

## The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle

SIXTY YEARS OF CATHOLIC  
JOURNALISTIC ACTION

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The history of any newspaper is mainly the story of its editors, so the history of *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle, or True Witness*, as it was generally known, is that of the life of one man, George Edward Clerk, its founder, and of the lives of his successors. To him is due the establishment of the paper which endured so long, and which accomplished so much good during its existence, because it was based on high principles established by Mr. Clerk and closely followed by his successors.

A few facts regarding this very remarkable man, whose career I sketched in a previous paper, are necessary here.

George Edward Clerk was the second son of the Right Honorable Sir George Clerk, 6th baronet, of Penicuik, County Edinburgh, Scotland. His family was noble and patrician, the title existing since the middle of the 17th century. He was educated at Eton, became a midshipman and later lived for about 10 years in Australia. The circumstances of his conversion to Catholicism are remarkable. He was baptised in Scotland in 1847, and came to Montreal in the autumn of 1848 with the intention of stopping only a few weeks before returning to Australia; however, he remained, at first with no definite object in view, and in Montreal he found his "vocation" and did not again leave Canada, except for a few short journeys.

In November, 1849, he married Marie Louise Dupuis, of Laprairie, and had a large family of sons and daughters.

He had early identified himself with the Church in Montreal, being active in the St. Vincent de Paul Confraternity almost from his arrival. With his friend and confessor, Rev. M. Laroque, later Bishop of St. Hyacinthe, he frequently had discussions regarding the anti-Catholic attitude of the English press in Montreal, – and, at the instigation of that alert organizer, Bishop Bourget, he undertook to establish and edit a new paper for English-speaking Catholics.

In his personal diary which he kept from January, 1849, until April, 1875 – a few months before his death – and which I have had the privilege of reading, he says:

March 18, 1850.—Called on Mons. Larocque in the afternoon and had a long conversation with him respecting some articles in the "Witness."

April 12.-Met some gentlemen at Mr. Sadlier's with whom I had a long talk. about the possibilities of establishing a Catholic journal.

In June at Bishop Bourget's request he drafted a prospectus, and on June 16 he went to Quebec, where he "called on the Archbishop's secretary... skewed my draft to the Rev. Mr. McMahon, who quite approved. He is very enthusiastic in the cause and seems very sanguine of success."

The following weeks were occupied in distributing copies of the prospectus, buying a press and type, making up a subscription list, and preparing the first issue of "The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle printed and published every Friday by J. Gillies, for G. E. Clerk, editor and proprietor," which appeared on August 16, 1850.

On the editorial page of the first issue of the paper we find the prospectus prepared in June, and Mr. Clerk's first editorial, which deals with an attack on the Grey Nunnery. While Clerk here states that "the editor of the Montreal *Witness* flatters himself that a Catholic paper is to be established solely for the purpose of opposing him" – it is true that one main purpose of *The True Witness* was to combat the virulent influence of the Montreal *Witness*, which in all its long career, from 1845 until it was recently discontinued, was unjust in its reference to Catholics and to things Catholic.

When Mr. Clerk drafted the prospectus of the new Catholic organ he proposed to publish, he outlined for himself a wide and definite program – a program which he rigorously followed throughout his whole career as sole editor of *The True Witness*, during the 25 years which began in 1850 and ended with his death in 1875. We quote his first editorial:

To our Catholic fellow citizens in Canada.

It has often been the subject of wondering remark, to many of us, of sincere regret, that, whilst our Protestant fellow-citizens, of almost every denomination, have each their avowed organ, through which they can express their wants and feelings, and advocate their own peculiar views of what they consider truth, the Catholics alone, that is, that numerous portion of the community, who professing the Catholic faith, speak the English language, should not possess, throughout the entire Province, a single publication in the columns of which they can give utterance to their indignant protest, against the illiberal, and often libellous charges with which they stand accused. That, whilst every recurring week brings back the same stereotyped calumnies, and blasphemous mockery, of all

that as Catholics we love, of all that as members of Christ's Church we esteem most sacred, not one voice should be raised in defence of the teaching of our holy religion.

