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Catholic Record.

London, Sat., Feb. 4th, 1888.

WITH the deepest feelings of regret we

announce that Right Rev. Mr. Bryner,

Vicar General and administrator of the

Diocese of London, is, at the present writ-

ing, very seriously ill. Our readers will

know, join us in fervent prayers to

our divine Lord that this most useful life

in the service of his Master may yet be

prolonged for some time.

THE CASE OF MR. WILFRED

BLUNT.

The Most Honorable the Marquis of

Ripon, the Right Honorable James

Stanfield, M. P., the Right Honorable J.

G. Shaw Lefevre, M. P., and W. J.

Evelyn, Esq., M. P., have formed their

selves into a committee for the purpose

of conducting the legal defence of Mr.

Wilfred Blunt, Mr. Secretary Balfour's

first English victim under the tyrannical

Crimes Act. They advertise in the

London Daily News for subscriptions to

the "Defence Fund," to be sent to the

Hon. Secretaries of the Home Rule

Union, Westminster. They state that a

legal opinion has been given by four

eminent lawyers that Mr. Blunt's action

asserting the right of public meeting at

Woodford was legal, not only by com-

mon law, but even under the Crimes

Act, and that the conviction ought to be

set aside on the appeal. It is therefore

their intention to institute a series of

actions against all who are responsible

for suppressing the meeting. For this

purpose, they state, "funds are urgently

needed."

The four lawyers whose names are

given are Sir Charles Russell, G. C. M. P.,

and Messrs. H. T. Ried, G. C. M. P.,

H. A. Quith, M. P., and W. S. Robson.

The high administrative positions

which have been held by the

members of the Committee, the

character which they all bear as

noble and generous minded men, and

their undoubted ability, all combine in

inspiring us that what they deliberately

undertake is no wild project without

hope of success. The eminence of the

counsel whose opinions they have taken

leads to the rational conclusion that

even with the powers conferred by an

Act which makes the Irish Secretary as

absolute as the Shah of Persia, he has

overstepped the bounds by his arbitrary

conduct in the case of Mr. Blunt.

When the Crimes Act was passed, the

Government expressly gave the assur-

ance that it would be used only for the

purpose of repressing crime more effec-

tually. It was not to be used for the

creation of new crimes: still less for the

purpose of preventing political discus-

sion. If this promise had not been given,

it is probable that even the subservient

majority which supports the Government

would not have given the enormous

powers granted in the atrocious Act.

However, once these powers were

obtained, the Government began to use

them for the purpose of repressing free

speech, and of inciting the people to

resistance so as to create crimes, and

thus afford the excuse for using their

powers more arbitrarily than ever.

The meeting which Mr. Blunt attended,

and for which he was sentenced, was

held on 23rd October, 1887. It was

to be held under the auspices of the

English Home Rule Union, and to be

addressed by Englishmen exclusively.

The object of the meeting was to protest

against the iniquitous proceedings of the

Marquis of Salisbury, who, in his

insatiable greed was bringing ruin and

desolation on his tenants occupying a

large tract of country. Even Sir Michael

Hicks-Beach and Chief Baron Polles

acknowledged his tyranny to be inexor-

able, and it was in praiseworthy sym-

pathy with the oppressed tenantry that

Mr. Blunt intended to address the

meeting. Even the Crimes Act did not

make such a meeting unlawful; but if it

had done so, Englishmen whose ancestors

fought the battle of popular rights on

the plains of Runnymede were not willing

to yield them easily: nor ought they, or

Irishmen either, to do so. Mr. Blunt,

therefore, resolved to test the question

of this right of meeting. Mr. Balfour

proclaimed the meeting under the

Crimes Act, on pretence that it would

lead to disorder and crime. There was

really no danger of this. People who

are all of one mind are not apt to fight

each other for expressing their opinions,

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

The Toronto Ministerial Association

met on Monday, the 16th ult., with the

President Rev. D. J. McInnery in the

chair. The chief subject under discussion

was "The Bible in the schools." The

persistence with which this subject has

been brought up by the various bodies of

Protestant clergy, especially during the

past two years, is an evidence of the

strong dissatisfaction which exists among

them at the present system which does

not make religion compulsory in the

school room. We have before now called

attention to the earnest language used by

many among them while treating on

this subject; and judging by the unanim-

ity with which the various speakers

urged religious teaching, and especially

the introduction of the Bible into the

school room, it would seem to be their

intention to persevere in agitating this

question.

