

The True Witness

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EDITORIAL NOTES.

This is certainly a cold world, or rather a busy one. It is not so much on account of an absence of fellow-feeling, or of charity that so many suffer untold privations in the very midst of plenty. The world is too occupied with money-making; everywhere there is a rush and sweep past and the unfortunate drop by the way side un-noticed. The world reads of the sad death of some child of the great and good, and the world says, "what a pity we did not know it"—and the great social stream rolls on. As an illustration we find the following in a London paper:

"It is grievous to hear that the only son of Balfe, the great Irish composer, who enriched our operatic literature with the *Bohemian Girl*, is in such a state of distress that an appeal in his behalf has to be made to the charitable public. We were under the impression that his sister, the celebrated vocalist, who had contracted rather wealthy marriages, was in a position to come to his aid. Anyhow, it is to be hoped the unhappy man will have his heart comforted at this festive season. He is not the only one that would be glad to have a trifle of that missing word, coin, that is locked up in the Bank of England."

We received a letter signed "Subscriber" telling us that many of our readers are anxiously enquiring what has become of our prolific correspondent 'K,' whose manly, trenchant letters on the 'School Question,' created such a *furor* for the past months in educational circles, besides arousing public indignation to a height of intensity seldom equalled on any public question." He then asks if "K." is dead or if he has offended our School Commissioners. "Surely," he says, "THE TRUE WITNESS, the only organ we Irish Catholics have, has not closed its columns against one of the most powerful and earnest advocates of Irish Catholic rights." Frank answers are awaited. The last letters of "K." were sufficiently personal to go to the very limit of public discussion; a letter of his that we have and did not publish goes beyond that point. Unless there is some tangible public benefit to issue from such correspondence, it is only detrimental to all parties to give publicity to personalities that indicate the desire to satisfy a private spleen rather than attain a public good. Moreover were we to publish indiscriminately such correspondence, we would, in all fairness, be obliged to give the counter personalities that would be called forth. Thereby our columns would simply become a battle-ground for individuals paying off old scores, and men, even more competent than we are to judge; look upon that course as at variance with the mission of a religious organ. "K." cannot complain, for he received more space than half of our correspondents put together.

A PROBLEM has been submitted to us for an approximate answer. "What is the ratio of density of the population of Montreal with regard to area, as compared with some of the great cities of

the United States: say, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, St. Louis and New Orleans?" Perhaps some of our clever schoolboys and girls would grapple with this interesting subject and give the benefit of their experience.

A VERY MOURNFUL despatch from London tells the unwelcome story that "a disease of the brain, which has for some time afflicted John Ruskin, is increasing. He is docile and generally quiet, but has the delusion that he is surrounded by enemies, who are awaiting their chance to assault him." Poor Ruskin! his work is evidently done. Yet he performed more grand things than sufficient to secure for his name a niche in the temple of immortality. Over-worked, the human system cannot unceasingly stand the strain. To Ruskin, as to many another bright soul, a twilight is vouchsafed, between the glory of his literary day, and the darkness of the grave's long night. Such cases always recall to our mind the fate of Hugh Millar. But for him it was not a calm blank at the close of a storm voyage upon the sea of science. Scarcely had he written the last line of the "Footprints of Creation," which contends with his "Testimony of the Rocks" for the palm of his masterpiece; scarcely had he laid down his powerful pen and turned to rest his weary brain, than the darkness came—like an eclipse upon the sun, like night suddenly rushing over space. But with the great majority of the noble writers, deep thinkers, great minds that grew exhausted before the end, the blank was calm and mournfully lengthy. We fear it is to be so with Ruskin. But come what may, as long as the English language is read, and art admired, the generations of men can live with Ruskin and bless him for the countless blessings he has shed upon their way of life.

It is surprising what a noise is made whenever a handful of country people, irritated on the one hand and excited on the other, step over the threshold of the Church and proclaim themselves Protestants. The thing is so unfrequent that the press, lead by the *Witness*, re-echoes the news from Atlantic to Pacific. And yet, all that time, without any public demonstration, calmly, conscientiously, and fervently, studious men and women are entering the fold of Catholicity. To this statement the general answer is that these converts are minors, children, or persons who change their religion after marriage. Just to prove the contrary we will give the figures of the conversions at St. Patrick's Church alone, during the year 1892. Eighty were baptized Catholics. Of that eighty, there were 37 males and 43 females; 16 of them were married and 64 were unmarried; 23 were minors (under 21 years) and 57 were majors; under twelve years there were 7, over twelve years, 73. These converts are from the following persuasions: Anglicans, 57; Presbyterians, 9; Methodists, 2; Baptists, 5; Lutherians, 1; Salvationists, 2; and undenominational, 4.