As men, as citizens, we are insulted by the meditated invasion upon the sacred rights of property, by the cry raised for their destruction.

As intelligent beings, we are insulted by the taunts of mental blindness, of bigotry, and of superstition:—of mental blindness, because, in our researches after truth, we refuse to be guided by the new light of the conventional;—of bigotry, because, believing in the unity of truth, we can recognize no Church of God save one:—of superstition, because we submit our reason to the teaching of that Church, and are content to adore, where we cannot comprehend.

As Christians, our feeling, are continually outraged by the foul charges of idolatry. whilst the most solemn offices of our religion, are made the subjects of the scorner's unhallowed mirth...

And, therefore, with the blessing of God, we will reply: not to offend others, but to defend ourselves.

We will endeavour to show that we are not necessarily fools, because we are Catholics: that humble faith is no more the fruit of ignorance, than infidelity is the sign of wisdom: that we are not idolaters, because we worship, as of old the martyrs worshipped: that we do not dishonor God, because we honor His saints: and that we are not wanting in love and adoration to Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, because we also offer the homage of our love and veneration to his blessed Mother...

And, by the help of God, we will no longer tamely submit to have our religion reviled — our holy things profaned — our clergy insulted — and the meek inmates of our religious communities exposed to the ribald taunts, and cowardly insinuations of the infidel or the fanatic.

We will endeavour to show, that it is owing to these much abused institutions, and to them alone, that this country is not, like Protestant England, burdened with a daily increasing mass of pauperism, and its hideous attendant crime, — that these establishments offer the only effectual provision for the suffering members of the community. And whilst gratefully acknowledging the benefits we derive from the equitable administration of the laws under which we have the happiness to live, we will still contend, that it is chiefly owing to the blessing of God upon the teaching of the Clergy that peace and order, religion and mortality, continue to flourish in this country, to a degree unknown in others, blessed perhaps, with a more fertile soil, a more genial clime, and more richly endowed with the elements of a material prosperity.

And, at the same time, we will always endeavour to avoid giving any just cause of offence to others. In as far as in us lies, we will ever

endeavour to maintain peace and charity with all men; and, in any disputes, in which we may happen to be involved, if we cannot boast of the wisdom of the serpent, we will at least try to imitate the gentle meekness of the dove.

With these sentiments, and for the purpose of carrying into effect the above-mentioned objects; it is proposed to start a Weekly Paper, to be edited at Montreal and entitled "The True Witness."

Although the True Witness will be essentially a religious publication, it is not intended that it should be so exclusively. Whilst no articles, inoffensive to true religion, sound morality or to Christian charity will be excluded from its columns, yet as its primary object is avowedly religious, the greater part of its pages will be devoted to topics connected with religion...

To explain what are the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and what her teaching to her children, — to declare what as Catholics we hold, and what we reject, — to repel the charges of idolatry, and of superstition, brought against us — these will be our objects, these the end of our efforts.

Religious intelligence from Rome, from France, Great Britain, Ireland and the U.S. gladdening the reader with the prospect of the increase and continual triumph of our holy faith. Extracts from the writings of Catholic Divines — translations of interesting passages from the early Fathers — a full account of the toils and victories of those glorious athletes of the Faith, who, for the love of Christ devote themselves to the conversion of the heathen, a record of all the ecclesiastical changes, promotions, and conferments, together with a detail of the proceedings of the different branches of that generous society of temperance will principally compose the religious matter which it is proposed to lay before the public.

Catholicity is of no nation, of no particular shade of politics. The "True Witness" therefore will not be a political paper, in the ordinary acceptation of the term. Confining ourselves to the discussion of those measures, the effects of which may be advantageous or prejudicial to the moral and religious well being of the community — the acts, and not the persons of the members of the Ministry, will alone form the subjects of our censures and our praise. Ardently attached ourselves to the land which gave us birth, we cannot but admire the love of country in others, and the respect which we would demand for our nationality, will be a pledge for the respect with which we will ever treat the laws and language of those whose religion is also our religion.

But if sparing of politics of our own, we will endeavour to make amends by giving copious extracts from other periodical publications, both of Europe and of the U.S. These will appear transferred to our pages without note or comment, with out any expression of approval or of

blame.

