

Right Will Never Die.

NOW that all is ended, for the present at least, and everything has settled into calmness, it is well, I believe, to make a survey of one of the last events which has taken place in the political sphere of our country, an event which will hereafter be known as "The Scholastic Trouble of Keewatin." Let us cast aside for the time, all party leanings and consider in an impartial manner this all important question.

We Catholics are convinced that our rights have been violated. It is needless, I think to go over all the history of this subject. We have observed the whole affair close enough to pass judgment upon it. Suffice it to say that in the "Manitoba Act" of 1870 and in the "Territories Act" of 1875, it is clearly shown that any minority whether Catholic or Protestant, should have the right to a school system adapted to their own religious teaching. Moreover, when by the Act of 1876, Keewatin was established into a district the guarantee, given by the Territories Act of 1875, was in no way revoked, that is, the right of establishing the system of separate schools was maintained in all its integrity.

This, in a few words, is the history side of the question and therein the right of the Catholic and Protestant minorities is well defined and clearly shown. Such right then, to protect the minorities has existed, still exists today and shall exist in spite of all, though our Canadian legislators may decide otherwise.

Moreover, if such a right did not legally exist, as some Canadian Demosthenes have given us to understand, would it not exist in the natural order of things? Are those, who today have the power to frame laws, those that the people of Canada have chosen to govern them and rule the destinies of our fair country and who seem to forget, or at least who have forgotten, their duty when they have refused to the minority of Manitoba separate schools, that to

which they had right,—are those, I ask, ignorant that they disregard the elementary rules of justice and equity, which those who have won the confidence of the people are supposed to possess? Are they ignorant that over the written law exists another supreme law? “Unwritten, it is true, but innate in us, a law that we do not learn from our fathers but from nature itself, that one cannot invalidate by another law, neither retrench nor abrogate, that neither the people nor the Senate can exempt themselves from obeying,” as said the great Roman, Cicero, in speaking of natural law. And, in fact, is not this natural law the participation of the eternal law? Is it not the impression of the Divine Light by which we distinguish what is right and what is wrong? Assuredly the majority of our Canadian legislators who have refused our just rights to us Catholics, either seem by no means animated with the desire of giving justice to those whose rights are sacrificed, or show primitive ignorance of their duty. If it is a defect of ignorance let us ardently wish that at the first, opportunity, the Canadian people will send back home the members having no knowledge of their duty, and this without distinction of parties whether they be Grits or Tories.

It is a fact the more painful to note, that in a few years it is the second time that the rights of the Catholic minority in regard to separate schools are being ignored. However, if we would cast a glance at the Constitution of Canada, we would see that it was the will and wish of the Fathers of Confederation to grant all just rights to minorities and to respect them by all they held dear in the world. And the same spirit of toleration, peace and harmony, with which the Fathers of Confederation were possessed in 1867 was the predominant note some time before,—in 1863 when in the province of Ontario was founded the separate school system that we now claim for our Catholic brethren in the west. These two facts taken side by side among so many others clearly prove to us that the idea which was brought into the deliberations of years ago was that all citizens of Canada, irrespective of creed should have their rights preserved.

What a striking difference between fifty years ago and today ! Formerly it was the spirit of justice, equity and the strong's protection of the weak; today the spirit of justice and inequity. *la raison du plus fort est la meilleure parce que je m'appelle lion.* This is the principle of our rulers today, well seconded, unfortunately, by the former administration, as the past was not to be denied "so as to be logical with ourselves." What principle compared with that of the Fathers of Confederation. In 1867, was understood and admitted the natural right that a father of a family has in regard to the education of his children; then it was agreed that such a right was inalienable, to interfere with it directly or indirectly really was a social crime, as it was encroaching upon the paternal society, prescribed in the union of man and woman in view of the education of their offspring, that the right of a father of a family in regard to the education of his children was itself the foundation of the existence of this family, established under his authority. And now "*quantum mutatus ab illo tempore!*" The Latin poet has said, "*Alia tempora, alii mores.*"

Without fear or remorse, without respect for paternal authority, they attempt, or rather take away this right. These principles of the Fathers of Confederation should have been the guides of our present legislators; they should have followed the steps of their forbears, they should have retained in themselves the sentiment of allurements to ministerial favors, and at the same time bind themselves, before the will of their leaders to the right as well as to the left; they should have answered the call of their conscience which was dictating to them to walk in the path of duty, that is, the sentiment of equity, integrity and wisdom, should have guided them in the making of this law, as in any other whose principal aim is to protect the weak against the encroachments of the strong. Protestants or Catholics, as representatives of the people, were in duty bound to give to every one what was his due by law, natural as well as written, without being compelled to raise their voices to obtain justice. Can one really have the hope of

making a nation great and strong on such foundations? Can one hope to have peace and harmony between the different religious sects of Canada, if the weak can no longer rely on those whose duty it is to protect them? Indeed no, it is not in sowing seeds of discord here and there, in sacrificing the rights of the minority, in suppressing the natural and sacred rights that the Canadian people of different races and of different creeds will be united into one strong, peaceful and compact nation.

For reasons which are rather pretences, those on both sides of the House of Commons who have in hand the future of our country, bluntly neglect their duty as representatives of the people, unjustly sacrificing rights which are admitted by all, pressing the written law without caring for the natural law, thinking that in this way an integral nation will be built.

One will perhaps, object that the question has been settled to the satisfaction of all by the Manitoba Legislature. Certainly, I admit that the Roblin Government has done something, but has it settled the question to universal satisfaction, as it is claimed in certain circles. Have the Catholics of Manitoba been given all the rights that are due them? Emphatically, no; and Mgr. Langevin, Archbishop of St. Boniface, who is unquestionably the authorised voice of the western Catholics regarding separate schools, has answered in the negative. "I am not satisfied," said he recently, "as the amendments introduced are very limited, and the question not being yet settled, the fight must be continued."

For us young men who are at the beginning of our career, what a lesson should we draw from the recent fight between the defendants and opponents of the right, between the Catholics on the one side, and the false Catholics and Protestants on the other! Let this lesson be useful that it may enable us to draw practical conclusions of organization and struggle for the future!

Yes, according to the expression of the Archbishop of St. Boniface, let us pursue the fight, we young men of today, hope of our religion tomorrow, let us bravely take arms and march by the side of

those—so few alas—who have either raised their voices in parliament or voted against the adoption of this unjust law. Let us remember from our very youth that the principle of honors and riches is secondary in public life, and that those honors and riches create for those who hold them obligations and responsibilities which they cannot discharge without troubling their consciences. Let us not lose our time in vain recriminations, but let us act; let us help by our young and vigorous co-operation those who undertake the defence of the rights of our religion; let us not have patience with the timid and fearful, as was the sad spectacle a few months ago. Let us follow the wise teaching that we have received, and we will never flinch from duty, never sacrifice our rights for paltry political favors. Let us, then, ever work without cease and if our efforts are not crowned with success let us remember that glory is not in success but in the efforts and finally let us remember that to work for the right is working for God, for the right can be violated but shall never die.

LUCIEN GOSSELIN, '12



Laugh and the world laughs with you ;
Weep, and you weep alone ;
For this solid old earth must borrow its mirth,
It has trouble enough of its own.

Sing, and the hills will echo it ;
Sigh, and it's lost on the air ;
For they want full measure of all our pleasure,
But nobody wants your care.

Feast, and your halls are crowded ;
Fast, and they pass you by ;
Succeed and give, and they let you live ;
Fail, and they let you die.