

The Examiner.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND NEWS.

EDWARD WHELAN]

This is true Liberty, when Free-born Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free.—EURIPIDES.

[EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

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Literature.

THE FATAL TRICK.

Upon one evening a party of collegians and young bloods of the town had met together at my rooms to play and carouse. In fact, it was a regular meeting of the hunters, who assembled twice every week. We kept it up jollily until midnight, having in that time managed to get full of Bacchus, when Somers proposed that we should sally forth and astonish the town by some well-planned and well directed piece of mischief. Without any one of us having a very clear conception of our action or intentions, we hailed the proposition with drunken rapture, and started forth.

A travelling menagerie had arrived in town the day before, and among the wonders was a young bear. The poor animal had been so well beaten, that he became very humble, and acquired a number of amusing tricks. Of this we were all aware, having visited the menagerie the day before. Just as we passed the spot where the animals were confined, it occurred to me what great sport it would be to capture young Bruin, and place him in the chemical lecture room, to astonish, on the next day, the professor and the class.

No sooner had I made the proposition to this effect, than it was adopted, and all volunteered to carry it into execution. The tent or pavilion which covered the beasts was erected in the yard of the principal tavern. The cages, each containing one or more animals, were iron grated boxes, standing on wheels, by means of which they had been dragged into town. They were arranged around the interior of the tent, forming a circular array of wood and iron. Not imagining that any one would disturb the animals, the showmen and inmates of the tavern left the tents entirely unwatched. Thus we were afforded a clear field in which to execute our scheme. After several of our number had been posted as sentinels, the rest crept in under the canvas and entered the arena. It was some time before we could, in the deep darkness of the place, identify the cage in which our friend Bruin had been put to sleep. After stumbling over divers things which lay scattered about, and peering here and there in the dark, we found the object of our search. There, in a substantial cage with the dim outline of the animal, his two white eyes flashed drops of fire at being aroused from his quiet slumber.

The next difficulty that occurred to us was the mode of conveying him to the college, which was several hundred yards distant. Some of the revellers proposed that we should throw a halter around his neck, and so drag him along.

We objected to it, not from any personal fear, since we had arrived at that point at which one is oblivious of danger, but lest we should be seen by some late straggler, and have our fun spoiled. A better plan was, after much scheming, devised, and one which met with universal acquiescence.

In the tavern yard stood a water hog-head, with a sliding lid, fastened by means of a hasp and staple. We had only to roll this in, slide down the box from the wheels, open the door immediately in front of the hog-head, and drive the animal in. We could then push down the lid of the cage, secure it by means of a rope passed through the staples, and roll our prisoner and prison house to the college.

No sooner was this suggested than we hastened to put it into execution. The cage, with our united efforts, was slid quietly down from the wheels—Bruin growling all the while with anger—the hog-head was rolled in and placed upon end in front of the cage, and the animal stirred up with our canes. With a terrific yell he rushed in, and we closed the lid suddenly down upon him, fastening it at the same time in a secure manner. The yell of the bear roared the other animals, and our ears were regaled for the next ten minutes with a variety of hideous sounds that wakened fearfully the sleeping echoes of the night. The animal in the hog-head growled, and his voice came like distant thunder, so deafened was it by the wood in which he lay. His fellows had no incumbances to their voices, and they howled as clearly as though they had been in their native forests.

Fearful of being discovered, we remained quiet for some time, holding our breath in suspense. But no one disturbed, or thought of disturbing us. The animal often started a chorus of strange noise during the night, and the keepers, thinking nothing unusual to be the matter, merely cursed the unruly brutes for destroying the unity of their rest, and turning back, went to sleep again.

As soon as quiet was restored, we slit a hole in the canvas, for we were afraid to emerge by the aperture which faced the tavern, rolled our hog-head through the yard to the back gate. This we unfastened, and passing into the road, started at a quick rate for our spot of destination. Over and over went the hog-head, the animal within growling at the rough treatment he experienced, and we nearly convulsed with laughter at the uncouthness of the noise which he made.