The conditions of Ireland must ever be a subject of the deepest interest to all Catholics especially to those who speak the English language. And as we look for support, in a great measure, to the generous efforts of our Irish brethren, it is but fair that a very considerable portion of the political intelligence thus extracted, should be of a nature to interest them; it is therefore proposed to borrow largely from the columns of the Irish papers.

Translations from, and notices of, foreign authors, together with extracts from the more amusing portions of the light literature of the day, will here also find their allotted place.

Arrangements will be made so that a full report of the proceedings of the Provincial Parliament, together with the latest intelligence from Europe, the U. S. and all parts of the Province, may be constantly laid before our readers.

The merchant, the man of business will here also find a regular account of the state of the markets, domestic and foreign; and we trust, that by means of a respectable circulation in the rural districts, we may merit and obtain some share of their advertising favors.

It is intended that the "True Witness" shall be published of the same size and form as the other weekly papers of this Country, or the United States. The terms will be Two Dollars and a Half per annum, payable in advance, to our country subscribers, and Three Dollars to those in town. Advertisements will be inserted upon the usual terms.

The "True Witness" will be conducted and edited by Laymen, who alone will be responsible for every line and word of every article that it may contain. Whilst on the one hand, no articles of a purely religious or dogmatic character will be submitted to the public, without having been previously subjected to an Ecclesiastical censorship, so that our readers may be effectually secured against the danger of having heretical propositions laid before them and have a sure guarantee as to the orthodoxy of our matter. So, on the other hand, if in the manner of treating any subject, harsh or unseemly expressions should occur, as such through inadvertence or momentary irritation may occur; then, be it clearly understood, that the blame, whole and undivided thereof, must rest upon the shoulders of the Laymen, by whom the paper will be avowedly conducted.

And now we trust we have sufficiently explained our objects, and the means by which we hope to obtain that support and encouragement which are necessary to ensure success; and therefore, would we call upon the Catholics of Canada, whose religion is dear unto them, to assist us with their literary and pecuniary contributions.

Especially, would we call upon Irish brethren for countenance and

support – by the love they bear to their own Green Isle, and to their Ancestral Faith – by the memory of the trials and persecutions they so oft have born in the cause of the truth. We would implore them to come forward now, and prove, that here in Canada, as in Ireland, and elsewhere, they are ever ready to do battle for their Church; always prepared to give every man a reason for the faith that is in them.

Respectfully, would we solicit the patronage and encouragement of our Ecclesiastical superiors – the benediction of our Bishops – the prayers and good offices of all the Clergy – their approval when right, their reproof and correction when in error – the benefit of their paternal admonitions and ghostly counsels at all times. And above all, would we humbly ask the guidance and assistance of the Father of Lights; beseeching Him, from whom alone cometh every good counsel, and from whom every perfect work doth proceed, that He will deign to bless this our undertaking to the honour and glory of His name, and the good of His Christ; so that from Him every work of ours may away begin, and in Him, and by Him be happily ended. Still as Catholics, not ashamed of our religion, nor afraid of the sneers of our opponents, would we desire to place ourselves under the powerful protection and patronage of the ever Blessed Virgin Mother of God – calling upon her for help, in the form of words which the Church teaches:

Sancta Maria, Auxilium Christianorum, ora pro nobis.  
Montreal, June 18, 1858.

It was Mr. Clerk's ambition that his paper be one of ACTION, whose object, as he outlined it, was to refute the charges of error and superstition, and to inform Catholics. Evidently there was need for such a journal for action, and aggressive Catholic action.

Mr. Frank Sheed, of the Catholic publishing firm of Sheed & Ward, said in a conference last spring that G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc had done more for the Catholic Cause in England than any other persons of their generation. Mr. Sheed said, "You can't ignore a man who makes fun of you and of himself (as G. K. did) and you cannot ignore a man who is always angry about something (as Belloc)." Consequently Chesterton and Belloc were not ignored and Catholics in England were benefited, and non-Catholics informed, by their aggressiveness.

