

The True Witness

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NEWS OF THE WEEK

A very sugry feeling is rapidly manifesting itself in England on account of the aggressions and monstrous pretensions of the Federal authorities; and unless these aggressions are discontinued, and these pretensions abandoned, it is greatly to be feared that war before long will be the result.

There is but one simple rule with respect to the rights of neutrals, which consistently with a due regard to its honor and its interests, the British Government can recognise; and that is, that a neutral ship, engaged in a bona fide voyage from one neutral port to another neutral port, has the right to carry any cargo her owners please to put on board of her, without molestation from either of the belligerents.

But whilst Federal cruisers have been seizing British ships bound to Mexican ports, it seems that Mr. Adams, the Minister of the Yankee Government in London, takes it upon himself to grant licenses to other vessels bound to the same ports, to carry arms and munitions of war for the use of the Mexicans in their war with France.

In the same way they have two rules, two sets of weights, and measures with respect to the building of ships by neutrals for the use of belligerents: one of which they insist upon applying to their neighbors, the other to themselves, with one of which they buy, selling with the other.

What we claim in this case, therefore, is by no means follows we can be asked to concede when we are neutral and Great Britain belligerent. In other words; we have a right to require that Great Britain shall prevent the building of rebel ships in her dockyards, and we are not bound by that precedent, if we choose hereafter to build ships for a nation friendly to us, and at war with Great Britain.

When such claims are coolly put forward by the Yankee press, and effect is given to them by the action of the Yankee cruisers, it would seem as if war were inevitable. Either these claims must be abandoned, or hostilities must ensue, for it is impossible that any nation, however weak, should submit to them without a struggle.

The intelligence from Europe is very meagre. We gather however from the last mails that the Poles still hold out; and it is added that, if Russia do not accede to the terms proposed in the joint note of the three Powers in behalf of Poland, Napoleon is prepared to draw the sword. In England the chief topic of conversation is the American war, and the complication in which that war may involve Great Britain.

is not sufficient legal evidence against her, to authorise her detention; we learn also that effectual measures are to be adopted to put an end to recruiting in Ireland for the rank of the Federal army. The reports of the state of the growing crops in Ireland are very satisfactory.

The army of the Potomac, under General Hooker, having crossed the Rappahannock river in two divisions, one above and the other below Fredericksburg, a series of severe battles commenced on Saturday last. The Confederates, whose communications with Richmond were threatened by General Hooker's movements, concentrated on their left: at a place called Chancellorsville, and there the main struggle took place. During the Saturday and Sunday the battle, or battles, continued, but with what result it is impossible to decipher from the very meagre and confused accounts forwarded to us by telegraph.

The telegrams we receive are however all made up to suit the Northern palate. Slight advantages are magnified into decisive victories, and severe repulses are glossed over. It leaks out, in spite of their precautions, that on Saturday the Yankees were well thrashed by the brave Confederates under General Lee, with the loss of 14 guns, and that one division of the invading army was driven off the field in confusion. Gen. Hooker had to fall back, and take up a new line, which he boasts is "impenetrable"—a strange boast for one acting on the offensive to make. There is every reason to hope that the Confederates may give their enemies another good drubbing; but up to the time of going to press, no positive information had reached us, as to the final result of the desperate struggle of the last three days.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.—The great party battle of the session commenced on Friday evening, when Mr. J. A. McDonald brought forward his motion of "Want of Confidence" in the present Ministry. Since then, the time of the Legislative Assembly has been occupied with the debate upon this motion, which still continues, and may be protracted to the very end of the week. Both parties profess to be confident of success; but the majority—on whichever side victory shall declare itself—will probably be but small. Our readers will, no doubt, be thankful that we do not inflict upon them the long discourses, which this motion of want of confidence has provoked.

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LIGHT READING.—We know no literature so light, so utterly destitute of stamina or nutritious matter, as that which evangelical papers are continually publishing in their columns, with reference to their "Foreign and Domestic Missions." Ice cream to a starving man would be a substantial dish in comparison with the frothy unsatisfying stuff which our contemporaries aforesaid are in the habit of dishing up for their respective readers. We are often a loss to know how the mess is received by the latter: whether they really like it, and have a relish for such mawkish intellectual provender; or whether they do not sometimes loathe the food set before them, and turn with qualms of conscience, if not of stomach from the unsavory and unwholesome potage with which their literary caterers provide them. A man blest with a good appetite takes pleasure in seeing a piece de resistance on the table before him, something solid upon which he can take off the sharp edge of his sacred hunger. But no such a dish figures in the carte of our evangelical friends; and their inhospitable board, even when most pretentious, most suggestive of a good repast, bears nothing more solid than soap-bubbles, or more savory than the risings of the dirty plates from whence departed guests have already eaten their fill.