At length we arrived at the back part of the college, when one of our party climbed over the wall, and unfastened the gate. We rolled in our prize to the back door of the laboratory, which was the place where our professor of chemistry lectured. We found that in consequence of the narrowness of the passage through the door the hog-head would not enter. Such being the case, we were about to start the animal through the open door, when an idea more redolent of fun struck the fancy of Somers. Back of the lecture room was a small apartment containing odds and ends, and which was not visited, perhaps, once a month. He said rightly, that if we placed Bruin in this apartment he would not be likely to be discovered until some time, when the noise he would be apt to make, attracting attention, the plot would be readily brought to a crisis. We joined our strength, and upon our shoulders up went the hog-head, until it was placed on a level with the window. A light young fellow, the smallest of the party, climbed up, hoisted up the window, and slipped up the lid of the cage. We shook the hog-head violently, but at first to no purpose. The animal was thoroughly frightened, and lay still or with only an occasional growl. We shook it again and he started. There was but one possible mode of progression, which was straight forward—and the brute gave a spring through the window. There was a crash of glass, a howl, and then the terrified animal crouching in the corner, remained silent. Our little companion closed the sash and leaped down. We rolled the hog-head up into a corner of the yard, and returning to our rooms, continued our revelry till near daylight.

It was about noon when I awoke. I hurried on my clothes, passed a wet towel around my head, swallowed some soda water, and afterwards a cup of coffee, and then hastened to the college. It was the hour of professor of chemistry, and I entered the room just as they had commenced to descend upon the subject. The class were wrapt in attention—for the lecturer was an able man, and was treating upon 'Light,'

a matter of interest, and capable of beautiful illustration. He had scarcely finished his short eloquent exordium, before we heard the crash of bottles, and a low, startling growling in the next room. The professor started, and stopped a moment, while those of the class not in the secret, looked at each other in astonishment. There was a pause of a few seconds' duration, and then the professor proceeded.

I began to feel alarmed, as I remembered what had been done the night before. Under ordinary circumstances, there was no danger to be apprehended. The bear was tame enough, and had been whipped until he had imbibed a proper sense of the superiority of man. But from the sounds, I judged that Bruin had worked himself into the room, only separated from us by a thin partition, full of windows, in which we kept the various drugs used in illustrating experiments. There were a great many carbons and bottles of acid in that room. Should he overcast any of these, and their contents touch his skin, he would be apt to break through the windows of the apartment, and do some mischief before we could secure him. By the looks of my companions, I saw they entertained the same fears.

There was another crash and growl. The professor stopped again, and the class looked around in dismay. Those who were acquainted with the noise could scarcely keep their countenance. In spite of the alarm under which they labored, there was something so ludicrous in the growl, especially when we figured to ourselves the coming consternation of the class, that we could hardly refrain from laughing outright. The professor, who could not tell from whence the sound proceeded, and thought it a trick of the class, reproved them severely, and then continued his lecture. "Gentlemen," said he, "prepare for a brilliant experiment; I will show you a most startling effect."

"And he did! Hark! there was a sudden crash as if every bottle in the case had been destroyed at once—a smoke rose up—there was a terrible howl, that made the blood curdle and the marrow thrill—and, through the frail glass—Father of truth! we had mistaken the cage—there leaped forth, infuriated with the burning liquid which streamed over him—horror—an untamed royal tiger!"

No words can describe the consternation of the class. Petrified by horror—motionless—there we sat. Not a muscle quivered, so rigid were we with intense fear. It was our preservation. Maddened with the pain, the animal rushed on with terrific bounds, and meeting with no obstacle, passed down the stairs into the great hall. There he leaped and rolled and howled in his agony, and the eldest daughter of our janitor, coming with a message, unwittingly entered. She screamed and fled. The tiger, frantic with the acid which was eating into his very flesh, heeled her not. On he passed, and the girl lived. Better had she died, for never again shone the light of reason in those vacant eyes. From that day forth she was a gibbering, incurable idiot.

On passed the tiger, on! out through the streets, with the people flying to every side for shelter—past his old prison, where the keepers stood wondering at his escape. On he went, while behind him, before and around him, rose the mingled cry of men, women and children—"the tiger! the tiger!"

At the extremity of the main street a traveller was riding quietly on his horse. He heard the noise behind him, and casting his eyes around saw the cause. He spurred his horse, who started, snorting with terror, for he saw the coming of the mighty animal as well as his master. It was in vain. The tiger noted not the man. He only saw the terrified steed. One leap—the distance was just saved—and he put his claws into the hind quarters of the horse, which unmindful of his double burden, rushed on, bearing his fearful load as though it were but a feather's weight. The man received no hurt. With presence of mind and coolness most determined—for it resulted from despair—he drew his bowie knife from his bosom, and with one stroke buried it to the hilt in the tiger's neck. The spinal marrow of the royal brute was severed and he died on the instant. But he did not release his hold.—Still with the death gripe he clung to his place, his eyes glassy and glaring and his claws sunk deep into the flesh. On went the horse, snorting, plunging and rearing, in mingled pain and terror—on he went until, exhausted by loss of blood and fatigue, he fell prostrate. Those who came that way an hour after, cautiously and timidly, saw the three stretched together. They stole up—lo! the horse and tiger were dead, and over their lifeless forms was the traveller, insensible, though alive, and still grasping in his hand the friendly knife.

