

The True Witness.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JANUARY 8.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The Congress may now said to be dead. We have we suppose heard the last of this notable scheme, and public attention in Europe is occupied about other and more important affairs. In the first place, the late Paris elections, which have just resulted in the return of M. Pelletan, the Opposition candidate, by a majority of 6,000 votes in spite of the most strenuous exertions on the part of the Imperial Government to secure the election of its supporter, is a decided symptom of the growing aversion to the present regime in France. The Opposition have also succeeded in putting in their candidate for Dijon; and as these elections are suggestive, not merely of discontent with a particular Ministry, but of a deep seated antipathy to the Government in general, and to the principles on which it is based, they may be almost looked upon as the forerunners of an impending political if not a social, cataclysm. It is almost impossible to exaggerate their importance, not to France only but to Europe and the civilised world. The debates in the Senate upon the Address have been very animated: the foreign policy of the Emperor has been freely criticised, but upon the whole, judging from the general tone of the debate, it does not appear likely that France will engage in war single handed with Russia, in behalf of the Poles.

Whatever hopes the latter may have once entertained of foreign intervention must now be dissipated: and yet still we read of conflicts between the gallant insurgents and the Russian troops, in which victory often inclines to the side of the former. The Church in Poland is now especially singled out for persecution; for the Russians seem to recognise that the religious element has entered largely into the conflict. As a just punishment for their patriotism and devotion to the national cause, the Catholic Clergy are therefore menaced with confiscation of their property; and already a contribution of 12 per cent. has been imposed upon the revenues of all ecclesiastics, and Catholic schools and hospitals, by reason of their not having aided the Russians in their work of extermination.

The question of the German Duchies is still pregnant with danger to the peace of Europe. A force of 45,000 Federal troops is ready on the frontier of Holstein to invade Danish territory, and to assert the rights of the Prince of Augustenburg to the Schleswig-Holstein Duchies. The people of Prussia seem for the moment to have forgotten their causes of quarrel with their King, in their eagerness to fight for the German fatherland; and the *Times* urges timely concessions on the new King of Denmark, as the only means of avoiding a disastrous war.

In the South of Europe also a storm seems brewing. Victor Emmanuel keeps his forces in readiness for an outbreak with Austria in the Spring. Garibaldi, that bird of evil omen, is again on the wing, and is said to be directing his flight towards Turin; whilst the people of Venetia are being stimulated to action by proclamations from the General Committee, urging union and a general rising. A revolt is also said to be preparing in Hungary. On the whole then it may be said that the political atmosphere of Europe is surcharged with electricity, though no one seems to know when, or at what moment, the inevitable storm will burst.

There appears to be a hitch in the arrangements for placing the Imperial crown of Mexico upon the head of an Austrian Archduke. The latter, it is said, before signifying his final acceptance of the proffered crown, insisted upon the recognition of the new Empire by the Government of which Abe Lincoln is the head. This recognition having been refused new arrangements will become necessary, and Louis Napoleon will have to recast his entire Mexican policy.

The telegram from New York announces the death on Saturday last of Mgr. Hughes, the illustrious Archbishop of that City. The military news from the United States is unimportant, no events of any consequence having occurred since our last.

Amongst the "Signs of the Times" we may be permitted to notice the great increase in works of a particular kind, all devoted to one object, inspired by one idea, and indeed in this respect almost monotonous, so closely does one resemble the other. We allude to recent works on "Spiritualism," or "Pneumatology," as its disciples designate their system; its opponents will probably speak of it disrespectfully, as diablerie, or charlatanism.

Of this novel species of literature we may enumerate the recently published "Memoirs" of Home the Medium—a more pretentious work on the "Supernatural," by Wm. Howitt, and Owen's "Footfalls." All these are devoted to one object; that of establishing the fact that there ever has been, and still is, direct sensible communication betwixt matter and spirit, betwixt the living in the flesh, and the departed. This communication manifests itself at the present day in many ways; but the mode of communication more immediately insisted upon is that vulgarly known as "Spirit Rapping," and its cognate phenomena.

