

The True Witness.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, SEPT. 11, 1863.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE Polish Question promises to afford plenty of work for the diplomatists. It makes no progress, we are told, and is altogether one of those interminable, insoluble questions in which statesmen seem to delight, as furnishing them with so many opportunities for displaying their dexterity and cunningness of fence. By the latest dates before us, per steamers, *City of New York* and *Scotia*, we learn, respecting the Polish imbroglio, no more than this: That there is nothing new, that the Notes of the Western Powers had been delivered to Prince Gortschakoff, that the latter had given no reply, and that it was generally believed that Russia would limit her action to a simple acknowledgment of their receipt. From the Italian Peninsula there is nothing of any kind to report.

From all parts of the United Kingdom, and from Ireland especially, the reports as to the state of the growing crops, and the prospects of the harvest, are most encouraging. Cereals and potatoes are both doing well in Ireland; and with an abundance of food, it is confidently to be expected that the sufferings of the poorer classes will soon come to an end. The distress in Lancashire, consequent upon the dearth of cotton, again excites a good deal of attention.

During the recess of Parliament there can be but little news of any political importance. Application had again been made to Lord Russell by Northern sympathisers, to stop the departure of two steamers which the applicants believed to be destined for the naval service of the Confederate States. Of these vessels, one, according to the allegations of the applicants, was to sail about the 27th ult., and was to be received by the Confederate man-of-war steamer *Florida*. The other vessel, asserted to be an iron-clad, is building in the Clyde, and is said to be fast approaching completion. No doubt, if the complainants can adduce proof such as a Court of Law would entertain, that the vessels complained of are really destined for the Confederate Navy, the British authorities will interfere; but such proof it is almost impossible to adduce, and, therefore it is, under a free Government like that of England, almost impossible for the authorities to interfere effectually in the matter. We are informed also by the Paris correspondent of the *London Globe*, that several steamers on the model of the *Alabama*, are being built in French ports, and that a Confederate man-of-war has just put into Brest harbor for repairs.

The acceptance of the Imperial throne of Mexico by the Arch-Duke Maximilian, is now looked upon as a settled thing, and speculation is rife as to how this open violation of the Monroe doctrine will be received by the authorities at Washington. That a short time ago the latter would have accepted it, not as a *casus belli*, but as an actual declaration of war can hardly be doubted; and even now, in spite of their troubles, and the stout resistance of the Confederates, it seems unlikely that the Northerners will allow the action of the French Emperor to pass without an energetic protest. For the present, however, the President eats his leek, and if he swears horribly, swears for the most part inaudibly.—His official organ at Washington frankly informs us that "it is not probable the Government will at an early day" proclaim to the country what policy it intends to pursue towards France, and how far it is disposed to brook European intervention in the affairs of Mexico. The organ adds—"Our domestic affairs are in that condition that the extreme caution and reticence become the duty of the administration, where a question of such gravity and magnitude is involved."

The question is indeed a very grave one, and is susceptible of but one of two solutions: Either France must withdraw her troops from Mexico, or else she must prepare for war, sooner or later, with the Northern States; since the latter cannot now retrace their steps, or abandon such a fundamental article of their foreign policy, as is that which is embodied in the Monroe doctrine. It is therefore by no means impossible that a favorable diversion in favor of the Confederates may yet be made by French arms; and that as the latter played an important part in the great political drama whose denouement was the severance of the thirteen Colonies from the British Empire, so they

