springing up of two new parties, the Patrons of Industry and the Protestant Protective Association, made it a matter of peculiar interest to know on what lines the Ontario Opposition will conduct the contest on this occasion; and it is scarcely necessary to add that the greatest interest centred in the question whether or not Mr. Meredith would once more lead on his forces to an attack upon Catholic education as he did in former years. He has spoken, and in justice to Catholic interests we feel it our duty to say that notwithstanding the sweet words with which he tempers the dose, he shows himself as uncompromisingly opposed to Catholic education as in former years.

We find also in Mr. Meredith's speech still another subject very largely dealt with, the attitude of that gentleman and of his followers in the past and present towards the Catholics of the Province, and to this matter nearly one half of Mr. Meredith's speech is devoted.

Why should it be necessary to raise a Catholic question in this contest at all, any more than a Methodist or a Presbyterian question? Have Catholics seized upon the Government of the Province to such an extent as to exclude Protestants from their due share in the Government? Certainly not. There has been one Catholic in the Government, a gentleman highly gifted, and thoroughly competent to fill the position he occupied, but the number of Catholics in the Province fully entitles them to at least one member of the Cabinet, even if the appointment were made purely on religious grounds, which it was not. The offices at the disposal of the Government are by no means filled by Catholics to a greater extent than their numbers justify and demand, and when besides the salaries of the offices filled by Catholics are taken into account, it will be seen that there is not the least ground for any outcry that Catholics have any privileges at all, not to say extraordinary privileges under the present administration.

The single fact that Mr. Meredith is bent upon raising a religious issue in the present contest is sufficient reason why the country should condemn him. There is only one reason for his doing this: it is because he is aware that by being aggressive against Catholics, he will please a certain faction which has some strength in the Province—a faction whose shibboleth is persecution and the proscription of Catholics. The motive is unworthy of the leader of a great party which aims at taking into its hands the government of a prosperous and important province like Ontario, and the interests of the province would not be safe in his hands.

Mr. Meredith takes occasion to tell us that when four years ago he addressed the electors of London in the same hall in which he spoke on the 21st ult. he was justified in the position he took in regard to the Catholics of the Province. He recalls the circumstances under which he made his famous appeal to the latent anti-Catholic prejudices of part of the Protestant population. His explanation of his position on that occasion is a very peculiar one, and it is well worth quoting. Here it is, as reported by this special organ, the *Free Press* of his city:

"I took occasion, then, to make some observations with regard to the

school question which was then agitating the public mind. I refer to some observations which are contained in a newspaper published in the city of Kingston, and I have heard a good deal about these observations, since it was said upon that occasion I called the Catholics of the Province the common enemy. That charge was utterly untrue. I have here the report of the speech which I made upon that occasion, and I challenge anybody to point to a single line that makes any such charge or any such imputation against any portion of my fellow-citizens. (Cheers.) What I did say, and what I am ready to repeat here to-night, was this: I read an extract from the *Kingston Freeman* in which it was pointed out that by the Roman Catholics of this country uniting together and carrying their influence from one party to another they would enforce whatever demands they choose to make upon the people of this country. I said that that was against the interest of the commonwealth, and that any man who had the interest of this country, whether Protestant or Catholic, at heart, was bound to resist and resist any such attack as that. (Great applause.) I want to know who is insulted. I want to know who has the right to complain."

In this explanation Mr. Meredith does not show a remarkable amount of honesty, for though he said he had the speech with him, he took care not to quote it, but made up a new version to stand upon on the present occasion. Why did he not quote the passage where he made mention of "the common enemy" to show who was designated thereby, if not the Catholics?

The *Canadian Freeman* did recommend Catholics to vote in one way on the occasion referred to, but it was not for any unlawful or any aggressive purpose, as Mr. Meredith pretends, but solely for self-defence. Catholic education was attacked, and it was only by a united vote that Catholics could repel the attack. If Methodists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, or Baptists were similarly attacked, no one would be surprised if they united to repel the assault; and such an appeal against any one of these denominations as Mr. Meredith made to Protestants, to unite against "the common foe" would be justly resented. Catholics have just the same rights in Ontario as these denominations have, and will exercise them too—without entertaining any fear of Mr. Meredith's misrepresentation of our designs.