We have got a lot of this "Religious Intelligence" before us, and we look upon it, we confess, with some such kind of melancholy curiosity as that with which a medical student may be supposed to regard a well developed tumor, or any other abnormal and revolting form of human disease. As he takes a pleasure in the dissecting room, and rejoices in the bottled specimens of morbid preparations which surround him, so can we take a certain strange delight in the moral and mental deformities with which the columns of journals such as the Montreal Witness and the Toronto Christian Guardian present us. It may appear cynical to make such a confession, as if we took delight in the public exhibition of human imbecility; as if the display of the folly of our fellow creatures—for is not even the editor of a Witness or of a Christian Guardian, "a man and a brother"—were matter of congratulation. But we cannot help it. If a man will write himself down an ass, why should we try to efface, or blot out the record? If the gentry of the conventicle volunteer to play the part of buffoons, why should we spurn the cheaply proffered entertainment? We confess it; in the dearth of other and more intellectual amusement we try to extract fun from the maudlin drivelings of the Methodist journal, and the inane babblings of the other member of the

evangelical press. What do the young men of the Protestant world for the most part go to Meeting for? Is it not to fall in with the girls, to see them home or "hum" after evening exercises, and then to poke fun at the preacher? They know what a humbug the whole evangelical concern is, and that it is only valuable or worth patronising as the provoker of mirth. Why then should not the Romanist looker on treat it as a humbug? or why should not be permitted a laugh at the solemn twaddle of Jabez Buser—what time the worthy man, copiously perspiring, narrates how gravely, oh! how graciously, the Lord has been pleased to bless the work; how the field is white unto the harvest—and how nought is wanted but a little, a very little more cash—for surely the laborer is worthy of his hire.

For after all this is the burden of the songs of our Zion—"give, give, give;" and it is partly perhaps the difficulty that the Missionaries encounter when endeavoring to explain what has become of the large sums of money placed at their disposal, that renders their Reports so vague and unsatisfactory, not to say bewildering. The Lord has always done, or is just about to do, great things; but what these great things are, or wherein Christianity is interested therein, it is impossible to discover. Take as a specimen the following extract of a Report from the Indian Mission Field, given by the Toronto Christian Guardian of the 29th ult:—

MISSIONS IN INDIA.—The general aspect of the Missionary work in India awakens at the present time, large expectations in the minds of those who are best qualified to form an opinion upon the subject. A missionary writes from Calcutta—"I cannot but express the conviction, which I share, I believe, with almost all missionaries, that vast changes are gradually but surely working themselves out in this land. There are comparatively few conversions—that is real change of heart and avowal of it, and consequent sufferings of manifold persecutions. But there is a vast amount of floating opinion, settled in nothing, but unsettledness, boasting of having found the truth in one of the many forms of Deism; but inwardly dissatisfied with everything; crying out, 'Who will show us any good?' and prepared, of course, for the influence of Divine grace, to be convinced that no good can be found except in the 'lifting up of the light of God's countenance.' The knowledge of the English language is being spread to a most astonishing extent. Every one is thirsting for it; and with it, of course, English ideas are being spread also. Let the educated natives of India have but moral strength to act up to their convictions, and marvelous indeed would be the result. Two refutations of Hindoo philosophy have just been published by learned native gentlemen. They are regarded by the Friend of India as marking the commencement of the apologetic epoch of the Indian Church. The cry from India is for more 'labourers.'

What there is in the actual aspect of Protestant Missionary work in India to awaken feelings either of gratitude, or of cheerful anticipation, we as Christians are at a loss to perceive.—'There are but "few conversions," we are told;—and there is a vast amount of scepticism, "settled in nothing but unsettledness." And this is the sum total of the work done by Protestant Missionaries, after generations of labor, and the expenditure of untold millions of dollars. Few conversions, and almost universal scepticism. If a tree may be known by its fruits, surely from the above confession of the Protestant Missionaries it is not hard to conclude what manner of tree the "Indian Protestant Church" itself must be.

Another promising "Mission Field" at the present moment is the Italian Peninsula. There the philosophical and religious principles of '89 are making considerable progress amongst the demoralised populations of the large towns; and a few lewd priests, of the Achilli, the Gavazzi, and the Chiniquy stripe, occasionally gladden the hearts of the faithful by their open profligacy, by their contempt for the sanctity of an oath, and the precepts of the Sixth Commandment. Out of such unpromising materials it is not easy, even for Protestant Missionaries, who are obliged to affect a regard for some Christian dogmas, and for Christian morality, to make a good story; but here again their platitudes, and their skillfully selected ambiguities enable them to tickle the fancies of an ill-informed and credulous Protestant public, with lively anticipations of the approaching wholesale conversion of the Peninsula to the faith as it is in Exeter Hall. Thus referring to the Christian Guardian, we find that a Methodist Missionary has been most courteously received at Parma; and that a Reverend Mr. Punshon has announced to a Missionary meeting at Leeds that "there were no fewer than five Romish priests ready at this moment to offer themselves to the Methodist Ministry;" and that moreover a real live "major in the army and a barrister were prepared to relinquish their present occupations and become disciples of the Gospel." The truth is, that infidelity and immorality are universal amongst the revolutionary party in Italy, as they were in France in '92; and these facts are gladly hailed by the Missionaries and Swaddlers as indubitable symptoms of Protestant progress, and of the spread of the principles of the Reformation.