It is not our object to discuss the question of the objective reality of these phenomena, or to criticise the evidence adduced by Home, Judge Edwards of the United States, by Howitt and many others, in attestation of the reality of necromancy, and the frequency of intercourse with the "Spirit-world." That such intercourse may obtain, has been the belief of all nations, savage or civilised, in all ages of the world; and that that intercourse actually has obtained, cannot be denied without a denial of the history of the Old Testament, and the facts of Christianity. But the opinion generally expressed—we do not say entertained—at the present day, especially amongst Protestants, is, that that intercourse altogether ceased with the Apostolic Age; and that, since the first century of our era, all supernatural phenomena, or in other words miracles, have disappeared from amongst men. This is the position which Protestantism has been forced to take up in order to evade the force of the evidence in support of the miracles of later centuries, when the doctrines of the *Romish* Church were undoubtedly prevalent throughout Christendom; and which miracles, or supernatural phenomena, were appealed to as decisive proofs of the truth of those doctrines against which Protestantism protests.

It is evident that this negation of the modern supernatural, that this denial of all miraculous phenomena for the last eighteen hundred years, must in process of time, and if logically carried out, lead to the negation of the supernatural of a more remote antiquity, and to the denial of all miracles, whether recorded in the book called the Bible, or in the "Lives of *Romish* Saints." And so it is that the tendency of the Protestant mind at the present day, as evinced in the writings of the German Neologists, and of their imitators at Oxford, is to eliminate the supernatural from the Biblical records, and to treat a miracle as a thing, *per se*, impossible—as a violation of the laws of nature, as Buckle would say, and as therefore insusceptible of proof by any amount of human testimony in its favor. Protestantism commenced by a strenuous effort to get rid of *Romish* miracles, since to admit these would be to admit the truth of *Romish* doctrine; To get rid of *Romish* miracles, Protestantism was forced to frame certain rules, canons, or tests for ascertaining the credibility of evidence in support of particular miracles; and these rules or tests, when applied to the evidence for the truth of the miracles related in the New Testament, were found to be as conclusive against belief in the latter, as against belief in miracles of the other class. And so it came to pass that, amongst intelligent Protestants, a general scepticism as to all miraculous histories became generally prevalent, and a gross materialism was the inevitable result.

For instance, amongst the chief of the canons or rules laid down by Protestant writers, especially by the Anglican Bishop of Salisbury in his famous "*Criterion or Rules by which the True Miracles recorded in the New Testament are distinguished from the Spurious Miracles of Pagans and Pupists*,"—1807—we find the following axiom laid down, and insisted upon:—

"That we must suspect as false, asserted miracles which are not published at the time, and in the place where they are said to have occurred."

But unfortunately this rule or criterion if fairly applied is far more damaging to the credibility of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, than it is to that of the more recent miracles recognised and formally authenticated by the *Romish* Church. The miracles which the latter admits as genuine, and propounds to our belief, were, whether true or false, published at the time when, and in the place where, they are said to have occurred. It was not so in the miracles recorded in the Bible; and not one of the four Gospels was first published, either at the time when the miraculous events which they record are said to have occurred, or, as far as can be ascertained with certainty, there, where the said miraculous occurrences are said to have taken place. The Gospel according to St. Matthew is indeed said to have been published in Judea, but even of this Protestants have no

positive proof; and whilst the date of its first publication is uncertain, the most remote antiquity assigned to it, makes its first appearance not contemporaneous with, but eight years subsequent to the occurrence of the miracles therein narrated. The Gospel of St. Mark was in point of time still more remote from the date of the events it records than that of St. Matthew, and it was published, not in Judea but, according to constant tradition in Rome. The Gospel according to St. Luke first appeared twenty-seven years after the death and resurrection of Christ, and probably in Greece, certainly not in Judea; whilst the Gospel of St. John besides being deuterocanonical—a book therefore which, according to the sixth of the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, has no right to rank as Holy Scripture—was only published some sixty years after the death of Our Lord, and then again not in Judea, where the miraculous events therein narrated are said to have occurred, but at Ephesus. Thus tried or tested by the rules or criteria of Protestantism the entire evidence in support of the truth of the New Testament miracles is found wanting; nor is it therefore to be wondered at that, with those who have adhered to Protestant premises and carried out those premises to their logical conclusions, the result has been a general scepticism as to the credibility of the miraculous narratives of the Bible, as well as to that of those more particularly the property of the *Romish* Church.