And yet no person ever heard a word about these conversions; the Church of Rome requires no flourish of trumpets to proclaim her triumphs; she knows that eventually all must be gathered into one fold.

IN the Sunday Oregonian of the 25th Dec., there appeared an editorial under the heading "A Relic of Medievalism," in which the editor attacks the hierarchy of the Province of Quebec on account of the threatened suit between the *Canada Revue* and the Most Rev. Archbishop of Montreal. A Catholic correspondent sends us the article and asks for the "facts of the case or cases referred to," as he does not think the editor in question would do an injustice to the Catholic Church. The facts are very easily stated, they require no elaboration. Under the mask of Catholicity the papers in question seized upon an unfortunate event, a sad scandal, and while heralding it on all sides they pretended to be only desirous to correct errors and do away with abuses. In order to carry out this peculiar programme—the usurping of the ecclesiastical authority and dictating to the hierarchy—they attacked the Sacraments of the Church and gave vent to such principles as were the basis of the Commune in France. While denying to the clergy the right to have a say in politics, they intruded *red-handed* upon the domain of the Church and assumed the right to regulate its actions, even in its most sacred functions. The united episcopate of the Province repeatedly warned and advised, almost begged and solicited these organs to discontinue. At last when no attention was paid to the prelates, and attacks upon the faith, upon the most sacred institutions of the Church were repeated, and under the garb of Catholicity these writers were attempting to undermine the confidence of the faithful, the head of the Church, in this section, was forced to intervene and protect his flock from the ravages of the wolf; he simply drove the wolf off from their doors. As a sequence one of the papers—still pretending to Catholicity—appeals to the Civil Courts against the Ecclesiastical authority. There is the sum and substance of the whole matter.

WE find the names of four Quebec reverend gentlemen signed to a published document that purports to be a statement of facts prepared for the Committee of the Quebec Auxiliary Bible Society. One of these ministers is Rev. Mr. Noble; ergo we may expect more or less exactness in the statement—we mean as much exactness as an over-wrought zeal and a blind bigotry will allow. The facts (?) collected are for the purpose of proving that whenever a copy of the Holy Scriptures is found in a Roman Catholic family, the priest condemns it to the flames for the good of the people. To substantiate this wholesale and absolutely false charge these learned gentlemen furnish the public with four stories resembling in every way the "tales of our grandmothers." The report says, "in

the light of these facts it would be too much to say that the priesthood wilfully deceive the people about the Scriptures circulated by the Bible Society, but one thing is quite evident that 'they do err not knowing the Scriptures.' That is about on a par with the stories of the woman in Daulacstreet, the family somewhere in St. Roch's, and the indefinite household in St. Saviour. Surely four reverend gentlemen must be very far gone, or very much overcome by the influence of fanaticism, when they can subscribe their names to such a statement and proclaim it to be the fruit of their labor and investigation. The idea that the Catholic priesthood does not know the Scriptures is a good one—there is really something novel about it; Messrs. Stobo and Company should get a patent for it.

IT IS WONDERFUL how the American secular press grows excited over every rumor about Mgr. Satolli, and pronounces, off-handedly, upon his every move and intention. Again, it is astonishing with what avidity Italian despatches are seized upon and trumpeted all over the land; while the wild and unfounded statements of every petty Neapolitan infidel sheet are given to the public with as much assurance as if they came from the Prefect of the Propaganda. On January the fifth, Mgr. Satolli was not to be tolerated by the American Bishops; the Vatican, therefore, was obliged to recall him instead of having him remain in America to represent the Pope at the Chicago World's Fair. A sad state of things, indeed! On January the sixth there was not a particle of truth in the statements quoted from the Neapolitan press. On January the seventh Mgr. Satolli received a special benediction and instructions widening his powers. What are we to conclude from all this? Simply the less the outside world meddles in Mgr. Satolli's affairs the less people will make fools of themselves before the eyes of the world.

THE *Southern Cross*, of Adelaide, gives the religious census of the Australian colonies. In all Australia the members of the Church of England number 1,485,066; the Catholics, 801,118; the Presbyterians, 493,369; and the Wesleyan Methodists, 354,594. These are the four most numerous denominations. The percentages of Catholics in the various colonies are:—New South Wales, 25.53; Western Australia, 25.32; Queensland, 23.56; Victoria, 21.81; Tasmania, 17.58; South Australia, 14.72; and New Zealand, 13.93. New South Wales is, therefore, the colony in which the Catholic Church claims the greatest number of adherents, whilst in New Zealand the proportion is lowest, but even there Catholics far out number every denomination except the Anglicans and the Presbyterians. The percentage of Catholics for all the colonies is 21.08, or over one-fifth of the total population.

THE Chiquiqu pamphlet will be ready next week. Orders sent in to this office will be promptly attended to.