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THE FREE PRESS.

VOL. I.] MONTREAL, THURSDAY, 7th NOV 1822. [No. 5.

— *Fuit hæc sapientia quondam*
Publica privatis sccernere ; sacra profanis. HORACE.

The wisdom of former times placed proper bounds between what was public, and what private ; between what was sacred, and what profane.

English translations of the able speeches, made at the meeting of the principal land-holders and other NOTABLES,* of the district of Montreal, on the 7th ultimo, by Mr. Viger, and Mr. Papineau, having appeared, or been announced, in the Canadian Spectator, I forego the purpose I had of taking that task upon myself; but I think it will not be displeasing to the editor of that paper, for me to assist him in communicating to the English part of the community, the arguments, and views, relative to the obnoxious Union Bill, which are presented by its opponents in the French language. Among others, the speech of F. A. QUESNEL, Esq delivered at the Mansion house dinner, on the occasion of the health being proposed of the catholic bishop of Quebec, deserves peculiar notice, not only from its eloquence, and luminous arrangement, but as detecting; and exposing; an instance of insidious and treacherous machination in the framers of the bill, which is but too plain an indication, that their ulterior objects are far more destructive of the dearest rights and privileges of the French Canadians, than they dare openly to avow.

As a text to which that speech serves for a glossary, be it remembered

I. That the abstract of the Union bill generally circulated as a correct statement of its intended enactments, states Sec. 25. "Persons professing the religion of the church of Rome, are to continue in the enjoyment of it, and the clergy of that church are to enjoy their accustomed dues and rights as heretofore, and as is provided by the 14th Geo. III."

II. That this clause has been held out by the advocates for

* *Cavillers against this term seem to have had their mouths stopped ; and I see that is very properly repeated and made use of in the advertisements and annunciations of other county and district meetings.*

the union as a secure pledge to the Canadians that their religion shall be inviolably preserved to them.

III. That that section in the projected union-bill, runs thus.

"And whereas by the said act (the Quebec Act) His Majesty's subjects professing the religion of the church of Rome in the said province of Quebec, might hold and enjoy the free exercise of the said religion, subject to the King's supremacy, as in the said act mentioned, and that the clergy of the said church might hold, receive, and enjoy their accustomed dues and rights, with respect to such persons only as should profess the said religion; *Be it therefore further enacted and declared*, that nothing in this act contained, nor any act to be passed by the said joint legislature, nor any regulation or other proceeding of the said Legislative Council or Assembly, shall in any wise affect the free exercise of the religion of the church of Rome by His Majesty's subjects professing the same, within either of the said provinces, but the same may continue to be exercised, and the clergy of the said church, and the several curates of each respective parish of the said province of Lower Canada, now performing the clerical duties thereof, or who shall hereafter, with the approbation and consent of His Majesty, expressed in writing by the Governor, or person administering the government of the said province of Lower Canada for the time being, be thereto duly collated, appointed, or inducted, may continue to hold, receive, and enjoy, their accustomed dues and rights, in as full and complete manner, to all intents & purposes, as heretofore, and as is provided and declared by the said act."

And IV. That the part underlined is an addition, interpolation, and innovation to the ecclesiastical constitution of the province.

Upon the following toast being given,

"The catholic bishop of Quebec, and the clergy. May they continue to be maintained in their rights and privileges; their virtues and their patriotism, indisputably entitle them to be
"so;"

Mr. Quesnel addressed the president as follows

"The sentiments which accompany the toast that has just been given, are equally honourable to those who express them, and to those to whom they relate. Although no more than merely a tribute paid to truth, it is always pleasing, to see the debt of gratitude, due to merit, discharged by the voice of the public."

"This is not a fit occasion for expatiating on the private virtues of the clergy. Inquire of the widow and the orphan, of the indigent and the miserable, whoever, and wherever they are and thousands of voices will be heard, in every corner of the province, proclaiming in far stronger, and more emphatic

language than I can, the innumerable good deeds of those men of benevolence.