So too, many years before, G. E. Clerk could not be ignored. He combined the qualities of the ardent convert – as Chesterton – and the bellicose aggressiveness of Belloc. Catholics learned more of their religion, and non-Catholics, by his fearlessness in refuting the slightest slur against the Church or her institutions, became more enlightened, and newspapers ceased to publish the calumnies which they had been accustomed to print, the

Montreal *Witness* was the one exception. However during his editorship, Mr. Clerk forced the *Witness* to apologize or retract its statements on several occasions.

At first Mr. Clerk was editor and proprietor, with Mr. Gillies as printer publisher, but in 1859 the proprietorship was transferred to Mr. Gillies. Perhaps to the business acumen of Mr. Gillies may be attributed the wide-spread circulation enjoyed by the paper. In 1858, the number of subscribers was 2837 and in an issue of August of that year we find a list of authorized agents in 21 towns. Mr. Gillies made several trips to the Maritimes, the New England States and to Upper Canada in the business interests of the paper. All the Bishops of Canada, with each of whom G. E. Clerk was acquainted, sponsored the paper and to a certain extent subsidised it.

But Mr. Clerk assumed all the editorial work, which he accomplished alone. He received many English and U. S. papers and made the news extracts himself. In the issue of May 28, 1851, we find extracts from 14 newspapers of England, Ireland, United States, as well as those of Montreal and other points in Canada, namely: *The Shepherd of the Valley, Illustrated London News, Buffalo Commercial Advertisers, Catholic Telegraph, Weekly Despatch, Montreal Herald, Quebec Mercury, Boston Pilot, N. Y. Freeman's Journal, Dublin Nation, Northern Whig, Liverpool Mercury, Weekly News, Punch.*

A lengthy list indeed and one can imagine the prodigious labor involved – reading the periodicals and extracting the necessary items and frequently condensing them to serve the exigencies of space.

The issue of June 18, 1869, in the 19th annual volume, gives us, besides many local items and regular features, 32 short notes of Irish news, 22 from Great Britain, 20 of U.S.A., 5 – France, 4 – Spain, 7 – Italy, 1 – Austria, 1 – Prussia, 1 – North Germany, – also alert editorials on illegitimacy, tall talking and Anglican orders.

Mr. Clerk prepared each week copy for approximately 7 pages of the periodical, read proof and was ever on the lookout for material to serve the wishes of his readers, besides attending to the many trivial worries that beset a busy editor.

The wide field of his knowledge and of his interests is shown by a glance at the editorial headings over any one year.

The defence of the Sisters of the Grey Nunnery in the first issue, is an example of his vigorous style. He had a perfect command of English, he was, when necessary, bitingly sarcastic, but he never stooped to invective. Whenever a problem was under discussion he endeavored to make a definite “expose” of the situation, to make a clear outline of his method of attack and it was always his rule to go to the end of a discussion and to arrive at a definite decision.

Following is an example from the issue of October 18, 1850. “He who brings an accusation against another, and refuses, when called upon to give

names and dates and every particular, is a liar, a slanderer and a coward; and no man of common honesty will dare to contradict me."

Again in a later editorial (1859) speaking of the role of a Catholic journalist he says:

His duty is to speak the words of truth fully and fearlessly, without regard to those whom he may please, or whom he may offend by so doing. This course, if faithfully pursued, will no doubt gain him but few friends, and will inevitably raise up against him many enemies; yet if he cannot, or if he will not, pursue it steadily and consistently – better, far better, for his own honor, and for the interests of religion, that he should at once lay down his pen, and make over his functions to abler hands, and stouter hearts. A servile Catholic press – that is, a press that will submit to the degradation of being the tool, or "organ" of any man, or of any party – is the greatest curse and disgrace that can be inflicted upon a Catholic community.

George Edward Clerk felt that *The True Witness* had a mission to accomplish and he made the editing of the paper his life work. His success was evident in the widespread circulation of the paper among Catholics of Canada and even of the United States, and in the esteem with which his views were held by his confreres in the journalistic profession, for during his career he succeeded in changing the antagonistic tone of the non-Catholic press to one of tolerance and respect for Catholic rights.