And thus the miraculous or supernatural has been eliminated from the faith of Protestants, and by the same process as that by which the founders of Protestantism fondly hoped to destroy the reputation of the Church which they had rebelled against. The materialism of the present day was the inevitable result. If the supernatural mission of Christ brought immortality to light, and established the reality of ultra-mundane existence, doubts as to the supernatural in His mission necessarily involved doubts as to the truth of the subject matter of His revelation. And yet men still yearned, as ever they must yearn, for certainty upon the great question of a life beyond the grave. Oh! in the bitterness of their hearts they exclaimed—if we had but certain proof of the reality of such a life—that what we call death, is no death, but merely a translation to a higher order of being. In vain were men thus painfully groping after the truth referred to the Bible for a solution of their doubts. The Bible can solve those doubts only in so far as it is admitted to be itself a miracle, *i.e.*, a direct communication betwixt the spirit and flesh—betwixt the natural, and the supernatural. To those who doubt of the possibility of any such a communication, the Bible can be of no use whatsoever; for with them the one question at issue is—Can there be, has there ever been, such a supernatural communication? To ask men mentally so circumstanced, to accept the Bible as containing a solution of their doubts involves therefore the *petitio principii*, is the assuming of the entire question at issue; and it is at this juncture that Spiritualism, which pretends to afford sensible and irrefragable proof of the objective reality of spiritual intercourse, of a supernatural communication betwixt the mundane and ultramundane worlds, steps in. It tells us that such intercourse exists, and can be tested—that such communications not only were, but are; it refers the enquirer not to a dead book, a record of events said to have occurred some two thousand years ago in a remote and obscure corner of the globe, but to events hourly transpiring around him, and of which at any moment he may take personal, immediate cognizance. It professes to be able to give to the materialist and the sceptic evidence, the same in kind and in degree, of the supernatural, and the possibility of miracles, as that which was vouchsafed to the Jews who stood weeping around the grave of Lazarus, or who in the flesh beheld Our Lord triumphant over death and the grave.

Such are the pretensions of modern Spiritualism, such the prospects which it holds out to a doubting and materialistic age, grovelling before what it blindly worships as the immutable laws of nature. Need we then wonder at the ready success which this new doctrine obtains in all Protestant communities! at the large and growing demand for, and popularity of, its literature, its Treatises on Spiritualism, and its Memoirs of Mediums! It is but a short and easy stride from scepticism to superstition, from ultra-rationalism to ultra-credulity. In the United States the believers in the new doctrines already number—we are told—some Three millions, and in Europe another million—though in England it has not as yet made so much progress as it has amongst the more thoroughly un-Christianised people of this Continent. "I believe no person," said Mr. Howitt, and we are glad to hear it, "has seen in England a large table, with six full-grown persons upon it, float through a room without touching the floor; yet such things have been done repeatedly in America."

But it is not our purpose to criticise the phenomena of Spiritualism, or to pass any opinion upon their objective reality. Enough for us as Catholics to know, with the assurance of faith, that they cannot be from God, and are therefore

either altogether human; or partly diabolic. Our object is to show how directly Protestantism leads, first to scepticism, and to materialism; and then from scepticism and materialism to the wildest credulity. It is of this transition, that the rapid increase of works on *Spiritualism* and *Pneumatology* is so striking a sign; whether the result however will be favorable, or unfavorable, to the cause of truth we cannot as yet venture to guess. Perhaps, however, even in modern necromancy there is a slight gain over the older materialism; and when a belief in a personal devil shall have been restored, perhaps Protestants will again begin to believe in a Personal God.