Colonial Legislature.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

FRIDAY, March 20.

AFTERNOON SITTING.

THE BIBLE QUESTION.

(Continued.)

Hon. Mr. MOONEY had not intended to speak on the subject under discussion; but when he saw so much sophistry and so much quibbling on the part of some hon. members in the opposition, he thought he would say something too. In all his legislative career, he had never heard such language before. The hon. member (Hon. Mr. Palmer) with his party had been advocates for the passing of a law enforcing the total abstinence principle, "touch not, taste not, handle not; but they had failed on that dodge; and the poor Archdeacon had talked the teeth out of his head, yet they had failed. After their defeat in the House, he had scarcely time to get his hat before they were off to try what sort of a taste the spirits had. Such sophistry and duplicity on the part of those hon. gentlemen made him almost feel ashamed that he was a man. To think that they would submit to use such low, grovelling expressions, and to raise such things and set man against man, was absurd. Where was that in the Bible? The hon. member Mr. Palmer, rose up as tall as any man; but he, Hon. Mr. Mooney, bet a pound that he would bring a little girl, only sixteen years of age, who had never attended school, and she would surpass that hon. gentleman with all his Blackstone knowledge, and the hon. member for Georgetown, Mr. T. Heath Haviland, in the knowledge of the Bible, and would repeat by rote more than either of them. What a mass of hypocrisy! God forgive him! He would never resort to the word of God to carry out a political purpose. Had it not been for the Protestants of this country, he would never have been on the floor of that House; and were the demand made just, he would be right in supporting the application of the Protestants. He himself had come from the land of strife, and he had lived amongst Protestants, and with a man belonging to an Orange Lodge, and he had never disputed with him—never had as much as an angry word with that man. He (Hon. Mr. Mooney) left Ireland when he was twenty-four years of age, and he had never received a hurt there, except that in kicking a ball he had hurt one of his toes; and there never was a word of dispute about the Bible, when colporteurs were sent to convert them. What would come out

of the present agitation? Nothing but raising bad feelings in the community, and it would do no good to the country. Protestants were the majority of his constituents; why did they not apply to him on the subject? Were he not able to occupy his place in the House, and represent his constituents when the majority of them were Protestants, he was prepared to resign his seat in the House. He would not go and sow the seeds of discord and strife in the Island, which he believed was the purpose for which certain parties had raised agitation, striving to set man against man, and excite an animosity between Catholics and Protestants. Where in the Holy Scriptures would be found precepts for such conduct? There they would find the precept: "Love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourself;" That was the way of getting to the place where they all desired to go. He was a Roman Catholic, and he wished, to allow every man to believe what he thought proper, and to go to whatever place of religious worship he pleased. He had never heard his priests say, to hate Protestants; and he had been instructed to hate no man, but to be kind and civil to all men. That was the doctrine which was instilled into the minds of Catholics at the present moment.

Hon. Mr. PALMER said, if no hon. member said anything more to the point than the hon. member, they might as well listen to the barking of dogs. What did he mean when he jumped up there to speak to the question? did he not think it his duty to make some little use of the reason his Maker had given him? What in the earth had all that balderdash to do with the question before the committee—accusing some parties of being hypocrites, and of endeavoring to raise up dissension? Who was the individual—for heaven's sake—that all those accusations came from? Who was the man? when we take a survey of him—and his intellectual capacity? What had all that buffoonery and nonsense to do with the question before the committee relating to the petitions concerning the schools? No man had candor or honesty but him! All for the benefit of the people's too; nothing for himself! a man who never took the people's money for any office! That hon. member had better look to himself, and see if he had not arguments coming from his own pocket more than from his mouth whilst he was declaiming against others for being actuated by selfish motives. It would be folly to descend to answer such remarks.

Hon. COL. TREASURER said, he rose merely on a point of order. The hon. member Hon. Mr. Palmer had accused Hon. Mr. Mooney of buffoonery and not speaking to the question; but he had not retorted in worse language than that used by Hon. Mr. Mooney in his observations.

Hon. Mr. PALMER replied that he had retorted, and had a right to retort. Would any hon. member sit there and be assailed with such accusations as those made by the hon. member, Mr. Mooney?

Hon. Mr. MOONEY would show that the hon. member, Mr. Palmer, was always opposed to consistency. In the year 1852 when the Education Bill was introduced he proposed an amendment for reducing the tax on real estate in Charlottetown for the education of the Charlottetownians. Was it not a wonder that he did not then propose something to the present question?