"But let us reflect on what has been the conduct of the Catholic clergy, ever since the happy period when this country was transferred to the dominion of England. We shall then see that they have invariably inculcated, both by precept and example, upon the youth of the province, the patriotic sentiments with which they were themselves animated. In that period of difficulty, when, for a short time, calumny had succeeded to cast an odious imputation of disloyalty, upon the Canadians, did we not see the clergy, in fulfilment of the wishes of a governor who had been imposed upon by our enemies, promulgating from the pulpit those patriotic sentiments calculated to awaken every feeling of loyalty amongst our citizens, had it not already been deeply engraven upon their hearts? In other still more stormy times, when we were attacked by a foreign enemy, did not the clergy excite, and support the courage of our youthful Canadian warriors? Did we not see them frequently even accompanying them to the field of battle, awakening them to glory, receiving the dying sighs of the victims of war, and consoling them with their sacred blessings in their last moments?"

Here Mr. Quesnel, by a sudden impulse, occasioned by the train of ideas that had arisen from this part of his speech, exclaimed "What did I say, the field of battle and of glory! Can we forget, gentlemen, that the hero who led our Canadians to fame and victory, is now in the midst of us?" The whole company instantly rose, and turned towards Col. De Salaberry, who appeared much affected by this unexpected allusion. Mr. Quesnel continued. "Excuse me, sir, for this involuntary wound given to your modesty, but it is better so to hurt the feelings of the warrior, than not to give him that applause which his heroic deeds deserve." (*Loud applause*) Mr. Quesnel proceeded.

"Now, gentlemen, will you believe it, that this meritorious body of men, the clergy; so loyal, so highly respectable, are attacked in their dearest privileges, and sought to be degraded, in the person of their head, by this *bill* of most hateful memory, which is the occasion of our present meeting.

"In one part of this *bill*, we are emphatically told that our religion will be preserved to us inviolate, as if we needed a *bill* to assure to us those rights of which we have been in possession from time immemorial, and which are guaranteed to us by the sacred faith of treaties; then in the next breath this same *bill* goes on to sap the very foundations of the hierarchy secured to us, by the introduction into the heart of it, of a foreign and strange authority, which we all know is at least incompatible with the discipline of the church. And this, forsooth, under the pretence that it is for the good of our church, and to render its clergy more independent; as if it could do good to that

church, to debase its chiefs; as if the individuals of a Catholic clergy, could be gratified or honoured, by being made independent of the legitimate authority of their ecclesiastical superiors; in fine, as if the wise exercise of the just superintendance of the bishop over his inferior clergy, was not the most certain egis, the securest safeguard of the privileges of the curates who are under his pastoral charge, and of the parishioners' who are confided to their care. If indeed the clauses of this bill were only replete with incoherencies and absurdities, perhaps we might content ourselves with shrugging up our shoulders; but who amongst us does not see that the bitter potion which is here presented to the venerated chief of our clergy, flows from the same poisoned chalice out of which he has more than once been compelled to drink?"

"And what are the pretexts employed to colour a conduct so illiberal, not to give it a harsher epithet, towards the clergy? What are they reproached with? Listen, gentlemen, and judge. In the first place they are accused of having an undue influence in this province; but, put the case even that that influence exists in the whole of its supposed extent, does it not arise from causes that are legitimate and honourable? Is it not derived from their private virtues, from their zeal for the public welfare, from their acknowledged loyalty, and above all from their manly and liberal principles; principles that evince a moderation and toleration exceedingly rare even amongst the most refined communities? Yes, gentlemen, and we have to thank the Deity, that the Canadians have never yet displayed in this province, either that wretched spirit of irreligion, which seized upon France, nor those humiliating feelings of fanaticism and superstition, of which Spain has never yet been able to divest herself, these inestimable advantages, are principally due to the wise, the prudent, and the measured, behaviour, and to the enlightened zeal, of our clergy, who, both by their precepts and their example, have invariably sought to keep our Canadian youth from falling into either of those extremes. And if that clergy, ever but for a moment, were to abandon the unerring path, which they have thus prescribed to themselves, and from which they have never hitherto deviated, their influence, which is so well merited, and so salutary, would immediately cease, and be dissipated like the dews of the morning by the first rays of the sun."