may yet be destined to be one of the means for establishing the independence of the Southern States. If the French Emperor wishes to establish an imperial form of government in Mexico, under a French protectorate, it is obviously his interest to interpose betwixt Mexico and the Northern States, a friendly power, such as would be a Confederacy of Southern States indebted for their national existence to French intervention. But the ways of Louis Napoleon are inscrutable, and the course of policy which he ultimately adopts is generally the very opposite of that which the world naturally expects him to take. Even now, who can explain, who can foretell the policy and ultimate designs of Louis Napoleon on Italy?—who can account for the long protracted agony of Gaeta? It is worse therefore than useless to hazard any opinion as to the course which he is preparing to pursue with respect to the Northern and Southern belligerents. In Dickens' description of the concert at "The Todgers," in honor of the two Miss Pecksniffs, it is remarked of the younger gentleman and his flute, that then when he seemed to be doing nothing at all, he was actually doing that, which if duly considered, should have astonished the hearers most. So in one sense may it be said of Louis Napoleon, and his policy, foreign and domestic; he is always turning up there and then, where and when least expected, and is never so busy and so dangerous as when he appears to be doing nothing at all.

The siege of Charlestown still continues, but with no very rapid progress. Sumter, so every day's telegram assures us, is a heap of ruins, but the Confederate flag still floats over its crumbling walls. Fort Wagner is not taken, though the enemy have pushed their approaches pretty close to it, and the barbarous scheme of bombarding the City seems to have been for the present abandoned.

The latest telegram, dated New York 8th instant, gives a gloomy account of the prospects of the Federals. The Confederate garrison has been largely re-inforced: the season is represented as becoming so inclement as to render it doubtful whether the fleet under Admiral Dahlgren can carry out its part of the attack: and above all, we are now informed that Sumter is not the heap of ruins it was said to be, but that it still opposes formidable obstacles to the advance of the ships. Nothing can be done by the fleet till Sumter is silenced: and the Yankee public are warned that it is at present impossible to hold out to them "any brilliant prospects of immediate active operations."

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

It is rumored that the present Session is to be a short one, and that the supplies having been voted, and a Militia Bill passed, the Legislature will adjourn. The debates hitherto present little of general interest, for no measures of public importance have as yet been brought forward. Mr. J. A. Macdonald gave notice of, and subsequently withdrew a notice of a motion for a Committee to inquire into the truth of the charge adduced by the *Gazette* against the Ministry, in the affair of the Grand Trunk subsidy; and their reported attempts to purchase the influence in their favor, of the Grand Trunk Company by bribing Messrs. Ferrer and Drydges.

WHAT IS A MONARCHY?—One half of our warmest controversies are mere logomachies; disputes about words, not things, which would cease of themselves were the parties thereunto to condescend to definitions, sharp and exhaustive. When, for instance, writers in the press provoke controversy by urging the feasibility, and the advantages of a monarchical government for British North America, how easily the questions raised might be solved by a simple definition of the much used—little understood, word "monarchy." Unfortunately few attach any definite meaning to the word which they use; they employ it, sometimes in one sense, sometimes in another, and thus appropriately end by talking through nonsense, and becoming unintelligible not only to their audiences—but to themselves.

It is perhaps easier to say what a monarchy is not—than what it is. The Government of England, for instance, is not, and since the days of the Tudors, has never been a monarchy, except during the short lived Commonwealth. Oliver Cromwell was the last Monarch of England; and though in the early part of his reign George the third tried, no doubt, to be a monarch, as well as a king, the Great Houses, or aristocracy proved themselves too powerful for him. The President of the U. States is far more of a monarch than is Queen Victoria; and the two most strictly monarchical governments on the face of the earth at the present day are those of Russia, and of the Federal States of North America.

When therefore people talk about assimilating our Canadian political institutions to those of Great Britain, by establishing a Canadian monarchy, "with perhaps a son of Victoria for King"—as a late number of the *British Standard* has it—they do not really mean a monar-

chy or "one man power"; but simply a form of Government, hereditary in the person of the chief member of the Executive. This is a horse of a different colour; for a government may be, as is that which now obtains in the Northern States, monarchical without being hereditary; or, on the other hand, it may be hereditary without being monarchical, as is that oligarchical—or rather polyarchical form of government which obtains in Great Britain. What is really meant therefore by those who loosely talk about Canadian monarchy is merely the adoption—or introduction of the hereditary principle, in the case of the head of the Government. But here of course the question at once arises—Is the adoption or introduction of such a principle feasible in British North America?