We have been requested to reply to the query conveyed to us in the following letter:—

To the Editor of the True Witness.

Sir—How was it that the Catholic Church—which regards marriage as a Sacrament, and manifested her belief in its indissolubility by refusing to divorce or re-marry the 8th Henry of England—re-married the 1st Napoleon of France to Marie Louise, of Austria, during the life of the Emperor's first wife Josephine?

Yours truly,

INQUISITOR.

Before we answer we must define. By the Catholic Church, we suppose that the writer of the above means that body, or organisation, of which the Pope is the head upon earth: and if it be in this sense that *Inquisitor* understands the words "*Catholic Church*," we reply that the Catholic Church never sanctioned the union of the Emperor Napoleon with Maria Louisa, and never recognised the sacramental validity of that pretended marriage. The facts of the case are these. In the first place, when the marriage or union in question was contracted, the Pope, the head and mouth piece of the Church, was a captive in the hands of the French Emperor, who never even took the trouble of endeavoring to obtain the sanction of his prisoner to his separation from Josephine, and his subsequent union with an Austrian Archduchess. In the second place, Napoleon at the time when that union occurred, 2nd April, 1810, was not himself a member of the Catholic Church; having been excommunicated, or cut off from the communion of the faithful, by the Bull "*Quam memoranda illa die*," published on the 11th June, 1809, and which pronounced the sentence of Major Excommunication upon all who had counselled, aided, or taken part in the outrages upon the Holy See, and the rights of the Sovereign Pontiff. As an excommunicated person, therefore, Napoleon was outside of the pale of the Catholic Church; and the latter therefore could not, and therefore did not, in any manner, consent to his marriage, or pretended marriage, with Maria Louisa. It was a proceeding over which she had no control, but one of which she never approved; and for which she was no more responsible than she is responsible for the impieties and sacrileges of Victor Emmanuel, the excommunicated King of Sardinia.

On the other hand, it is true that, just as at the present day, and to the scandal of the faithful, Passaglia, and other servile priests to the number of some thousands, have taken part with Victor Emmanuel against the Pope—so in 1810 individual Catholic ecclesiastics high in rank, but wanting in their duty to their Church, and to the august and persecuted Pontiff whom Napoleon had despoiled and carried away captive, did by their acts and presence countenance both the civil and religious ceremonies with which the union of Napoleon with Marie Louise was celebrated. But as the Catholic Church cannot be said to approve of, or ratify the acts of Victor Emmanuel because several of her children have taken part with the latter against the Pope, so neither can it be pretended that the Catholic Church approved of or ratified the marriage of Napoleon with an Austrian princess.

In the *Memorial de St. Helene* the Count of Las Casas, when treating of the divorce and second marriage of the Emperor, fully exculpates the Pope or head of the Church. "The civil separation"—of Napoleon and Josephine—was, so he tells us, "pronounced by the Senate. As to the religious separation, it was determined not to make application to the Pope, and there was no need to do so." "The first marriage of the Emperor with Josephine, celebrated religiously the evening before the Coronation by Cardinal Fesch, in the presence of M. M. Portalis and Duroc, and at the express desire of the Pope who insisted thereupon as the condition *sine qua non* of his presence on the following day—was declared null and void, *ab initio*; not by the Catholic Church speaking by the mouth of her Sovereign Pontiff, the sole competent judge in the matter; but by Paris officials, by Government employees, by servile bishops, more anxious to curry favor with the great man who ruled over France, than to please God, and to administer righteous judgment.