His immediate successors in the editorial chair were men of the same mental calibre as himself but it would seem that Divine Providence wished the fulfillment of the promise of the prospectus that *The True Witness* would be conducted by laymen.

Father James J. Murphy, a brilliant young orator and theologian, mounted the editorial chair in November, 1875, a few weeks after Mr. Clerk's death. Tragedy enters our story here. Father Murphy and Father Lynch, both of whom had contributed to the paper under pseudonyms, were burned to death in a disastrous fire at Sault au Recollet on December 4, scarcely a month afterwards. It had been planned by these two to conduct a series of controversial letters to expound Catholic doctrine. Mr. Clerk had for several years followed a similar course in the secular papers of Montreal, continuing a discussion with his friend, Mr. Henry Gray – the father of Dr. Dunstan Gray, of Montreal – and himself an ardent convert.

The next editor, Reverend Dr. A. J. O'Reilly, Miss. Ap., the distinguished author of "The Martyrs of the Coliseum," relinquished his office after a few months to "return to the ranks of literature more congenial to his personal tastes."

Captain M. W. Kirwan, who guided the destinies of *The True Witness*

during the next three years, was Captain Commanding of a volunteer regiment in Montreal and an outstanding Irish scholar, and he gave to his editorial work the enthusiasm of his predecessors.

Shortly after Captain Kirwan assumed the editorship Mr. Gillies retired, and the management and proprietorship of the paper was taken over by Mr. M. C. Mullin. The following editorial tells of this and of a change in the publishing of the paper.

May 2, 1877. Mr. Gillies and the True Witness.

Twenty-seven years ago the True Witness was established by Mr. G. E. Clerk with Mr. Gillies as publisher. Since then the journal has had three editors, Mr. Clerk its founder – the late lamented Father Murphy, and Father O'Reilly. However, Mr. Gillies held on, and piloted the True Witness over periods of difficulty and danger...

Mr. Gillies though still connected with the True Witness is not in as good health as his many friends would wish to see him, and with the hope of recuperating, is going to Ireland where he will remain for a few weeks... The True Witness will in future be published on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The Wednesday edition will contain all the news of the week up to the date of publication as heretofore... The Saturday edition will be for city circulation and will contain the latest news up to midday on Saturday...

For several years attempts to establish an English Catholic daily had been made, and in 1878 they finally resulted in the appearance of *The Evening Post*. The notice in *The True Witness* reads:—

May 1, 1878. The new daily paper.

At last we are to have our daily paper. After many attempts and the long expectation of friends... A partnership has been formed between the editor and proprietor with three gentlemen of the city, by which the True Witness and the new daily paper are made a joint proprietary. The new paper will be called the "Evening Post" and it will be a commercial paper... independent in politics... The True Witness will become the weekly edition of the daily.

In June, 1878, we find that "the True Witness and Catholic Chronicle and weekly edition of the Evening Post is printed and published every Wednesday at 761 Craig Street, Montreal, by M. C. Mullin & Co., Proprietors."

Captain Kirwan remained editor from 1877 until 1879, and was followed by Mr. John C. Fleming. During this period there were frequent editorials regarding anti-Catholic statements in the Montreal *Witness*; contributions

of poetry, several from the pen of John C. Fleming himself; letters to the editor, under the heading "What the people say."

In November, 1879, the business carried on under the name of M. C. Mullin & Co. as proprietor and publisher of *The Evening Post* and *True Witness*, was transferred to the Post Printing and Publishing Co., of which Mr. John P. Whelan became Managing Director early in 1880.

The daily paper had a possible circulation of between 9000 and 10,000 copies. However, *The Evening Post* ceased publication in March, 1880, but was resurrected again in December to struggle along for a few more years.

*The True Witness*, still the weekly edition of the daily, reflected the policy of *The Post*. It became more political in tone, was very sympathetic to the cause of Irish Relief and the Irish Land Movement. Approximately two of its eight pages were filled with a variety of advertisements. We find poems contributed by J. K. Foran, then a university student, and the name of H. J. Cloran figures prominently as chairman of various committees.