Mr. MACINTOSH said, from all he had been listening to since the discussion commenced, he had not heard a single argument against the Education Bill as not working well since it had been passed into a law; and he thought everything tending to create bad feelings would be suppressed. He believed the Education Bill of all Bills ever passed by the House, had given general satisfaction; it was found to work well, and it should be left alone. He did not intend to say much on the subject under discussion, but he was opposed to introducing anything which was not in the Act. If any one had been compelled to abandon the use of the Scriptures in school, then there might be some reason to change the Act; but the proposed amendment would provide that the reading of the Scriptures must be attended to. When every one was at perfect liberty to use the Scriptures in school, in the name of common sense, let it be done. He was determined to oppose every amendment to the Act, except the one relating to the schools of Georgetown.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN.—Mr. Chairman, I shall vote for the amendment proposed by the Hon. the Speaker, and will then vote against the whole clause so sought to be amended. But I must crave your attention to state briefly, and, I trust, in a spirit of moderation worthy of the question, the reasons which induce me to adopt the course I have indicated. After all the agitation and misapprehension which have been caused by the discussion of the Bible question out of doors, I indulged the hope that corrector views would prevail in this House than some of those I have heard expressed during the debate. I do not see how any hon. member can doubt the fact, that the whole of the agitation now existing is the result of a serious and most unaccountable misunderstanding. A considerable effort has been made to remove it, but there are some parties in the community who appear to be bent upon sowing discord—who will not, if they can help it, suffer the public to be rightly informed on the question at issue, but who go on from day to day labouring to involve the settlement of that question in difficulty, by mystifying all the facts connected with it. Whether this extraordinary conduct proceeds from an inherent love of discord, or from a desire to serve a political purpose, I am not prepared to say, nor do I care; for in spite of all the efforts of the designing, I do believe that the people of this Island are too liberal and enlightened in their views to become parties, for any length of time, to a religious crusade, and that the present excitement will shortly subside, leaving no trace of its operation but that which may be found in the disgrace that will inevitably attach to those who have fomented it. I did not, I confess, expect to find their machinations encouraged in this House; but the debate has taken such a turn as to justify, in a great measure, the course pursued by the parties to whom I allude, and may possibly lead strangers to the Colony to suppose that attempts have been made by the head of one religious denomination to deprive all the others of their religious liberty. To meet this most fallacious view of the case, I hold a resolution in my hand, which I shall presently offer; and as it must be admitted to contain nothing but the facts, its proposal will obviate the necessity of reviewing at any length some of the arguments and statements urged by gentlemen who have preceded me. Permit me, however, first to ask what is the particular circumstance which has given rise to the agitation that has been created in regard to the introduction of the Bible, as a class-book, in our public schools? I shall be referred, I presume, for an answer to this question, to the letter addressed by his Lordship the Bishop of Charlottetown, at the close of the last year, to the Secretary of the Board of Education. And what is the purport or spirit of that letter? This question I shall presently answer myself. Throughout the whole of the discussion which that letter has provoked, not one of those who have assailed his Lordship has had the fairness to put an honest and legitimate construction on the expression of his views. But, on the contrary, we have been every day met with the cry, that it was the design of the Bishop to suppress the reading of the Bible in our public schools. Now, his Lordship's letter very clearly shews that he had no such design. That letter was written in consequence of some injudicious remarks having been made and published by the Visitor of Schools, at the inauguration of our Normal School—that officer having assumed authority on the occasion referred to, to propound rules for the regula-

