

The True Witness.

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We beg to remind our Correspondents that no letters will be taken out of the Post-Office, unless prepaid.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26.

NEWS OF THE WEEK

The long dreaded event has occurred; the first shot has been fired, and in a few weeks Europe may be all on fire. Indeed, at present, it is almost certain that the Western Powers will be compelled to take part in the contest just inaugurated in Schleswig. The details of this affair have not yet fully reached us; but it appears that the Austrians and Prussians having first sustained a repulse at the hands of the Danes, had again advanced and driven the latter from the town of Schleswig. This war is actually declared; and it is to be supposed that this will be immediately followed by an outbreak in Hungary, and by that attack upon Venetia for which the Piedmontese have long been getting themselves ready. What part Great Britain will play in the round game in which all are invited to take part, it is as yet hard to say; but France will no doubt see therein the long coveted opportunity for rectifying her North Eastern frontier.

The appeal in the *Alexandra* case had been heard on the 6th instant, and the judgment of the Court thereupon was to have been given on the 8th. In the British Parliament the Address in reply to the Queen's speech had been carried without amendment, in both Houses. Lord Derby in the House of Lords, and Mr. D'Israeli in the Lower House took the Ministry warmly to task for their foreign policy. Lord Russell replied to Lord Derby, and Lord Palmerston vindicated himself against the attack of D'Israeli.

There is nothing whatever to report from the United States. An expedition destined to subdue Florida has started, and it is said that negro troops are to be chiefly employed in the campaign. The siege of Charleston seems to be virtually abandoned.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.—On Friday last the 19th inst., at three o'clock in the afternoon, His Excellency the Governor General opened the second session of the eighth Provincial Parliament. Having taken his seat on the throne, and the members of the Legislative Council being present, His Excellency was pleased to command the attendance of the Lower House; which having been done he delivered himself as follows:—

Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council, Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly:

"I am happy again to meet you in Parliament, and I feel confident that during the Session now commenced your best attention will be bestowed on Legislation for the public welfare."

I have taken steps for carrying into effect the act passed during last session for the organization of the militia force of the Province, and I will continue my best efforts for the attainment of so important an object. The period is approaching when by the conditions of the Treaty of Reciprocity between Her Majesty and the U. S. of America, the notice for the determination of its provisions may be given at the option of either party. I have not failed to give my best attention to the subject of this treaty, and of the great interests affected by it. Your attention will be invited to measures designed for the improvement of our existing system of inland water communication, to attract to the channel of the St. Lawrence a larger share than we have heretofore enjoyed of the great and rapidly growing commerce of the western lakes. You will also be invited to consider the expediency of providing for such improvements of the canals constructed to obviate the natural impediment to the navigation of the Ottawa River, as will, as its believed, without involving a heavy outlay, greatly accelerate the development of the extensive and valuable territory drained by that noble stream and its tributaries. Unforeseen obstacles have retarded the survey of the route of the proposed railway way between this Province and the sister Colonies of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Arrangements are, however, in progress which, I trust, will soon lead to the execution of this preliminary work, the results of which will enable all parties to form a more satisfactory estimate than is possible at present of the expense and practicability of the proposed undertaking.

The condition of the vast region lying to the North West of the settled portions of the Province, is daily becoming a subject of greater interest. I have considered it advisable to open a correspondence with the Imperial Government, with a view to arrive at a precise definition of the geographical boundaries of Canada in that direction. Such a definition of boundary is a desirable preliminary to further proceedings with respect to the vast tracts of land in that quarter belonging to Canada, but not yet brought under the action of our political and municipal system.

The construction of the public buildings at Ottawa since the resumption of work last spring, has been prosecuted with so much diligence as to justify me in announcing to the officers of the civil service, the intended early removal thither of the Seat of Government in pursuance of Her Majesty's selection of that city as the future Capital of Canada.

The discoveries of gold and other valuable ores within the Province which have recently been made and which have attracted very general attention, appear to call for legislation both as regards the more

systematic and perfect development of our mineral wealth, and the rights as well of the public as of private individuals connected with it.

I would also suggest to you the expediency of making legislative provision for ensuring a more efficient system of investigation into the cause of shipwrecks, occurring on or near the sea coast of the Province, as well as of similar disasters which though occurring elsewhere, may, from the nature of the attendant circumstances, seem calculated to affect the reputation of our marine service.

A fresh contract for our Ocean Mail Steamship Service has been entered into on terms which will be submitted for your consideration, and which will, I believe, be found to combine efficiency, economy and safety.

I would further invite your attention to the state of the existing laws relative to Parliamentary elections, to bankrupt and insolvent debtors, to the administration of justice, to the encouragement of agriculture and of the fisheries, to the regulation of titles to real estate, and to the granting of patents for inventions.

Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly:

The public accounts for the past year will be laid before you, as also estimates for the supplies required for the current year. These estimates will be found to have been prepared with a careful attention to economy. I rejoice that I am enabled to inform you that the revenue of the past year considerably exceeds the estimate submitted to you last session, whilst the aggregate expenditure for the public service of the year was less than the estimated amount.

Notwithstanding these gratifying results, however, there was a large excess of expenditure over income and as the revenue derivable from existing sources is clearly inadequate to meet the annual charges on the public Treasury, measures will be submitted for your consideration calculated to equalize the annual income with the annual expenditure of the country.

Hon. Gentlemen and Gentlemen:—I commit the affairs of the Province to your patriotic and disinterested consideration, earnestly hoping that under the favor of Divine Providence, your deliberations during this session may be productive of results conducive to the prosperity of Canada and the happiness of her people.

The Governor General then retired. The Speech from the throne was agreed to be taken into consideration on Monday the 22nd, by the House of Assembly, and on Tuesday the 23rd, by the Legislative Council.

It has been remarked that the Governor's speech contains no allusion to the birth of an heir to the Prince of Wales. This strange oversight, to whatever cause owing, will we hope be rectified in the Address in reply, so that no occasion may be given to people in England to accuse us Canadians of want of loyalty, and of intentional disrespect towards our Queen.

The vote on the Address is looked forward to with anxiety by the public, and with confidence by both of the contending parties. Opposition and Ministerialists muster strong, and parties are very nearly balanced; but the result of the Debate cannot be known until after we shall have gone to press.

On the motion of Mr. J. S. Macdonald, seconded by M. Cartier, an address, congratulating the Queen on the birth of an heir to the Prince of Wales, has been carried unanimously.

THE "GLOBE" AND FREEDOM OF OPINION.

—How different do the same things appear to different men, as seen through differently coloured pairs of spectacles. So true it is, as Carlyle observes, that in every object, "the eye sees in it what the eye brings means of seeing." That, and no more. So, seen through a pair of Catholic spectacles, the late events in Italy which made the King of Piedmont master of the territories of his weaker neighbors, appear as acts of fraud, and theft. Seen through a pair of Protestant spectacles the same objects appear in very different colors; and the *Globe* perceives "in the champions of Italian independence, the champions also of free speech, of free thought, of the right of men to judge for themselves." And yet, the intrinsic merits of the things seen and so differently appreciated, remain the same: for things are what they are, and not always what they seem to be.

But there is moreover this peculiarity in the Protestant spectacles; that they make the same acts appear, white or black, good or evil, according as they are adverse, or propitious, to a Catholic Sovereign and the Catholic Church.—Had a Catholic prince, one devoted to the Holy See, acted towards one of his Protestant neighbors as Victor Emmanuel has acted towards the smaller Italian Sovereigns, the *Globe* would have seen therein but an act of grossest treachery, and the triumph of brute force over right.—Were the authority of Queen Victoria in Ireland to be overthrown by the same means as those by which the authority of the King of Naples was overthrown in Sicily and the South of Italy, the *Globe* would perceive clearly that "freedom of opinion, free thought, and free speech" were terms not properly applicable to acts of violence and bloodshed. The discontented Irish, the *Globe* would tell us, and their sympathizers on this side of the Atlantic, have a perfect right to their opinions, and to express those opinions; but they have no right to take up arms against their legitimate sovereign; no right to conspire against her authority, or to fit out expeditions in the United States against her territories. As the *Globe* would judge the Irish and the Americans, were a band of filibusters from New York to land in Ireland; and were the Government of the United States without declaration of war, and whilst still professing amity toward the Queen, and disclaiming all complicity with the said filibusters, to send out a powerful army and navy to assist, and profit by, the acts of the latter—so, if he has any regard for consistency, would we beg of the *Globe*

to judge of the acts of Garibaldi, and Victor Emmanuel. Would he then defend such treachery, such violence upon the plea that he saw in the chief actors, the "champions, of free speech, of free thought, of the right of men to judge for themselves?"