The notorious "Post - McNamee" libel suit in which Mr. F. B. McNamee sued John P. Whelan for defamatory libel, resulted in the acquittal of Mr. Whelan mainly through the brilliant efforts of his counsel, C. J. Doherty, later the Right Honorable the Chief Justice of Canada. The reports of this unfortunate affair, which, unhappily, was connected with *The True Witness* through its publisher, appeared at length in its columns during many weeks of 1882.

However, with the appointment of a new editor *The True Witness* embarked on a new era of prosperity and influence, when Mr. Henry J. Cloran became editor-in-chief of *The Post* and *The True Witness*, on the resignation of Mr. Fleming towards the end of the year 1882.

Henry Joseph Cloran was born in Montreal, in 1855, son of Joseph Cloran and Ann Kennedy, natives of Ireland. He made his classical course at Montreal College and for three years studied at the College of St. Sulpice, in Paris, after which he visited Italy, Switzerland, France, England and Ireland. On his return to Canada he filled a professorship of English Literature at Montreal College, his Alma Mater. He then took a course in law at Laval and McGill Universities, receiving the degree of B.C.L. in 1882. At the close of his law studies he was offered the editorship of *The Post* and *The True Witness*. Mr. Cloran's educational background, his travel, his extensive stock of knowledge, eminently fitted him for a journalistic career which was crowned with marked success. He had a wide knowledge of the Irish question and of European politics, and by his cleverness and ability he made *The Post* the organ of Irish Canadian opinion. His editorials were widely reproduced and commented on in leading papers in Canada and United States and even in Europe.

When Henry J. Cloran assumed the editorship he embarked upon a career which made him one of Canada's outstanding public men. In 1885, he was chosen, jointly with M. Duhamel, to fill the position of secretary of the national movement inaugurated to secure the overthrow of Sir John A. Macdonald's government for maladministration of the North West Territories. He took a pronounced part in a mass meeting of 50,000 where he distinguished himself as an orator speaking in both French and English. He

addressed mass meetings in more than 40 counties and in, a short time became the most popular orator and one of the political lights of the Province of Quebec.

In 1887 he was called to the Bar and shortly afterwards was given an important post in the Provincial Government, and was later appointed Crown Prosecutor. He moved to Hawkesbury, Ontario, where he identified himself with agricultural and industrial interests. Many honors were accorded to him and he was finally called to the Senate by Lord Minto in June, 1903.

As editor of *The Post* and *True Witness*, Mr. Cloran championed the cause of the Half Breeds in the North West. He was an uncompromising Home Ruler and a defender of provincial rights and autonomy. While *The Post* was avowedly independent in politics, it was difficult for any daily paper to remain entirely impartial. Unfortunately, and unnecessarily, much of the political activity of *The Post* was reproduced in the *The True Witness*, thus violating the promises of Cler's prospectus and forgetting its mission of "a Catholic journal, independent in politics."

However, "in 1886, when the board of directors wished to give the support of the Post to certain Tory candidates in the general provincial election, the young editor declined to obey their mandate and rather than write one line inconsistent with his convictions, he threw up the editorship of the paper."

Again *The True Witness* was without an editor. It is possible that Mr. Carroll Ryan, who was at some time editor of *The Post*, may have conducted both papers following Mr. Cloran's resignation.

*The Post* ceased publication in 1888, but Mr. Whelan continued as proprietor of *The True Witness* until September, 1891, when in a lengthy editorial a change in the proprietorship was announced to the effect that *The True Witness* would be owned and conducted under the directorship of Mr. D. M. Quinn, who had been identified with the paper for a number of years.

Mr. Quinn introduced some new features, woman's domain, a children's column and notably a special souvenir number for St. Patrick's Day, and in January, 1892, he appointed Mr. J. K. Foran, a name bright in the annals of Canadian literature, as editor.

From October, 1892, until May, 1895, *The True Witness* was issued in small magazine form of 16 or 20 pages. This format gave more scope for editorial comment and notes, and this was Mr. Foran's "metier." On October 5, 1892, the editor states:

We have no intention of intruding upon the domain of the pulpit; but we believe in the "Apostolate of the Press." While the ordained representative of Christ stands upon the hill-top and like Moses of old, with hands extended to heaven, invokes the blessing of God, we the soldiers, in the ranks of Church Militant, will "fight the good fight" in the valley below – and fight with the assurance of victory!