But it must be remembered that even the passing rhetorical appeal of the *Canadian Freeman* to Catholics to unite is not fairly to be taken as showing any fixed design of the whole Catholic body to attack the liberties of Protestants, and Mr. Meredith's campaign against Catholics was not justified by it, any more than a campaign against Protestantism would be justified by the frantic appeals of the *Toronto Mail*, the *Lindsay Warbler*, and the Ontario P. P. A. organs, to crush out the rights of the Catholics of the province.

Mr. Meredith's summing up of this matter is peculiar and amusing. He quotes a statement from the *Catholic Record* that "the ballots of the Roman Catholic electors fell like rain upon the candidates supporting the Meredith party" at the last election, and this fact he considers a justification of his anti-Catholic course. He says:

"If a man is to have the whole power of a great Church driven against him he would be little less or more than mortal if he did not rise and protest against what has been done." This is putting cause for effect with a vengeance. We confess we are puzzled to know how the ballots of the Catholics, which were cast after Mr. Meredith's declaration of war, could have been the cause of that declaration. As Mr. Meredith is an adept at linguistic quibbles, possibly he may find an easy solution to the paradox.

We must here remark, however, that it is not a true statement to say that the whole power of the Church was directed against Mr. Meredith and his party. The Church took no action in the matter—but the Catholic electors, finding themselves grossly insulted and attacked, and their rights imperilled, spontaneously put themselves into an attitude of defence, and so fell the rain of ballots.

We must leave further remarks on the Opera House speech, and especially on the Separate school question, till our next issue. Meantime we trust that our readers and friends who are now aware that Mr. Meredith prides himself on keeping the same hostile attitude towards Catholics which he first assumed eight years ago, will show their appreciation of his conduct by supporting Mr. Mowat's candidates in every constituency; and it is not merely to Catholics we give this advice, but to all, whether Catholic or Protestant, who have the peace and prosperity of the country at heart.

"CHRISTIAN NEW ENGLAND."

The Puritanic spirit of the days of old is very easily roused to the highest pitch of intolerance in New England, and at the Methodist convention held at Waltham a month ago a good deal of bottled froth was let out regarding the old story of Roman Catholic, Romish or Papist aggression. There is a committee always standing in that body to keep this subject under consideration, and as the Catholic Church will not down in the United States, this committee has constantly plenty to do to devise means for its suppression, and to report its plans from time to time to the organization, that steps may be taken to put them into practical operation.

From time to time the required reports are made, and recommendations given that energetic means be employed to prevent the progress of Romanism; but somehow it never happens that the means devised materialize in the shape of important results; for, in spite of them, Romanism always continues to progress.

At the meeting we have referred to a report was read by the chairman of the committee, Rev. E. K. Stratton, in which it was stated that "the power of Rome had been lessened in its old strongholds, and now an effort is being made towards massing Rome's forces on these shores; and this effort has been so successful that the statement is made that in no country in the world is the power of Popery so strong as in America. But then there are forces which are arranging themselves against the common foe."

What are these forces? Surely they can be nothing else than the A. P. A., which indeed had given to it its first impetus in the fanaticism of New England, and especially of Bostonian ministers of Mr. Stratton and Justin D. Fulton's calibre. These are the persons who are responsible for the crusade of mendacity which the A. P. A. has inaugurated, for the bogus Papal encyclicals which have been issued by this organization, for the arming of the fanatics of Toledo with Winchester rifles intended for the massacre of Catholic citizens, for the blood which has already been shed, and the ill-feeling which has been aroused throughout the land by the creation of religious dissensions.