The *Globe* need not attempt to rejoin that in the above representation of the Italian question we have unfairly stated the action of Piedmont towards Naples, or the conduct of Victor Emmanuel, Cavour, and Garibaldi; because if he does so we will retort against him strong Protestant testimony—that, in fact, of *Blackwood* whom no one can suspect of seeing things through a Romish glass, darkly. Let us see then how in such a staunch Protestant periodical as *Blackwood*, the process by which the Kingdom of Naples was annexed to Piedmont is described and judged. The writer is indignantly repudiating the comparison which M. Peruzzi, the Italian Minister of the Interior had attempted to institute betwixt the English Revolution of '83, and that of Italy:—

"We would simply declare that, to make the cases analogous some few details are wanting. The Ministers of William, for instance, should have been in close and friendly relations with the Cabinet of St. James'. Amicable remonstrances as to the danger of this or that policy: friendly warnings as to the perils of opposing popular demands when pressed with force and vigour; wise counsels how to guide the States amidst the quicksands of Revolution around; and lastly as a lulling security against all present danger, hints about maritime conventions, and commercial treaties which should unite the two countries in closer amity. The Dutch Cavour should have done this, and more; he should have assured the English Cabinet that he was fully prepared to suppress all unauthorized interference, all buccannery expeditions, and that strict orders had been given to some Dutch *Persone* to cruise off Cornwall and the Lizard, and suffer no suspicious craft to effect a landing."—*Blackwood*, July, 1863. p. 62.

Had the Prince of Orange and his Ministers been guilty of all these acts of duplicity, or as plain men would call them, of lying; had they bought over the officers of the English army, and corrupted all James' Ministers, then admits the Protestant *Blackwood*, the analogy betwixt the English and Italian Revolutions would have been, not complete, but "closer;" even then the Protestant Englishman having the honor of his country, and his religion at heart, would be loth to compare the process which transferred the Crown of three kingdoms from James to William, with that which has given the King of Piedmont temporary military possession of the dominions of the King of Naples.

The obliquity of moral vision which characterizes the *Globe* is we say due to the deep hue of his Protestant spectacles. All weapons thus seen appear to be fair against the Church and her friends. Therefore to lie, to cozen, and betray were in the eyes of the *Globe*, not only lawful acts, but laudable and honorable, when employed to the detriment of the Pope and his allies. In those who availed themselves of such weapons he can see only "the champions of free speech, of free thought, and the right of men to judge for themselves." Such champions also will the *Globe* find in abundance in the convict hulks and in the Penitentiaries; only unkind fate has compelled them to exercise their gifts on a smaller theatre than that allotted to Victor Emmanuel and Mazzini, to Cavour and Garibaldi; and society brands them as felons, instead of glorifying them as heroes. So capricious is fortune.

The crimes perpetrated in the abused name of liberty are not more numerous than are the absurdities of which Liberal Protestants are guilty in their laudations of freedom of opinion, freedom of thought, and freedom of speech. They will, it is true, grant this freedom to every man; but with one little proviso—that he think in conformity with their thoughts, that he utter no word to contradict their words. Thus if in Naples a Romish Bishop, or a Popish priest think that the usurpations of Victor Emmanuel are a grievous wrong, and refuse accordingly at the bidding of the usurper to mock God with a *Te Deum* and solemn rites of praise, he is haled to prison as a malefactor in the name of "freedom of opinion;" if he denounce the tyranny, he is forthwith dealt with as a convicted felon; and if the loyal peasantry of Naples take up arms in vindication of their opinions, as did Garibaldi and his companions in vindication of theirs, the former are summarily shot as "brigands."—Such is the "freedom of opinion," and the "right of men to judge for themselves" which Liberalism awards us, and which Protestants of the *Globe* type admire. It means simply unrestricted licence for themselves, and the right to impose silence upon all who differ from them.—It means the right of all subjects of Catholic Princes to revolt against their rulers; and the duty of the Catholic subjects of Protestant sovereigns to submit without a murmur to all the cruelties and exactions which their oppressors may inflict. Always are our Protestant Liberals bound to give themselves the lie.

So, when treating of a society called the *Fenian Brotherhood*, denounced both on this Continent and in Ireland by the Catholic Church, the *Globe* tells us with his accustomed regard for consistency that:—

"If any danger were to be apprehended to the empire from the machinations of these societies, it would be necessary for the administrators of the law to exercise their authority in Canada, and for the Imperial Government to call upon the authorities of the United States to suppress societies formed for the

purpose of exciting the subjects of a friendly State to rebellion."—*Globe*.

"Rightly reasoned," good master Dogberry of the *Globe*; such no doubt would be, under the circumstances you have supposed, the duty of the Imperial Government. But what, an if the authorities of the United States thus appealed to, "to suppress societies formed for the purpose of exciting the subjects of a friendly State to rebellion," were to enact towards the Fenians the part Victor Emmanuel and Cavour enacted as towards Garibaldi and his associates! What if the American Government were to encourage them, secretly, and to give them all the aid in its power to prosecute their enterprise; were to furnish them with money, arms, and ships, whilst professing the most friendly sentiments towards Queen Victoria; and when, through its connivance the Fenian filibusters had sailed, had landed in Ireland, and after various fortunes were on the point of being thoroughly and ignominiously routed, were, without any declaration of war, to rush to their assistance with a powerful army—what, we ask, would be your estimate of the conduct of the said "American authorities?" and would you accept in justification of that conduct the plea that the "Fenian Brothers" were "the champions of Irish independence, of free speech, of free thought, and of the right of men to judge for themselves?" If you would not admit that plea in the supposed case of the "Fenians," if you would not applaud the action of the American Government, you would stand self-convicted of inconsistency and of double-dealing; you would make good the charge we have often urged against you—that you have two sets of weights and measures—one for your own use as Protestants, another for you Catholic neighbors.