The marriage of Napoleon with Josephine having been thus declared "null and void"—for be it remarked that, even in the extremity of their servility and abjection, it was not pretended by any Bishop or priest in France that a marriage once validly contracted could be broken, or set aside by any power upon earth, or upon any pretence whatsoever—the Cardinal Fesch

without authority from the Pope, proceeded to the celebration of the pretended marriage of Napoleon with Marie Louise. Of the Cardinals present in Paris thirteen, though invited, refused to attend at the marriage, and by so doing incurred the hostility and incessant persecution of the Emperor, who rightly construed their absence from both the civil and religious ceremonies of his second nuptials, as a formal protest against their validity. Cardinal Consalvi in his *Memoires* has left us a full account of the motives which determined him and his colleagues to take this bold step; which of itself is a sufficient proof that, whatever may have been the conduct of individual ecclesiastics, the Catholic Church, that body or Society of which the Pope is the head and mouthpiece, never countenanced, never gave its sanction to, never took any part in the union of Napoleon and Marie Louise of Austria.

The French Emperor had in short succeeded for a season—thank God for a short season only—in establishing in France a politico-religious system such as that which Henry VIII of England meditated. He was not only master of the person of the Pope, but he had assumed Papal authority over the Church in France, which he had thus made the instrument of his tyranny. In the words of the Protestant historian Ranke:—

"Napoleon most vigorously asserted the rights of the State in opposition to the Church; he regarded the declaration of 1682 as a fundamental law of the realm, and caused it to be expounded in the schools; he would suffer no religious vows, and no monks; the regulations respecting marriage which were laid down in his Code Civile were at variance with the Catholic principles of the Sacramental nature of that institution; the organic articles which he added from the first to the concordat were utterly anti-Roman."—*History of the Popes*.

Is the Church then to be held responsible for the tyranny of Napoleon? can she be blamed because her persecutor laid down laws at variance with her principles? or because some of her children, the creatures of the civil power, the nominees of the Emperor, slavishly acquiesced therein? What she could do, that she did.—She had resource to her spiritual armory, and her enemies were scattered. "What! Does the old fool think," said Napoleon, when he heard of the Bull of Excommunication launched against him, "that the muskets will fall from my soldiers' hands?" And in a few short months the horrors of the retreat from Moscow could find no words more expressive of the sufferings of the same soldiers, and of the state to which they were reduced than these, "Their arms fell from their hands . . . for they did not throw them away; hunger and cold snatched them from them."—*Segur*. This were the Church and her august Pontiff avenged; thus was their sacrilegious persecutor punished and his pride humbled; and thus too, we hope, and firmly believe, shall Victor Emmanuel and all his accomplices be shortly recompensed for their outrages against the Holy See and the Lord's anointed.

IMMIGRATION STATISTICS.—During the past year there have arrived in the Province 14,287 persons, emigrants from the United Kingdom, and 3,358 from the Continent of Europe. Of the immigration from the British Islands, the majority were Irish, and the actual numbers are thus set down:—

Irish,	5,508
English,	4,830
Scotch,	3,949

14,287

Of these immigrants, it is estimated, says the *Montreal Herald*—though it does not furnish us with the data upon which that estimate is based—that nine-tenths of the English and Scotch have taken up their residence in Canada—and that four-fifths of the Irish have gone to the U. States. Assuming the accuracy of this estimate, it follows that the net gain to the population by immigration from the British Isles during the past year is as follows:—

English and Scotch,	7,900
Irish,	1,100

9,000

Whilst about 5,277, or above one-third of the total number of emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland, who have arrived in Canada have passed over to our Southern neighbors. This is certainly not very encouraging. Of the European emigration, direct to the United States for year 1863, we have the following details. The total number landed at New York was 155,223. Of these there were from:—

Ireland,	92,631
Germany,	38,236
Great Britain,	20,206

MINING NEWS.—The *Sherbrooke Gazette*, while speaking in the most flattering terms of the success of the McCaw and Clarke mines in that neighborhood, warns the unwary not to enter into ventures without due caution. It is credibly informed that plenty of bogus mines are in the Boston market at fabulous prices, the properties on which they are said to be situated showing no indications of copper whatever. It advises parties in Boston, New York, and Montreal, who desire to speculate in those investments, to go to the spot and examine for themselves before making arrangements.