It would be profitable if these gentlemen were to look more narrowly into the state of religion at home, before spending all their time and energy in abusing Catholics for having succeeded in making the United States a Christian country; for all the statistics which have hitherto seen the light tend to demonstrate that it is because of the wonderful progress which the Catholic Church has made that the country can be called Christian at this moment, and not because of the Blue Laws which were planted by the original Puritan settlers of New England, who are claimed by the Methodists and Baptists, and more especially by the Congregationalists, as their ancestors.

From time to time we are wont to read in some of the religious periodicals of the wonders wrought in the propagation of the Christian faith by the Puritan fathers who two centuries ago planted and established their form of religion in the New England States, to the exclusion of all others.

It is indisputable that in the hill country of these States the purest blood of the Pilgrim Fathers is to be found, for it is there that the property of the original possessors has passed down from father to son while new fields were put under cultivation, the later immigrants being attracted to the cities and towns, which are now peopled largely by a foreign born population, or the children of foreigners. It is, therefore, to the hill country that we are to look for the real fruits of the Christian teaching of the Puritan fathers, more than elsewhere. It is a curious fact, therefore, that recent investigation has shown that not more than about one out of twenty-five persons of the rural hill-side population now regularly enter a church-door. Thus it happens, that though the Catholic population of New England is not yet nearly half the total population of those States, yet there are more Catholic communicants, that is to say, practical Catholics, in New England, than Protestant churchgoers; and there are at the present moment in New England over one thousand unused churches.

It is not to be denied that Mr. Stratton says truly that Popery is strong in America; but it is this fact which makes the United States Christian, and renders it possible for such men as Rev. Mr. Stratton to boast that they live

in a Christian country. They should therefore be duly grateful to the Catholic Church for giving them this proud distinction.

We may add that it is not only in New England that this state of things exists, but it is general throughout the whole country. A Protestant writer in a recent issue of the *Boston Arena* informs us that in the city of New York "in 1840 there was one Protestant church for every 2,000 people; in 1880, one to 3,000; in 1888 one to 4,000." He adds that "the total population was about 1,500,000, and the total membership of the Protestant churches only about 100,000."

The same writer shows that he is a strenuous opponent of Catholicity, yet he admits that 500,000 persons attend Mass in New York every Sunday, or ten Catholics to two Protestants of all kinds.

We must add that the whole Methodist Convention was not unanimous in Mr. Stratton's opinion that Catholicism should be crushed. Three speakers objected to the adoption of the committee's report, but it was carried all but unanimously. Perhaps it is owing to the fact that the Methodist clergy have so small a hold upon the people of the United States that the A. P. A. does not find it so easy as it expected to gain political control of that "Christian country."

ENGLISH NON-CONFORMISTS AND DISESTABLISHMENT.

The Presbyterians of England are beginning to renew the agitation of former years with a view to bring the subject of disestablishment of the Church of England in England. The plea upon which this new movement is being pushed forward is that the judgment in favor of the Bishop of Lincoln in 1892 makes the non-conformists responsible in some measure for the continuance of a Church which has departed from the traditions of old-fashioned Protestantism. Some of the Presbyterians are exceedingly warm in the advocacy of disestablishment, while others appear to be indifferent, or at least practically so. To the Presbyterians the increase of Ritualism in the Church is extremely distasteful, and their principal organ in London is in the front of the agitation for disestablishment.

So far back as 1874 a vote of the English General Synod was passed by 125 to 44 to the effect that "unless a speedy and effectual check be put to the teaching and practice of (so-called) Catholic doctrine and ritual by a party within the Church of England it will be the duty of this Church (in order to escape complicity with the legalized fostering of superstition at the public cost) to protest against the continued connection of Church and State in this realm."

From this the Presbyterian argues that as Ritualism has made great strides during the twenty years which have elapsed since that resolution was passed, it is still more incumbent than ever to take the steps indicated in it, the more especially as the question of disestablishment in Wales is now a live question which must be settled without delay.

The anomaly of having an Established Church is insisted upon, when the number of persons believing in it is scarcely a moiety of the population.

