

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## THE CUSTOMS VACANCY.

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

SIR,—In your editorial items of last week I noticed with pleasure your strong advocacy of the claims of Mr. W. J. McKenna to the vacancy caused by the death of the late lamented John Cox, Esq. In my humble opinion you have struck on the right man; and anything you can do to forward his interests will be favorably received in the commercial and social circles of Montreal. Apart from creed and nationality, Mr. McKenna has claims on the position no other man in the service can command. He has had seven or eight years practical experience in the office and is as thoroughly at home with the most complicated as with the minutest details of the business. To these qualifications, which are of primary importance to that department of the service, Mr. McKenna adds scholarship, business tact, and what is all important to the mercantile community, great suavity of manner. Polite, unassuming and unostentatious, yet, without dignified in the discharge of his duties; he has popularized himself with the public and his *confreres* alike, and no man's name in the Civil Service is so familiar and held in such kindly regard as that of W. J. McKenna. It is to be hoped that the Department, in its appointment of a man to this important office, will weigh well the *pros* and *cons* of the public interest. No mere figure-head, however weighty the influence behind him, will satisfy the public, or command the respect due to the head of the shipping office. Some recent appointments in the Civil Service confirm this statement.

Mr. McKenna, if I may presume on a long and friendly acquaintance, unlike some of his *confreres*, will never solicit the equivocal support, bend the knee, or gravel to that species of manhood (so common in the Civil Service) who get pitchforked into commanding positions through paying the same price they exact from those low enough to approach them for aid. He is too much of a man for such contemptible engineering. If some of his *confreres* would only take a leaf from his book they would command what they now lack, the respect of all. Hoping to see "Billy" appointed solely on his merits,

I am, Sir,

CONSISTENCY.

Montreal, 13th Aug., 1893.

## SCHOOL INSPECTORSHIP.

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

SIR,—I hope you will extend your usual courtesy to an inexperienced member of the "sex," asking, for the first time, a very small space in your valuable paper to express sympathy with the object of the subject heading this letter. I have not the presumption to hope that I can add anything new to your published correspondence on the subject; but, as one of the teachers employed in a large school, subsidized by the Commissioners, I have a right to express an opinion. My opinion, then is, that an English Inspector is a long felt want, and that we, lady teachers, can never receive, and will never receive, common justice until this pressing want is removed. There is one point, to which your correspondents did not refer, that I should wish to supply, and have an expression of opinion on it, from others in the service, having longer experience than I have: Suppose (and the supposition is quite natural) the lady principal of a school and one of her assistants are at variance on some point of discipline, government, method, or organization, the teacher knows, from practical experience acquired in her classroom, that she is right in pursuing a certain course; the lady principal objects to her assistant's course, not that it is wrong, but that she herself has preconceived ideas, and tells her, in very decided language, she must not deviate from the "rules" and "course of studies" laid down for her guidance, and approved of by the concentrated wisdom of the School Commissioners, none of whom, however, know anything of practical teaching. Now, what is to be done in a case of this nature,—and cases of this kind happen frequently: The teacher knows she is right, and will not submit gracefully to what she holds is wrong; while on the other hand, the principal knows her assistant is not wrong, but that she is simply deviating from her own preconceived ideas of how things should be done. Would not an English Inspector,

if we had one, be the proper person to settle points of difference of this nature? Would not his decision be final? On all the other points at issue, I fully agree with your correspondents, and cordially endorse everything I have seen in THE TRUE WITNESS on the subject of the appointment.

KATE.

## SCHOOL INSPECTORSHIP.

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

DEAR SIR,—I have been very much interested in your arguments *re* School Inspectorship. Like all other taxpayers, I was in perfect ignorance of the want of such an officer as you advocate, until I followed up step by step, the grounds upon which you found your arguments and the legitimate conclusions following. Everything, I have read from your own polished pen, and every word and sentence in your correspondence on the subject, confirms my growing belief, that, our children have been sadly neglected in their education, from want of regular and proper school inspection. To say that they have been sadly neglected, is putting it in the mildest form, since there is such strong and damning evidence from the best judges in the case—from the most interested, next to the parents—from the teachers themselves. The teachers' claim alone, calling for the appointment of an English Inspector of Schools is *prima facie* evidence that the want exists, and that the Government should see to the want being filled without delay. I wonder does the School Board take any stock in the appointment you, Mr. Editor, and the teachers are now so vigorously advocating? There is one measure at least, they are particularly interested in, viz., the ratepayers' taxes. Whether those taxes are devoted to the education of our children, or for the most part sunk in ornamenting and remodelling palaces of untold cost, is a question that is open to debate. At present, I shall not debate it, but turn to another point. According to the TRUE WITNESS, of a certain date of June last, Ald. Kennedy succeeded in having a gentleman appointed on the School Board, in every way acceptable to those whose interests he represents on the Board. Now the question that presents itself to my view at the moment is this: Why did not Mr. Kennedy have two Irish Catholic representative Commissioners, nominated and appointed in place of only one? My object in putting the question is this:—From a cursory survey I have had of the Taxpayers' Rolls of the twelve Wards of the City; I find that the English speaking Catholics of the twelve Wards, contribute taxes to the civic treasury, amounting to over two sixths of the whole taxes contributed by all other Catholics. Now, as the School Board, as at present constituted, consists of six members, it will be seen that two of the six, should be men acceptable to, and representing Irish Catholic interest on it.