Rev. John Burton read a paper in

which he entered a "decided protest

against the system of Separate Schools."

He contended: "The State has no right

to acknowledge religious caste, thus leg-

islating division and perpetuating alien-

ation. Therefore I must be pardoned for re-

fusing to speak of Protestant Schools. Our

Public Schools belong to the public, not

to a majority, nor to the sect; and we

cannot cure one evil by creating another;

therefore, build up our Public Schools.

As a Christian, I would follow unhesitat-

ingly Christ's teachings, let ecclesiastical

and politics say what they will."

Further on he said:

"Then let Jesus, as teacher, facile prin-

cipe, speak to our children of God and

truth. The Christianity He taught is the

Christianity we need; that of Nice, Gene-

va, Canterbury, Trent, may be left to the

sects."

As the consequence of these views he

declared that "we only need to unite upon

a text book of ethics based upon Chris-

tianity as thus defined, which ought not

to be an impossible task to Christian

teachers of good-will. Of course the

Bible must form the basis; there is no

other source; besides we should gain forth

ing by substituting the Vedas, and for us

the Christ of history is a more important

fact than the shadowy 'Light of Asia.'"

These passages constitute the cream of

Mr. Burton's paper. This gentleman's

views are widely distant from the intol-

erant and aggressive positions which were

taken by many of the ministers present,

if we are to judge from the synoptical

reports of the discussion which appeared

in the Toronto journals; and we recognize

in his statement some desire to deal fairly

by all; nevertheless his views cannot pre-

vail with us, and their adoption towards

Catholics would be a grievous wrong.

As Catholics we agree so far with what

Rev. Mr. Burton says, that the schools

should teach Christianity as Christ taught

it. When he infers that ethics only,

and not dogmas, must be taught, we

must part company with him. As far as

Protestants are concerned, we are quite

willing to let them agree to teach what-

ever system of Christianity they please,

to their own children, without inter-

ference from us, but we cannot allow such

a system to be taught to Catholic children.

The only Christianity which Catholics are

willing to have inculcated on their chil-

dren is a Christianity which teaches both

ethics and doctrine, and we maintain that

such is the Christianity of Christ. Our

convictions are settled in this matter, and

as we do not wish to interfere with the

character of the Christianity which Pro-

testants agree to impart to their children,

we must be equally free to teach, with-

out interference from Protestants, the

Christianity we believe in. From

our point of view the Christianity

which Rev. Mr. Burton proposes to

teach, is of a very low type, little bet-

ter than the system of the Vedas, or of

the Agnostics. He himself seems to be

of this opinion, even from the very apolo-

getic manner in which he makes the com-

parison between Christianity and "the

Light of Asia."

Our position is this. The parents, not

the state, must settle the character of the

religious training to be given to their

children. The State may very properly

facilitate the way for the parents in im-

parting such education. It may insist

upon a proper standard of secular training,

but it has no right to dictate to us the

character of the religious training to be

imparted. It seems to us that Mr. Burton

himself acknowledges this when he says:

"Our public schools belong to the public,

not to a majority, or to the sects."

It is only in Catholic schools that we

Catholics can carry out our views respect-

ing religious instruction. We are, there-

fore, in earnest about having schools

which are truly Catholic. Is it just, then,

that we should be constantly threatened

with the abolition of Catholic Schools?

But the threats will not avail. Catholic

schools we must and will have. Our

earnestness on this point may be seen in

the course of Catholics of the United

States, who though compelled by the law

to educate Protestant children, educate

their own children also, but at their own

expense. We maintain that the State

does not act honestly in this; and Ontario

would not act honestly in imitating the

United States. All are well aware that

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