There is no doubt the agitation will result before long in complete disestablishment, and once the question is generally taken up for discussion, the Establishment in Scotland will be swept away equally with that of England.

IN RELIGIOUS GOOD-FEELING.

Ottawa, May 23.—Archbishop O'Brien, of Halifax, who is here to attend the meetings of the Royal Society, says in an interview in the *Evening Journal*:

"In religious good-feeling you people in Ontario are fully ninety years behind Nova Scotia. Down in Nova Scotia Protestants and Catholics recognize each other's rights and try to live in peace and harmony. They agree to differ, and as a result things go on very nicely. The people up this way, however, seem to be, religiously speaking, just where we in Nova Scotia were ninety years ago. To my mind there is no necessity for religious strife."

Speaking of Canada's future the Archbishop said: "The day must come sooner or later when Canada must cease to be a colony. To my mind her natural place is in an imperial league. We do not want annexation, and there are too many obstacles in the way of independence."

We are pleased to learn that such a state of things exists in the sister Province by the sea, and we are assured that the same thing which is said here of Nova Scotia is applicable also to New Brunswick. While such

continues to be the case, there is no fear that the intolerance of P. P. Aism will find a foothold in the Maritime Provinces, or that it will dominate the Dominion.

FOR WHOM TO VOTE.

In another column we give reasons why it is advisable to support Mr. Mowat's administration during the coming contest.

In addition to the reasons there given, we may here state briefly another which of itself should be sufficient and satisfactory to all our readers: that is, the position taken by the two principal political parties in regard to Catholic education.

Mr. Mowat's administration has endeavored faithfully to carry out the spirit of the Act of Confederation which guarantees to us Catholics in Ontario the school system as then existing, including the system of Separate schools. Mr. Meredith, on the contrary, has proclaimed his undying hostility to Separate schools.

It is true, Mr. Meredith acknowledges that the Separate school law cannot be changed either by the Local or Dominion Legislature, and he is therefore obliged to leave it in the condition in which it was placed in 1867 when the school law was passed which was afterwards guaranteed by the British North America Act. But he is careful to make it known that he is against giving "facilities for the establishment of Separate schools." His actual words, in his Opera House speech are:

"What I do say is this: I say that in this country we are entitled, if our Roman Catholic citizens stand by their rights which were guaranteed to them by the British North American Act—we are entitled to say, or those, at all events, who think that it was a mistake that there should be Separate schools—we are entitled to take this position: the powers which are given by the B. N. A. Act shall not be extended; they shall not be increased. You who are in the minority say you do not want them abridged. We say they shall not be increased or greater facilities given for the formation of Separate schools. Now what intolerance or bigotry is there in that? What is there unfair in that?"

Mr. Meredith is quite aware what there is unfair in this. He is aware that there were certain matters which required readjustment in fairness to Separate schools. They were matters of detail, of small importance in comparison with the great principle of our right to Catholic education, which the Separate School Act conceded, but regarding which justice to Catholics required that they should be conceded. We know by the past that it is Mr. Meredith's policy to interpret the school laws in the sense which would most restrict Catholic rights, and harass Catholic school trustees, and it is in the sense that he will continue to do this that we are to receive his present declaration.

Mr. Meredith may be conscientiously of the opinion that it is right to harass the Separate school boards as much as possible; but we Catholics are of different conviction, and it is our duty to carry our convictions to the ballot box, and to vote there in accordance with them. But we must here mention that in reference to our Separate schools, we have no desire to employ Mr. Meredith's tactics, and to lay hold of the moneys of Protestant ratepayers who do not send their children to our schools. Justice, however, demands that every facility should be given to Catholics to enable them to apply their whole means available for educational purposes to the education of their own children. This is what it has been Mr. Meredith's aim to prevent.

It is right we should here mention also one of the points on which Mr. Meredith's policy of annoyance has already been made manifest. He has, all along during the last eight years, endeavored to make it as difficult as possible for a Catholic to have his name upon the Separate school roll; so that by means which we can characterize only as contemptible, the Public schools might get a few dollars which in justice belonged to the Separate school boards.