"But the clergy are accused of encouraging and keeping up ignorance amongst the inhabitants of this country. Does this atrocious calumny require refutation? Undoubtedly not. It would be equally an insult to your understanding, to attempt to prove that the sun shines at noonday. But let those who know us not range the province throughout its whole extent. Wherever a parish exists, will be found charity schools, established

and maintained by the clergy alone. I will not enlarge to you, upon the colleges of Montreal and Quebec, those ancient and magnificent establishments, which are an honour to science and literature, and for which we are indebted to the established Roman Catholic clergy of those two cities, alone; long since have the noble founders, the learned teachers, and the generous patrons of those institutions, deserved and received, the just reward of our sincerest praise, and our most lively gratitude.— But look at the college of Nicolet, which has risen into existence in our own time, raised as it were by enchantment, in the midst of the woods of Canada, and, like those vast trees, which are found in them, the monarchs of the forest, and the asylum of the birds of heaven, contains under its extensive shade, an interesting multitude of the offspring of those families, which, dispersed at a distance from our cities, would otherwise have been deprived of all means of education for their progeny. Do we not owe this useful and costly institution, to the indefatigable zeal of our Catholic bishops? Look again, at the college of Yamaska, that extensive edifice, which we owe to the liberality and philanthropy of a single individual the humble curate of Yamaska. Look at those flourishing institutions for the education of youth, at Boucherville, at Varennes, and in so many other parishes * Do they not all testify the falsehood of those imputations, thrown upon our clergy? and do they not, on the contrary, prove that there is no class of society, that has displayed equal zeal, and has made equal exertions, for diffusing the benefits of education, throughout the country? Gentlemen, I appeal to all our fellow-citizens, I appeal to yourselves, to those who know how many from amongst our clergy, do not only devote their parochial revenues, but likewise sacrifice part of their private fortunes, to accomplish these noble purposes."

"But it is time I should conclude. However fertile the subject, I have been compelled to run over it in a cursory and rapid manner, nor have I been able to collect and present to you, the flowers, and blossoms, that offered themselves in my path.— I must leave to better pencils than mine, to finish the picture, of which I have only been able to give a rude sketch which I finish, by repeating the sentiment as given by our honourable president. May the catholic bishop of Quebec, and his clergy, be forever maintained in all their rights and privileges. Such is the desire of every Canadian."

* After this detail, let the British inhabitants of Canada, think of the McGill legacy, and yet unborn university, and blush!

MR. EDGROU,

Your 16th query in No 3, enquires, whether any other, and what mode, has been tried for the amicable settlement of the deficiencies that have arisen in the adjustment of the respective proportions to be enjoyed by the two provinces, in the revenue arising from the importations, at the port of Quebec, than the appointment of salaried commissioners, whose interest it is to prolong the discussion, and widen the breach?

Waiving a direct answer, I will consider the question in the light of an invitation, to suggest other expedients for the accomplishing of that object, than such as may hitherto have been tried or proposed. It appears to me that the simplest, the easiest, the most economical, and the most equitable, mode has been wholly overlooked.

Upper Canada ought not to claim more, nor Lower Canada to expect she will be satisfied with less, than the real equivalent of the duties paid at Quebec, on the articles which are actually transported to Upper Canada, for the consumption of its inhabitants, or exportation to the States. The idea that has been held out by some, that the division of the duties should bear a relative proportion to the respective expenses of the civil governments of each province, and not to the actual consumption, or population, is absurd, and untenable, and I will not waste any time in combating it, further than to adduce an homely maxim, and to say that it is the duty of the government of either province, "to cut their coats according to their cloth," and confine their expenditures, within the bounds of their just and legal revenues. But why resort to an equivalent, an estimate, or a calculation of any kind, when the real sum, is, in my opinion, ascertainable with the greatest facility? Let, upon each article that has paid duty at Quebec, a certificate in the nature of a drawback debenture, be given, upon its crossing the line into the Upper Province, in virtue of which, the receiver-general of Upper Canada, may receive from the receiver-general of Lower Canada, the full amount of duty upon it. To make it an object for the owners of the goods not to omit entering them, it will be necessary, that a small proportion of that drawback, should be given to them, ten per cent upon it, would I think, answer every purpose. The points of communication, are at present, very few, and a revenue officer at Coteau du Lac, and two or three on the line of the Ottawa, as that portion of the country gets settled and frequented, would be all that would be wanted, for there would not be, as in the case of duties to be levied, any temptation for avoiding a regular entry; on the contrary, the ten per cent would ensure its being invariably practised. As that ten per cent would have to go out of the pocket of Upper Canada, it is but just that it should be the Upper Canadian receiver of the goods, and not the Lower Canadian expor-