The hereditary principle, as applied to the sovereign in Great Britain, succeeds admirably, because it is in harmony, or keeping, with the entire social system of that country. The hereditary principle obtains throughout, and vitalises that system: and an hereditary sovereign is but the logical sequence or complement of an hereditary aristocracy, of an hereditary tenure of land—and of a law, or rather custom of primogeniture. In a state of society where none of these things existed or would be tolerated: where there was no hereditary aristocracy, no hereditary tenure of land, no entailed estates, and no law or custom of primogeniture, an hereditary sovereign would be a social and political monster. The political system instead of being in harmony with, or, the logical development of the social system, would be alien and abhorrent to it. The political order would be in opposition to the social order; and the intrusive or hereditary element in the political order would have to be expelled, before harmony could be restored.

Now in British N. America—unfortunately as we believe—fortunately according to the opinions of others, there is no hereditary aristocracy, no hereditary landed gentry, no hereditary tenure of land, no system of entails, and no law or custom of primogeniture. Such things are not only at present wanting, but in so far as the vast majority of the population of British North America are concerned, are at variance with, and repugnant to the genius of the people, and to all their national traditions, customs and prejudices. We are stating what we believe to be the fact, not what we wish to be so; for it would be well for the country, well for its future liberties, were it otherwise. No matter what our political system in British North America, our social system of which ultimately the other must be but the outgrowth or development, is with the exception of Catholic and French Lower Canada, identical with the Yankee social system, or that which obtains in the Northern States of the neighboring Union; and any attempt that might be made to establish a form of government, or political order not in harmony with and based upon our actual social system would inevitably be a failure.

Nor can this defect be in any manner or degree remedied or supplemented by political action. It is as impossible to make an hereditary aristocracy, or hereditary landed gentry, as it is to make an ancient oak. Every other part of the social organism may be made, or if lost may be restored. The *bourgeoisie*, the peasantry, if destroyed, will rapidly grow again; but, whether for good or for evil, so it is, an aristocracy and an hereditary gentry, once destroyed, can never be supplied. The ravages of the revolutionary storm which swept over France during the last decade of the eighteenth century have, with one important exception been repaired. The throne and the altar have been raised up; a monarchy has been re-established; the *bourgeoisie* have sprouted out again; the peasantry are as numerous and as prosperous as ever; but the aristocracy, but the old hereditary landed gentry of France have disappeared for ever, and no power on earth can restore them. As well attempt to bring back last Spring's flowers as to resuscitate the noblesse of old France. Now we have not even the elements or the raw material in British N. America, if we except Lower Canada, out of which an aristocracy might in time be developed. We might of course have a snobocracy, or a plutocracy, but an aristocracy, never! We might have Dukes of Hardware, Earls and Marquises of Dry Goods and Molasses—bogus titles and bogus Honorables without end; but these would in no wise make good the want of an hereditary sovereign or chief of the political order would be impossible.

And herein probably lies the secret of the utter failure of all modern attempts to copy or imitate the British form of government, with its hereditary sovereign, its aristocracy, its quasi feudal tenure of land, its social hierarchy, and its political liberties. In England the people enjoy liberty, if not equality; which latter exists to perfection under an Oriental despotism, where the Monarch's favorite of to-day is liable to be scourged like a dog to-morrow; and the people of England enjoy liberty, because they care not to disturb the social inequalities which exist amongst them. Other peoples make equality the

one great object of all their labors, and grasping too eagerly after this shadow; they invariably lose the substance—liberty. In British North America, as we said, the social traditions, customs, and habits of the people are in favor of social equality rather than in favor of liberty, for they are moulded on those of the Yankees whom they, in all respects, so closely resemble. It is idle for them therefore to dream even of modelling their future political order on that of the mother country, unless they first determine to model their social order upon that of aristocratic Great Britain, beginning first of all with establishing an hereditary tenure of land, and the law of primogeniture. Then, but not before, will it be time enough to discuss the question of the feasibility of establishing the hereditary principle in the political order, and in the person of a member of the reigning British Royal Family.

AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM.—The *Echo*, an Anglican journal of the "low" stripe, published on Friday last the following accusation against the Rev. M. Ricard, Parish Priest of Acton. The story appeared originally, we believe, in the *Pays*, a *Rouge* and anti-Catholic paper of this City:—

"Mr. Dorion, brother to the Attorney General East, was at an election meeting in Acton, C. E. After his opponent had ended speaking without being interrupted, he commenced and so did the bell of the Roman Catholic church. He waited, but on went the bell, until one of Mr. Dorion's friends went to tie it up. The priest then appeared and ordered the people to go to vespers. Like an obedient flock in they went, and after service Mr. Dorion then managed to make his speech, without the bell ringing accompaniment. This is entirely a new way of putting down a political opponent."

This is a very pretty story no doubt, but like all other stories it has two sides. We propose therefore to lay before our readers another version of the affair at Acton, which if it be not quite so brilliant or *piquant* as that furnished by the *Echo*, has at least this merit that it is strictly true.

On Sunday the 2nd of August, a political meeting was held in the immediate vicinity of the parish church. At this meeting a M. Morin spoke, finishing his discourse about two o'clock, and was followed by M. Dorion.

Now according to invariable custom, Vespers on Sundays and other holidays of obligation, commence precisely at two o'clock in the afternoon. But from a desire to meet the views of his parishioners engaged in holding a meeting, the priest, the Rev. M. Ricard, postponed the hour for Vespers until 2.30 p.m.; and availed himself of the moment's silence that occurred betwixt the close of M. Morin's address, and the commencement of that of M. Dorion, to ring the first bell, or notice of approaching Vespers. This operation of ringing lasted the usual time, about two or three minutes. M. Dorion then commenced his discourse.

Half-past two o'clock arrived, and still M. Dorion continued speaking. Again, in consideration of the wishes of his parishioners, the priest postponed the Service of Vespers to three o'clock; although several of his parishioners—who had, as is by no means of rare occurrence in country parishes, come a considerable distance to assist at the divine offices—remonstrated against the second postponement, and urged the convenience to which they were put, by the long and unexpected delay in the commencement of the services. Out of consideration to these—and surely they were as much entitled to consideration as were the political disputants—the Rev. M. Ricard determined to commence Vespers at three o'clock.

That hour arrived, and still the stream of M. Dorion's harangue flowed on. The Rev. M. Ricard having informed the speaker that he could postpone divine service no longer, that of his parishioners many were weary of waiting, and had a long way to return home, ordered the beadle to ring the bell of the Church to summon the people to attend. This was vehemently opposed by the friends of M. Dorion on the ground; and one of the partisans of the latter took forcible possession of the bell-ropes in order to prevent the instructions of the priest from being carried out. At this outrage—an outrage which had it occurred in a parish church in England, would have been punished by law, as "*bravado*" and sacrilege—the Rev. M. Ricard himself interposed, and accompanied by one of his parishioners got possession of the bell-ropes, and enforced the order for ringing in for Vespers.—The people—such of them at least as desired to assist at the offices—came into the sacred building; the service commenced, whilst standing within a few feet of the open windows, and on the ground belonging to the church, M. Dorion continued to pour forth the torrents of his eloquence.

Vexed at this unseemly, and anti-Christian disturbance of a peaceable congregation, the Rev. M. Ricard sent a polite message to M. Dorion, by one of the church-wardens, to the effect that the office of Vespers had actually commenced, and begging of him not to interrupt the services of the Church. M. Dorion took no notice of this polite and most reasonable request. He did not move further off from the church, and still continued his address to his friends and partisans; nor did he cease his an-

noying, and we will add, most indecent interference with Christian worship, until the priest himself came out, and remonstrated with him upon the gross impropriety of his behaviour.—After Vespers M. Dorion recommenced his discourse, and continued speaking for the best part of another hour.