We shall say somewhat more on this matter in a future issue, but at present we have to advise our friends not to be persuaded aside from the main issue during the present contest. There are constituencies in which there are "Independent" candidates, "Patrons of Industry," etc., making what is called a triangular fight.

This is the case especially in West Lambton, East and South Wellington, West Victoria, East Simcoe, Russell, Prince Edward, East Peterborough, North and South Perth, Parry Sound, South Oxford, Lennox, East Huron, East Hastings, Glengarry, South and

North Essex, East Elgin, Carleton, South Bruce, etc. We have not a word to say against the principles of the Patrons of Industry, but we have to say that their principles are quite as safe if left to the calm consideration of Mr. Mowat's Government, as they would be under the manipulation of an Independent party. The present Government have the interests of the whole country at heart, and it is not the time for a party of new principles, when interests so important of another kind are at stake. We unhesitatingly recommend our friends, therefore, to support the Government's candidates in all the constituencies we have named, and not to permit themselves to be thrown off the scent of the most important of all the issues at stake by any such red-herring drawn over the track, as the candidature of a Patron of Industry, or an Independent. Local issues and private grievances should also be laid aside on an occasion so important.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF KINGSTON'S MANIFESTO.

We recommend our readers to make a careful study of the pronouncement of the Archbishop of Kingston, which we publish in this issue, in reference to our Separate schools and Christian education. The document is timely and the subjects dealt with in a most comprehensive manner. Although written with a view to treat of the present emergency, when our system of Catholic education is threatened with destruction by unreasoning foes of everything Catholics hold dear, it lays down principles of conduct which are world-wide in their scope and which are applicable as well to the future as to the present. The importance of conserving the priceless boon of Christian training for our children is placed before us in the clearest light; and cold indeed and dead to the faith of his fathers must be the Catholic who will not allow the noble words of His Grace of Kingston to burn deeply into his heart, and who will not make the resolve to take still a deeper and more abiding interest in the work of extending and perfecting the system of Catholic education, the foundation upon which will rest the future glory of that Church for which our ancestors sacrificed so much, and in the bosom of which the way to heaven is unerringly pointed out. The Archbishop's reference to the dangers which threaten us—to the unworthy motives actuating that class whom we may with justice call political freebooters—veritable guerrillas of the Canadian political household—are noble words of warning from a sentinel who is ever on the alert to ward off danger—come from where it may—to the flock over whom he has been placed as guardian by Peter's successor. The document will, we have no doubt, likewise receive careful consideration from our Protestant fellow Canadians. It has no semblance of an attack upon their rights or privileges. It is an appeal for fair play—an appeal to their reason, demonstrating in the clearest manner the justice of our position, looking for no favors, but demanding the God-given rights of freemen—rights which, were Catholics in the majority in this Province, they would extend without question to the Protestant minority. We earnestly hope, with the Archbishop, that the present contest will forever put an end to the vile work of the unreasoning and prejudiced section of the Province, and that never again, in our political life, will we behold a Catholic or Protestant question staring us in the face as we proceed to exercise our franchise.

SIR FRANCIS SMITH.

Press despatches inform us that Hon. Frank Smith, of Toronto, has had conferred upon him by the Queen the honor of Knighthood. We may say with truth that no man in Canada more richly deserves distinction than he who is now to be known as Sir Frank Smith. By his prudence, his honesty, his perseverance and other sterling qualities of head and heart, he has placed before our young men a golden model. Indeed, his great successes in the world of commerce may be attributed to the possession in large measure of those traits we have mentioned. Nature richly endowed him. He did not abuse her gifts, nor allow them to remain dormant, and therefore, as was to be expected, God blessed his labors. The following sketch of his life we take from the *London Free Press*:

Sir Francis Smith was born at Richhill, Armagh, Ireland, 1822. Accompanied by his father he came to Canada in 1832, and settled near Toronto. He married Lady