tion of the Normal School,—one of which was, that the reading and exposition of Bible truths should form part of the daily exercises. This announcement by a public functionary at the head of our educational establishment, as Inspector of Schools and a member of the Board of Education, was of so general a character, that his Lordship was easily led into the error, that if the Inspector could prescribe rules for one school there was nothing to prevent his doing the same thing for them all. And could the Bishop entertain any doubt as to the kind of religious instruction to be imparted in those schools? He well knew that the Catholic version of the Bible would not be the one introduced, and well knowing that nearly half the children attending our public schools belong to the Church over which he exercises spiritual authority, it was not too much for his Lordship to apprehend, that a system of proselytism would be attempted; and influenced by such an apprehension, it was clearly his duty to interfere. This duty he discharged in the most unobtrusive manner,—he stated, in his letter to the Board of Education, the grounds of his apprehension—he pointed out the evil consequences of infusing the religious element into our mixed schools; and, in that spirit of Christian forbearance and toleration for which his Lordship is so highly distinguished, deprecated the adoption of a system of instruction which would so certainly disturb the harmony that now happily subsists between the different religious denominations. Under these impressions, he asked the Board of Education to reconsider the subject, and he suggested that it would be far better to adopt the *godless* system—such as is pursued in the National School of Ireland—(using the word *godless* in the sense in which it is generally used in reference to those schools)—than a system which would necessarily deprive nearly one-half the rising generation of the benefits of a free education. Such was the purport of the Bishop's letter, and I cannot see how any reasonable man could find fault with it—taking into consideration the shadowy lights in which it was written. It is true that his Lordship committed an error in supposing that the Bible—meaning, of course, the Protestant version—was to be forced as a class-book into our public schools; but this error was caused, as I have already shown, by the extra-official assumptions of an individual who has since been disingenuous enough to take improper advantage of his Lordship's error. But the Bishop having discovered that his apprehensions were unfounded, did he not acknowledge his error in the most unreserved and unequivocal manner, by addressing a note to the Hon. Colonial Secretary, in which he stated, that having received full explanations from the Colonial Secretary, there was no disposition on the part of the Government to prescribe *new* regulations for the management of our mixed schools, he was perfectly satisfied? Why, then, should an attempt be made to mislead the public into the belief, that the Catholic Bishop has sought to invade the conscientious rights of his Protestant fellow subjects? We all know that the public meeting held at the Temperance Hall on the 13th February last, under the direction of certain Protestant clergymen, was called for the purpose of arousing public opinion against the Catholic Bishop and the Church in this Colony of which he is the head ecclesiastic. At that meeting his letter was referred to, and censured in the strongest terms by some of the speakers, but not one of them had the candour to admit that that letter was virtually cancelled by the one subsequently addressed to Mr. Coles. A great deal of nonsense was uttered at that meeting about the demoralizing tendencies of "Popery," (as the religion of one-half of our population was insultingly described), and much vehement denunciation was expended on the despotism alleged to prevail in Catholic countries; but what this had to do with our social, religious or political condition, in this country, the reverend orators did not condescend to enlighten their hearers. There was one circumstance connected with this meeting which I cannot easily forget, and that was the presence of several individuals, whose character for probity and uprightness does not stand remarkably high in this community. Their zeal on behalf of the Bible, and their enthusiasm in defence of the Protestant religion, were such as to lead many persons to hope that they had "turned over a new leaf," and would become better members of society than their previous conduct proved them to be. I am willing to give credit for sincerity to most of the Protestant ministers who have placed themselves at the head of the present movement, and who were mainly instrumental in getting up the meeting to which I have referred. I think they are acting under the impulse of an honest, though very injudicious zeal; but I think that any person of common sense and understanding, cannot, in his heart, acknowledge that most of those laymen, who are rendering themselves conspicuous in the present agitation, are influenced by any other motives and prejudices than those which are wholly foreign to religion. The simulated zeal for the Bible, observable in the conduct of such persons, is the greatest obstacle that can be presented to the circulation of the Scriptures, and cannot fail to cover with suspicion, and bring into disrepute, all others who associate with them.

Now, Sir, let us suppose that we should give effect to the wishes of the petitioners, and make the Bible a compulsory class-book in our mixed schools, what advantages would we confer on society in Prince Edward Island? Does any one suppose that sounder morality and more true religion would be the result of such legislation? If any one does, I do not envy his credulity. Countries which have tried the religious element in their public schools have not been more fortunate in cultivating public virtue and morality than those countries that wisely leave the inculcation of religion to those places which are specially set apart for its ministrations, and to the domestic hearth. We have had a system of public instruction in this Colony for many years, and for the last five or six years the freest and most liberal system known to any of the British Provinces. I certainly think we are not behind our fellow subjects abroad on the score of religion; and why should we now seek to disturb the public harmony, and impair the efficiency of our educational system, by setting Catholics and Protestants against each other on matters of religious faith? To illustrate the impracticability of making the Bible a class book in mixed schools, let us suppose an individual case. Here, in a particular settlement, one half the children in attendance at the public school are Catholics—the other half are Protestants,—the teacher is a Protestant—the majority of the trustees are Protestants,—we may readily conclude that when there is a rule to have the Bible read and expounded by the Teacher, the Protestant version will be the one selected—(it is absurd to suppose that the two versions of the Bible, Protestant and Catholic, will be used in the one school under the direction of the one school-master),—well, one half the children are compelled to read or to listen to a Book which they are taught to believe is an entirely incorrect version of the Holy Scriptures. Does this compulsory attention encourage a veneration for