ter, who should profit by it. The operation would be very simple; at the place of entry, the receiver of the goods, goes to the officer, reports his articles, and when the officer has ascertained their existence and quality, by such checks as are familiar to all custom-houses, he forwards the report to the receiver-general at York, and gives a counter certificate to the importer, entitling him to receive the ten per cent at York; (which certificate, by the bye, might likewise become a kind of current government paper, that would come in aid of the circulating medium.) These reports again, transmitted to the receiver general at Quebec, would be the vouchers upon which the treasury-warrants would be granted, for the quarterly payment of the Upper Canada quota, which would thus be ascertained, collected, and paid, not by equivalent or approximation, but in reality, and in true justice, down to a very fraction, and without the expense, the delay, and the encumbrance, of boards of commissioners, and the disputes, differences, and ill blood, that has hitherto accompanied the old and inefficient system. Many minor particulars of arrangement occur to me, but I refrain, meaning these remarks more as hints, than as proposals.

Yours, &c.

CARDO.

The following is an additional and satisfactory proof that sound *English* principles and feelings are gaining ground in Upper-Canada on the subject of the proposed Union.

PRESENTMENT made by the Grand Jury of the Court of General Quarter Sessions for the District of NIAGARA, on the 9th Oct. 1822.

DISTRICT OF }
 NIAGARA, } *Upper-Canada.*

We the Grand Jurors for our Lord the King having been requested by the honorable the Chairman, to express our sentiments upon the Union of the two Provinces, feel it our duty to say that, in our opinion, such a Union would be very detrimental to the prosperity of our country, and would much contract the liberty of its subjects.

Grand Jury Room, Niagara. Upper-Canada, 9th Oct. 1822.
 Signed by MOSES BRADY, Foreman, and twenty-one other jurors.

As the editor of the Spectator seems to have some doubts as to the meaning of the word "clinch" made use of by the Courant. I beg to offer my conjectures on the subject, & if they throw any light upon the diction of the editor of the last mentioned paper, which is sometimes rather obscure to *English* men; who

have not had the advantages of a classical acquaintance with the Yankee tongue, I expect to receive the thanks of its readers, as well as of the readers of the Spectator.

To "clutch" or "clench," for the word is spelt differently, we all know, in English, is a technical verb used by carpenters to express the binding back of the points of nails, staples, &c., so as to secure their hold in the substance through which they have been driven; and is also applied figuratively to the doubling of the fist by reason of the crooked form which the fingers assume similar to that of a clenched nail, and analogically to the maintenance of a proposition by some argument or assertion that is conclusive, thence denominated a "cluncher" which again is emphatically used to denote a notorious lie, that being the most unanswerable argument that can be employed Q. E. D. But as a substitute I have no recollection of the word being admitted into the records of lexicography. I looked into Grosse's dictionary of the vulgar tongue, and Bailey's slang-vocabulary; and I was just going to set it down as a Yankee-ism, when the light flashed upon me at once, and I most perspicuously saw that it was nothing but an error of the press, and that the erudite writer of the paragraph in which it appears, absolutely wrote "*clench*," a word of Greek origin, and signifying a subtle argument, a sophism, a piece of logical legerdemain. The compositor, evidently possessing less learning than the writer, had recourse to the first word that to him sounded like that which appeared in the manuscript, and adopting a sense in which I have some reason to believe the word "clutch" is used in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts, degraded a sublime and liberal invitation to engage in a war of tropes and syllogisms, into a challenge to a bout at fisty cuffs.

To corroborate that I am warranted in this restoration of the true reading, I can adduce an instance of the very same mistake occurring in all the editions of Massinger's plays from the time of Coxeter till that of Gifford. In the *Emperor of the East* in Act II. Sc. 1. it is said of Pulcheria, the emperor's sister, a very learned and accomplished lady,

"She will have her *clenches*."

which notwithstanding its absurdity, maintained its ground till Gifford restored its true reading from the old folio,

"She will have her *clenches*."

Can therefore any thing be more clear than my explanation?

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