The Home Mission "Reports" are those however in which the greatest amount of namby-pamby is to be found, and upon the composition of these the Missionaries expend their highest powers of twaddle. Here are some specimens selected at random from the Methodist organ from which we have above quoted:—"I have preached the Gospel!"—writes one Methodist

Missionary—"to many Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, and believe good was done. All these shanties were visited by Priests this winter, but their adherents have said they would rather bear us, because they could understand what said."

Mark, how by way of giving a seasoning to the above, an emphasis in the form of Italics is laid on the word "Priests," as if these were a kind of monsters—and their visits to their own flocks a sin. It is a consolation however that the superior natural endowments and intellectual acquirements of the Methodist Missionaries always suffice to silence and put to flight the emissaries of the Man of Sin. The same writer in the Christian Guardian—treating of the great things that the Lord has done on his mission, gravely informs the world that:—

"We have had considerable spiritual prosperity during the year. Our missionary meetings have been spirited and good. Our tea-meetings on the various missions have been very successful."

Are "tea-meetings" Scriptural? are they then the divinely appointed means for "spreading the Gospel? Do they confer grace, and are they supposed to supersede or take the place of the Eucharistic banquet? Reader, have you ever seen an evangelical "tea-meeting" with its mountains of buttered toast? for buttered toast is deemed a powerful instrument of conversion. Have you ever listened to the unctuous man of God presiding over the sacred banquet, exhorting the dear brothers and sisters—with the hot tea, and the buttered toast oozing out of him at every pore, and dribbling in innumerable streamlets over his greasy face, and his limp white choker, like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard? If you have not then have you never realised the fullness of sanctuary privileges, or the blessedness of the saints, to whom it has been appointed that they should carry tea and salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Here is another specimen, taken from the Montreal Witness of Saturday last, which in its turn quotes an evangelical journal of New York. The writer is a Rev. Theodore L. Cugley, and he is describing an inquiry meeting at which he had presided:—

"It was held in a large private house which had been thronged that night with a prayer meeting of unusual fervor and earnestness. The atmosphere seemed nearlly in its influence on all who came within it: even the lads who sat on the stairway in the hall were melted into a tearful solemnity, as if the day of judgment were projecting its shadow over the scene. Two or three veteran Christians wrestled at the mercy-seat: two or three sweet inviting hymns were sung—hymns that with invisible bands took hold of every soul present and led them up toward &c., &c., &c.

The rest is blasphemous, and we need not repeat it; or tell how one young woman burst into tears, and could not be put together again for ever so long—how another went home in "strong despair," and a bombazine gown—how a young lawyer "who had been running away from the meetings for a fortnight to escape the Spirit," was "cut down" and fell into violent convulsions "crying for mercy." The man, albeit a lawyer, is now a deacon, we are told; now the rest of the acts of the Rev. Theodore L. Cugley, and his gracious conversation, are they not written in the columns of the Montreal Witness?

Seldom do these reports deal in facts and figures; but as an exception we find one missionary reporting the conversion of 15 head of children, who "have professed to find peace in believing," and of whom "some have been made subjects of converting grace." But as a general rule, and when the conversion of a Papist, or a controversial triumph over a "Romish priest" is announced, we are never allowed to be witnesses of the process, or to obtain a glimpse of the arguments by which the emissary of the Man of Sin was confounded. This reticence is to say the least, prudent on the part of our evangelical friends; but it is one of the causes of the general insipidity of their narratives. Whether relating to "Home" or "Foreign" fields their Reports are all alike, for in neither of these fields has Protestantism, as represented by the sects still professing to retain a smattering of Christianity, ought to boast of, or upon which it can afford to enter into truthful details. We do not deny that Catholics often lose their faith, and renounce their Church, but when they do so they invariably renounce every vestige of their Christianity. And it must be so, because no man can admit the premises of Protestantism—which are that there is not on earth any living infallible Church or teacher of truth in the supernatural order,—without thereby admitting that the person known in history as Christ was either an impostor, or an enthusiast; and that in neither case, is the religion, or code of dogmas attributed to Christ, worth preserving, or entitled to the respect of any educated and conscientious person. The same argument that destroys belief in the divine mission and infallibility of the Catholic Church, is destructive of all belief in the divine mission and infallibility of Christ.