Then began a series of editorial essays on Catholic doctrine and the liturgy which Mr. Foran wrote while he remained editor until 1896, during distinction of its [*True Witness*] contents and the breadth of its outlook".

James Kearney Foran was born in Aylmer, Ontario, the son of John Foran and Frances Kearney, both highly cultured descendants of distinguished Irish families. He was educated at St. Joseph's College, now Ottawa University, from which he received his B.A. degree, and then entered Laval University where after passing a brilliant examination, he was admitted to the legal profession in his 21st year. While at Laval he became "noted as a writer of poems, essays, and also commenced to acquire fame as a lecturer." He was equally conversant in the English and French, languages. In fact, the *first* of his several hundred public lectures was given in *French* in his 18th year. In his lectures he "preached the gospel of national unity in a style which charmed both English and French alike. He could make the most ordinary topic interesting." In June, 1894, he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters by the University of Ottawa, his Alma Mater.

As early as 1886 in speeches, and in his writings during all his career as editor, he championed the rights of French Canadians in Ontario in their efforts to preserve their language. He did this as a matter of duty and because he loved the French language.

Dr. Foran severed his connection with *The True Witness* in April, 1896, returned to the practice of law, was made Queen's Counsel, and later entered the Law Branch of the House of Commons.

His term as editor was the golden age of *The True Witness*. The paper had been established well and enjoyed a wide circulation, and Dr. Foran's gifts as poet, essayist and champion of Catholic and national rights added to its glory. It was not necessary for him to counteract malicious attacks of secular journals, as it had been the task of G. E. Clerk forty years before. Other English Catholic papers had appeared to defend the cause, and the aggressive and unrelenting work of the founder made Dr. Foran's work easier. Furthermore, he was very gentle and had the knack of making friends, and *The True Witness* remembered by older people is *The True Witness* of that era.

In 1894 the proprietorship of the journal was relinquished by Mr. Quinn and the True Witness Printing and Publishing Company Ltd. was formed under the presidency of Mr. Michael Burke, with Mr. Cornelius A. McDonell as managing director. This company continued until 1904 when Patrick J. Cronin of Toronto took it over, and in 1907 Mr. George Plunkett Magann of Toronto assumed the financial responsibilities, for by this time they had become responsibilities rather than assets or resources. Mr. Magann lived in Toronto and left the business in charge of Miss H. Lanning, who was office manager, proofreader and general factotum.

After his retirement as editor Dr. Foran was frequently a contributor in an editorial capacity, but no name is mentioned as editor during the last 14 years.

Until Dr. Foran's time *The True Witness*, with a competent "full-time" editor, enjoyed a large circulation and was a force in Catholic circles.

Then it would appear that it was taken over as a business proposition and sideline – and this was the beginning of the end. Mr. McDonell did some of the editorial work and later Mr. Cronin edited the paper – but both these men had other interests that naturally demanded much of their time.

After 1900 the paper seems to have lost the virile spirit of its earlier years,

editorials are not so pungent, there are more articles copied *holus bolus*, new departments “for boys and girls” and “home interests” were introduced, more and larger advertisements fill up much space and Montreal parochial news becomes a feature, (which naturally would not be of great interest to out-of-town subscribers). The paper which had always had the approval of the Bishop – having been established at the wish of Bishop Bourget – now published in each issue this note of Episcopal approbation:

“If the English speaking Catholics of Montreal and of this Province consulted their best interests they would soon make of the True Witness one of the most prosperous and most powerful Catholic papers in the country.” (He might have said “again.”) I heartily bless those who encourage this excellent work. † Paul, Archbishop of Montreal.

There was no definite editor; – contributions were received from various people, among whom were Dr. E. J. C. Kennedy, R.J.L. Cuddihy and Father R. H. Fitzhenry, the last a young member of the Congregation of the Holy Cross who contributed many brilliant editorials. But people had found other modes of expression, it was difficult to collect subscriptions, and Mr. Magann invested much money endeavoring to keep the paper alive. Finally, on July 28, 1910, in the fifth issue of the 60th volume, appeared this:

#### IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

With this issue the True Witness will cease to exist. It will be succeeded next week by the Montreal Tribune.