During this time the priest had to perform a baptism, which according to the custom of the Catholic Church, necessitated the ringing of the bell; and one of the parishioners of Acton having died during the course of the forenoon, the bell, as is also the invariable custom, rang forth the *glas* or knell of the departed soul. These were the only interruptions of any kind, in so far as the priest and the church authorities of Acton were concerned, that were offered to M. Dorion; and we put it to any reasonable unprejudiced person, whether there was therein aught of which M. Dorion and his friends have the right to complain. It was hardly to be expected that for their convenience the offices of the Church should be neglected, or her discipline and rules with regard to baptism, and prayers for the departed, be set aside.

Indeed the only things worthy of notice in the whole affair, are—firstly, the priest's great forbearance in postponing the hour of Vespers from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., to accommodate M. Dorion; and secondly, the indecorous conduct of the latter and of his friends, in violently interfering by brute force with a church officer in the execution of his duty, and in M. Dorion's interruption of divine service in spite of the oft repeated admonitions, and reiterated requests of the priest. We know not what action the Fabrique and church authorities of Acton intend to take in the premises, or whether they intend taking any action at all: but we should be well pleased to hear that they had determined to institute legal proceedings for "brawling," for indecently interrupting divine worship, and for assault, both against M. Dorion, and the ruffians who by force interfered to prevent the beadle from ringing the bell, when ordered to do so by the priest. As M. Dorion is evidently one of those men who think it a fine thing to insult and defy priests, because priests do not carry horsewhips, and cannot chastise their insolence as it deserves we would strongly recommend in his case an appeal to the laws of the country, which, as well as gentlemanly courtesy, and Christian decency, he has outrageously violated. To the last of these, that is to say, the courtesy of a gentleman and the decency of a Christian, M. Dorion may be a stranger; but he is still, thank God, amenable to the laws of the land, and these we should be delighted to see put in force against him.

LETTING THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG.—

We have never entertained any doubts as to the reasons which compel the sympathies of the ultra-Protestant and Clear-Grit press in behalf of the Federals, and prompt them to utter ardent vows for the speedy and complete triumph of the North over the South. These sympathies, these vows, are but the infallible symptoms of the strong anti-British, and pro-Yankee sentiments which unfortunately obtain amongst a portion of our Canadian community; amongst those who are ever "looking to Washington," and who sigh for the rupture of those ties which now happily for our civil and religious liberties, unite us to the British Empire. With some, these sentiments are the natural outgrowth of their hatred of Popery, and hankering after democracy; but with others they are to be attributed to a still more ignoble source, to mere mercenary considerations, and to their total absorption in the not very ennobling pursuit of dollars and cents. Since the commencement of the civil war, the Northern States have let slip no opportunity of displaying their hostility to Great Britain; they have made no secret that, if successful, they will immediately turn their arms against Canada; and therefore it is in the nature of things, that the ultra-Protestants, and Clear-Grits should sympathise with the Yankees; and that the organs of the former e.g. the *Toronto Globe*, the *Montreal Herald* and the *Witness* should warmly espouse a cause whose success is of evil augury to British Empire on this Continent.

That this is the true explanation of the tone adopted by the above named journals, with reference to the contending parties in the great struggle now pending, every one is fully aware; though with the exception of the *Witness*, none of them has as yet been so candid, or so imprudent, as to avow the unworthy motives by which they, professedly British subjects, are severally actuated. The *Montreal Witness* however very naively betrays itself, or as the proverb says "lets the cat out of the bag." The *Witness* of course sides with the Yankees, as do the *Globe*, and the *Herald*; but the latter alone has the imprudence to admit that the reason is, that the triumph of the North means the invasion perhaps also the subjugation of Canada by the Yankees; and that this country is indebted for immunity from invasion, under God, to the heroic and long protracted resistance of the gallant Southerners, whom in consequence, it, the *Witness*, devotes to the infernal gods. Here are the