ORANGEISM IN THE LOWER PROVINCES.—We learn from the Vindicator that the Legislature of P. E. Island has passed a Bill to incorporate the Orange Society and that the Lieut.-Governor has given his assent thereunto. Great excitement prevails, and meetings are being held to prepare petitions to the Queen praying Her Majesty to disallow the Bill when laid before her for the Royal approval.

EMIGRATION.—We have received the Second Report of the Committee on Immigration and Colonization, printed by order of the Legislative Assembly, and signed by the Chairman, Mr. Archibald McKellan. The Committee contents itself for the present with recapitulating some foregoing recommendations, and making the following suggestions:—

(1). That an Emigrant Map of Canada, showing the settled, partially settled, and wholly unsettled portions of the country, ought to be at once prepared under the supervision of the proper Department, and every means taken to ensure its being generally circulated throughout the British Islands, Germany, and the Northern countries of Europe.

(2). That Township or District Maps be distributed gratuitously, or at a nominal price, to immigrants or native settlers, thus teaching them, through the eye, the situation and boundaries of their future property; and for this purpose that copies of such Maps should be placed on board the Canadian Line of steamers, and other emigrant passenger vessels; also in the possession of the local Clergy, Crown Land Agents, Colonization Road Agents, and Emigration Agents.

(3). That an Agent be appointed for New York and Portland, during the emigration season.

(4). That an Agent be appointed to reside in England, with large powers, and corresponding rank, who might in other respects also be found useful as a Representative of the Province.

The recommendations of the Committee seem good in their way; but it must be remembered that little can be done by mere legislation to attract emigrants from Europe to Canada, and to retain them here after they have arrived. These things are determined not by legislation, not by Reports of Special Committees, not even by the representations of Emigration Agents, but simply by the natural and material advantages of the Province. "Good wine" says the old adage "needs no bush." A country which holds out many and great material advantages to the immigrant; which is blessed with a mild climate and fertile soil; where labor is constantly in demand, and the rates of wages are high and steady, will never experience any difficulty in obtaining hundreds and thousands to till its waste lands, to break up its virgin soil, and to develop its resources. On the other hand, it is in vain to puff up a country which is wanting in any of these natural advantages; whose climate is severe and unpropitious, whose soil refuses readily to yield up its treasures to the husbandman, and where the labor market is periodically crowded or overstocked. Indeed it is a fact, and a striking fact, that those countries or colonies which have been the least cursed, which have been the least legislated for, and to which emigration has been the least forced, have thriven the best—as in the case of the colonies on the southern and eastern seaboard of New Holland. Men of all classes rushed to these, not because of the excellence of their several systems of emigration, but because of the immense natural advantages which they held out to settlers, both to capitalists, and to those whose sole capital consisted of a strong back, and a stout heart; and any other country which possesses the same advantages in an equal degree, will prove equally attractive to the intending immigrant. Men will flock to it as naturally as water flows down hill; and the legislator may sit down and quietly smoke his pipe the while.—All that we would ask, or expect of him, is that he abstain from putting any obstacles in the way of the stream which will most assuredly flow towards every country blest with a genial climate, a fertile soil, and a never ceasing demand for labor.

When the stream of emigration slackens, or when it is diverted to other shores than ours—we may be certain of two things. First, that the pressure upon the means of subsistence in the mother country, has relaxed; and secondly, that we no longer hold out such material advantages to the settler as do those other countries towards which the stream of emigration directs itself. It is the custom we know, always to attribute every thing to the action of Government; to say "Oh! if the Government would but do this, or had not done that—we should be receiving immigrants in shoals, and from all quarters." Widely spread however as is this belief, we look upon it as a delusion, and a most singular delusion. It is the pressure upon the means of subsistence at home which compels men to emigrate; their destination, or future site is determined for them—(1) by the respective natural and material advantages of the several countries open to colonisation—and (2) by the cost of voyage. Not one in a thousand or a million bothers his head about the action of the Government, or is influenced by the Reports of Blue Books. If, for instance, a larger number of the emigrants from the British Islands prefer the United States to Canada as their future home, it is because the climate of the latter is colder, its winters shorter and less severe, and the price of labor—before the war at least—higher and steadier. To these causes, and not to any remissness on the part of our rulers, do we attribute the fact, that the United States receive annually more immigrants from Europe than do the Provinces of British North America; and in the same manner, and for the same reason, the latter attract more of the annual immigration than do the countries lying further North, in the vicinity of Hudson's Bay, and the Arctic Sea. No legislation, however bad, will deter people from emigrating to a country which possesses certain natural advantages; and no legislation,