I hope that this letter will fall under the notice of Ald. Kennedy, to whom the foregoing question is particularly addressed. It will be seen by those who read between the lines, that my argument resolves itself into this:—Had we two representatives on the School Board, as I have shown we should have, no doubt, this united influence and support, would be freely lent to the TRUE WITNESS, and the teachers in their peaceable crusade for the appointment of an acceptable English School Inspector. As it is, no doubt, they will have as they should, the powerful influence and support of one gentleman, but it is a truism that double influence would be more powerfully felt than single influence under present conditions. Another point to which, as parent and taxpayer, I would invite public attention is, the want of good text-books in our public schools. From the "Primmer," placed in the hands of the infant, up to, and including the highest "reader," placed in the hands of the most advanced pupil, not one can be said to be a text of even ordinary merit. I will say nothing about the selection of the lessons; beyond what every one of common sense knows:—the selections are notoriously dull and uninteresting. The most important thing after the selections, viz., the "grading" is absolutely *nil*. Yet, these valueless books cost parents a pile of money. In my humble opinion, all these objections could be overcome, by the appointment of a competent School Inspector. It will be my duty in a further contribution on this subject, to show, how and where an Inspector's usefulness would

come to the teacher's aid in the selection of school texts; their grading, and in the use and importance of marginal notes.

A. MURPHY, Accountant.  
Montreal, 12th Aug., 1893.

## THE BLACK FRIARS.

Something About the Society Which  
Saint Dominic Founded.

A kind friend, who takes a deep interest in all matters pertaining to the success and glory of our religion, sent us the following, which he clipped from the Daily Eastern Argus, of Portland, Me., and on which he remarks that it has "the true ring about it." We reproduce the letter for the benefit of our readers:

"I suppose that's the finger of the Bishop," said a man to me the other day, pointing to the statue of Domingo de Guzman enshrined in the facade of St. Dominic's church. Perhaps half the Protestant population of this city believe the statue to be that of the living Bishop Healy, and the other half that of the late Bishop Bacon of blessed memory; so profound is the ignorance displayed by this people of the church of its fathers and of the history of the mightiest institution since the downfall of the old Roman Empire—upon whose grave, said quaint Thomas Fuller, it sits crowned. There are men, not a few but a multitude, who are proud of this ignorance of an ecclesiastical organization of which it has been said by a Protestant historian that "There is not, and there never was on this earth, a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church," which numbers more communicants than all the other Christian denominations combined, and which many thoughtful minds regard as the only efficient barrier against the rising tide of rationalism. That Protestantism provokes unbelief many do stoutly affirm, perhaps having in mind this dictum of Macaulay: "The doctrine of Bossuet, that transubstantiation is affirmed in the Gospel, and the doctrine of Tillotson that transubstantiation is an absurdity, when put together produce by logical necessity the inferences of Voltaire."

It seems strange on first thought that a people which boasts of its schools and its general intelligence should be so ignorant, and so contentedly ignorant, of the history of the famous Black Friars whose monasteries are scattered throughout all Christendom, and even dot the pagan shores of Asia and Africa, who have produced great scholars like Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas, and Raymond de Pennafort, and who have played no unimportant part in the settlement and civilization and religious growth of this country. However, not much is to be expected of those who confound the chromo culture of Chautauqua with scholarship and who take their knowledge as invalids with weak stomachs take their nutriment, half digested. Ignorance of the preaching Friars is but natural with those whose only knowledge of Catholicism is derived from the so-called "confessions" of a bawd like Maria Monk, or the grotesque deliverances of clerical blackguards and buffoons like the very irreverend Dr. Fulton. I have mentioned Macaulay's tribute to the Catholic church. It may not be amiss, in view of the ignorance above indicated, to quote at length those splendid and memorable sentences in which the historic importance and present power of the church are set forth:

"The history of that church joins together the two great ages of human civilization. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camleopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday, when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in an unbroken series, from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight of fable. The republic of Venice came next in antiquity.

But the republic of Venice was modern when compared with the Papacy; and the republic of Venice is gone, and the Papacy remains. The Papacy remains, not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigor. The Catholic church is still sending forth to the farthest ends of the world missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustin, and still confronting hostile kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila. The number of her children is greater than in any former age. Her acquisitions in the New World have more than compensated for what she has lost in the Old.

"Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in that world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigor when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

These sentences should be, to use one of Macaulay's own phrases, familiar to every school boy. That erudite youth may recall them with pleasure in their rhetorical beauty and with profit in their historical significance, as he pauses before the stately pile which bears the name of Saint Dominic and ponders over its meaning.

Whatever his religious prejudices or predilections, he will do well to weigh the wise words of Charles Kingsley: "We cannot safely combat the errors of man or system without first giving them full credit for whatever excellencies they may retain," and to adopt as his own the broad dictum of George Eliot, that "all the great religions of the world, historically considered, are rightly the objects of deep reverence and sympathy—they are the record of spiritual struggles which are the types of our own."

The school boy in question, if he be a youth of sensibility and some thirst for knowledge, cannot fail to be interested in the famous society of St. Dominic, the *fratres predicatorum*, who have given the Catholic world sixty-six Cardinals and four Popes, and number among their contributions to the service of Holy Church the great names of Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Henry Suso, Savonarola, Las Casas, and Lacordaire.

ALFRED YORK.

## M - Emmanuel - Champigneulle

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