

MOORE COLLEGE: BROUGHTON LETTERS

Broughton to Coleridge, 21/10/1844

Fifty and more than fifty variations of opinion have passed through my mind during the course of the last two days, whether it wld be fair and proper to write to you again upon the subject respecting which my communications have been already so mercilessly profuse:- that is our vacant Judgeship. It is not that the importance of the subject admits of any question in my own mind; but it may be one in which you cannot take the same interest, perhaps not any; or may have no one to propose for the office, or no opportunity to forward anyone's views. Nevertheless the serious disadvantage which must befall (sic) us if the office be bestowed upon a Rom. Catholic causes me to think you may not deem the matter unworthy of consideration. If you do not, and yet anything proposed shld be impeded through want of full information, it might afterwards be imputed to me that a good measure had been defeated through my false delicacy. Write therefore I will; especially as the plot thickens as the scene proceeds. We have now another candidate in the field: a Mr Roger Therry; another Roman Catholic, who (having held several legal appointments and having acted pro tempore as Attorney General) puts in his claim to a seat upon the Bench. He does not claim to be Chief, but a puisne office wld content him. He has applied for and obtained leave to go home to prosecute his claim: and will sail by the next vessel after this. The design is apparently thus arranged. First to press with all force the appointment of Plunkett as Chief Justice, in which case the Office of Attorney General being vacated wld naturally devolve upon Therry. Thus the Romanist influence wld be fortified by two advancements. If this cannot be then the game wld be for them to leave Plunkett as Att. Gen. obtaining the vacant puisne seat for Therry, leaving Stephen to be Chief. The only thing that cld frustrate these views, either one or the other, wld be the sending out of a fresh man altogether in the Office of C.J. and this

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I do hope will be the termination. If either Stephen or Plunkett be appointed Chief, there will be a precedent established that such vacancies must henceforth be filled by rotation on the Bench itself, or must be, here, as in England, at the option of the Attorney Gen. Either of these, you may believe my Colonial experience, wld be inconvenient and prejudicial acknowledgements to be made: and yet, as both parties claim the office on those grounds, they must be made if either applicant be now promoted.

(Anything missing here?)

Neither wld there be any end of the anomosities which this wld lead to. The interest which Roger Therry can exercise is derived from the Repeal party in Ireland; Canning and Huskisson men (if there be any such remaining) Sir Richard Bourke and Sir George Gipps; who is sorry, it is evident, that he has been in a manner obliged by force of circumstances, to pass over both Plunkett and Therry in making temporary appointments. Yet it with me a subject honestly of doubt, whether he can regard the former as really qualified for the post; and he told me himself, not long ago that when he first proposed any matter to Plunkett, he always seemed as if he did not understand a syllable, but required to go home and think about it (or rather as I should suspect to look into his books) and then he did very well. He does certainly make singular blunders. The other day, for instance, in the Legislative Council, arguing against a motion for adjournment which the Government felt to be inconvenient, he wld insist and persist in saying that the adjournment of Parliament for the Easter vacation was always by prorogation, and wld hardly be set right. What we want is a man not liable to such mistakes. But so much has been said in former letters on this point that I will not run the risk of wearying you by a repetition. Give us an Etonian if it can be done.


Check.

A Selwyn I shld pray for; but at any rate an Etonian. We have dear Burton's successor at last arrived. His name is Dickinson; and we have great hopes that he

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will be a good man and take the same unflinching course with his predecessor. He afforded a very promising token by coming to Church yesterday for the first time, and desiring to return public thanks to Almighty God for safe termination of his voyage. It has been my earnest wish to impress this becoming observance upon all who arrived in security; but few indeed are induced. His spontaneous adoption of it was therefore very pleasing. I was not myself at that Church; nor have we yet seen each other.

This Education question plunges us all into perplexity and uneasiness. It has been carried against us in the Legve Council by a majority of one: and that gained in so questionable a manner that in my opinion it will ultimately do injury to the adverse cause. Still the fighting it out in public Meetings is very irksome: but being called how can we decline? Like almost everything that now stirs it has raked up the Oxford movement, and a very vehement and bitter attack has been grounded upon the 75th Tract. It is impossible for me to come personally into direct conflict with the writer, a Baptist minister; but the circumstance has really excited me to think of another mode of at once meeting him, and of rectifying what has always appeared to me the leading error of the writer of that Tract - namely that of publishing the Services of the Breviary with all those portions of them which he at the same time admits to be modern, corrupt and dangerous. My view wld rather be to publish a reformed Breviary in English, substituting what wld accord with our own tenets, in lieu of the 'Ave Maria', 'Confiteor' etc and above all for the four objectionable Antiphons denounced at p. 23 and giving metrical Versions of all the Ambrosian and other Hymns, after the example of those in the Tract. My inducement to this is that I see no way so direct to refute the charge which  is so inductriously and artfully woven, and I regret to say by many believed, of our sentiments being in exact conformity with those of the Church of Rome.



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It is astonishing how much this persuasion gains ground; and with how much suspicion we are all regarded who will not preach absolute calvinism in the style of the conventicle, and attend Bible Society meetings and so forth. ← ?

In a Preface to such a publication as is here hinted at, much might be said to the purpose which cannot otherwise be brought under notice; by me at least. The effect upon the Roman Catholics wld also be good: for finding so much of that which they hold sacred to be retained, and admitted to be good, they wld not only be brought to a better acquaintance with the true nature and extent of our differences from them, but wld, it may be hoped, be led to reflect upon those differences with less excitement: and I cannot help thinking that there are (unless my hopes flatter me) many of them even here who are prepared to acknowledge such a reformed Breviary as preferable to that which they now are required to use. The strong measure of Dr Polding in dedicating himself and his Church and province to the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary has not pleased some among them who reflect, and to whom this proceeding appears to approach almost to a dispossession of the Almighty from his rightful dominion. Now I have been led to examine and reflect upon the question of the Breviary, it has occurred to me to think what may have been the reasons why the Reformers in preparing their new Service Book shld not have adopted more of the idea here thrown out. Some reasons, and without doubt good reasons, they had for acting otherwise: and many such motives as may have weighed with them, readily offer themselves to our thoughts. Yet there is one ground upon which I can hardly help wishing that the experiment shld have been tried; that is in consequence of the fairer hope it might have presented of prevailing on the R.Cs to continue their attendance on the Church service, and perhaps more readily reconciling them to the change. If you can ever find time to think a little about this matter pray give me your

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opinion in a few words. That good might be done here by it is my already formed conclusion: but it is not in my power by my own unassisted resources to conjecture how it wld be taken elsewhere. My last Letter to you was written only last week, and went by the Brig 'Soundraporvy'. There is a name with a vengeance. We are all well here except my dear wife who has had a cold, and some slight return of the complaint she suffered so much from in 1842 and occasionally since. But I hope and trust it is going off. We had last week a most extraordinary tempest of wind and rain which deluged our house, and she going about notably to see that the wet was all mopped up, put herself too much in the way of it. I hope this will find you and yours quite in health and happiness. You have the most earnest prayers to that effect of Your very sincere friend. W.G. Australia.