This is a step which has been contemplated for some months past and which has been finally decided upon only after the most mature deliberation. The publishers felt that not merely did business reasons demand a change, but that the general interests of not only our readers, but of the English speaking Catholics of the Province of Quebec, if not, indeed, of the whole Dominion, would be far better served if their organ possessed a name which would be thoroughly in keeping with the spirit of the times.

There was no intention, however, to make this change unless public opinion favored it, and, for that reason, the pulse of our people was felt on the subject. Pains have been taken to get the opinion of the English-speaking Catholics of the city on the advisability of taking this step; their advice has been sought and their wishes on this matter consulted, and it is not exaggeration to say that, without a single exception, they declared themselves favorable to a change of name. In addition to this, the pastors of the majority of the English speaking parishes have been interviewed in this connection and every single one of them have placed themselves on record as thoroughly supporting the idea of a change, and His Grace Archbishop Bruchesi has graciously granted his approval to the recognized weekly.

This emphatic expression of opinion which made itself heard from all quarters, convinced the publishers of the wisdom of the move which they had contemplated, and which is now in process of being carried out.

We feel confident that the majority of our readers will receive this

announcement with satisfaction. To others, however, it will come in the nature of an unpleasant surprise. We can appreciate these feelings, and we readily sympathize with them. Some of our readers have been subscribers to the "True Witness" as long as they can remember, while others have had their names on the books since the first issue of the paper sixty years ago. It is easy to understand that the disappearance of the name of an old and valued friend cannot but cause regret and that it will take them some time to become accustomed to the fact that the visitor whose weekly appearance was always so welcome is now coming to them under a new name and garbed in a new dress. The new management however, would like them to understand that whatever changes are taking place are being made with the object of benefiting them, that their interests have never been lost sight of, and that, before long, the wisdom of the change will have made itself very apparent to them.

The subscriptions to the "True Witness" will be transferred to the "Tribune" and, for the present, there will be no increase in the price of the paper.

The old subscribers are asked to give the "Tribune" all the support and sympathy which they extended to the "True Witness." They were faithful to the latter in its years of success and loyally stood by it when Fortune's smiles seemed to have all but vanished. They clung to it through its lengthy career with a tenacity that warmed the hearts of those who were striving to make it a success, and now they are asked, in all sincerity, to transfer this allegiance, this loyalty, and this whole-hearted sympathy to the "Tribune."

In return the "Tribune" will always consider it its solemn duty to look after the interests of the English-speaking Catholics to the best of its ability. To this end it has installed a thoroughly new and up-to-date plant, comprising the best machinery that money could buy, enabling us to produce a newspaper which from a typographical stand-point, will be worthy of the matter it will contain and of the people who will read it. In addition to this the various departments of the paper have been placed in the hands of men who, by virtue of their training and ability, have been adjudged the best qualified to manage them, and finally, arrangements have been perfected to cover in a thorough manner the views that most interest our readers.

In a word no trouble has been considered too great, neither has any expense been spared which would in any way contribute to the publishing of a weekly newspaper which will measure up to the high standards we have set for ourselves.

*The True Witness* was no more. For 60 years it had filled a need. Had it not existed, the conditions of intolerance that it fought and subdued would have subsisted unrestricted for many years, conditions which persisted in England much later until mitigated by an active Catholic press.

Catholic action by the laity – the slogan of our day is not new. We need only to remember the work of the lay disciples of the apostles and later crusaders, and in every age and every country there have always been

catechists. But real active workers have always been rare. *The True Witness* established by G. E. Clerk was for a quarter of a century an active force, animated by the energy and ideals of its founder and the spirit remained for almost 35 more years.

Nowadays we must revert to those ideals to form our plan of combat, for, to quote from Pope Pius X "In vain will you build churches, give missions, found schools – all your works, all your effort will be destroyed if you are not able to wield the *defensive* and *offensive* weapon of a loyal and sincere Catholic press."

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