FAITH AND SUPERSTITION.—"The *penchant* for what are termed the 'occult sciences,'" writes the Paris correspondent of the *Montreal Herald* under date of the 26th ult., "which has been apparently one of the characteristics of the human mind in all ages of the world's history, and has been accounted for in many various ways by psychologists, is very far from having died out of the French mind, notwithstanding the positivism and materialism which are so rife in this country."—*Montreal Herald*, 18th inst.

The correspondent of the *Herald* may be an acute observer of facts actually transpiring around him, but he must have but a very superficial acquaintance with the past, and with the phenomena of the human mind, or he would not have used the little word, "*notwithstanding*," which we have ventured to italicise. Had he been accustomed to look beyond the surface of things, and to read the human heart, he would have said that the "*penchant* for the occult sciences" is rapidly spreading in France because of its positivism and materialism, and as the natural and inevitable consequence of its rejection of Catholicity, and consequent loss of faith."

No psychological fact is better established than this: That faith is the only antidote to superstition; and that men, if they cast off the one, must inevitably fall victims to the other. The wide spread, and rapidly extending devil-worship of the non-Catholic or Protestantised communities of France and of the United States, can surprise no one who has studied the history of the past; or from the collection of facts has endeavored to attain to the knowledge of their causes, and of the moral laws of our being.

Man cannot live on the natural laws alone.—He, in spite of himself, clings to the supernatural, to the belief in something that cannot be seen, felt, or heard, weighed in the scales, or measured by the linen-draper's yard. No doubt the physicists can show conclusively, that according to the settled order of the universe, belief in a God who governs the universe is a very silly thing, and that to pray to such a God is eminently unphilosophical. They may by their arguments defraud the unstable of their faith, but they do but prepare the way for the inroads of superstition. They may haply do somewhat to discredit the Christian religion; but the final triumph is always to inaugurate an era of "devil-worship," or, as in courteous phrase it is termed, "of the cultivation of the occult sciences."

Thus the ready acceptance that the pretended "*medium*" or necromancer obtains amongst all Protestantised, or Je-Catholicised communities so far from being an abnormal or inexplicable phenomenon, follows as naturally and directly the rejection of the Catholic Church, as do the ebbing and the flowing of the tides from lunar attraction and the revolution of the earth upon its axis; thus the "*penchant* for what are termed the occult sciences" in France, is the logical consequence of that "*positive*" philosophy and that gross "*materialism*" which are so generally accepted in France as the results of free thinking and modern Protestant philosophy. Now as under the Regency, when it was no longer fashionable to believe in God, or assist at Mass, Messieurs les Philosophes acknowledge a devil, and reverently take part in the mystic rites whereby that personage is summoned to their aid. Side by side with the intensely Pro-

testant or anti-Catholic literature of the day—such, for instance, as M. Renan's "*Life of Jesus*," is springing up a literature of the "*black art*"—for the human mind is a soil, which can never be altogether barren, and if it bear not fruit and flowers, it must of necessity bring forth noxious weeds. The correspondent of the *Herald* furnishes us with the titles of some of the chief products of this devil's literature, which are curious, both as showing the last results of the "*positive*" and "*materialistic*" philosophy in France, and the extent to which a degrading superstition has spread itself amongst the people:—

"There exists in this City," says our informant, writing from Paris, "a much more numerous band of 'spiritists' than is generally supposed. These people hold '*seances*' and '*circles*' for interrogating the inhabitants of 'the other world,' and support a couple of periodicals, one of which—*La Revue Spirite*—seems to rejoice in a tolerably well filled list of subscribers."

This form of *diablerie* is familiar to our readers under the name of "Spirit Rapping" of which it is but a development. In their pursuit of the "occult sciences" the French freethinkers have however got far beyond this stage of superstition, and are taking up with some of the more ancient forms such as obtained in the pre-Christian world—"Chiromancy" to wit, and the study of the "*Kabbala*":—

"The study of the Kabbala has also been revived here of late; and boasts several adepts, who in their own opinion, and that of their disciples, are treading in the steps of Moses and the Chaldeans. The head and chief of these porters into ancient mysteries is Mr. A. Constant, who under his hierophantic name of 'Eliphas levi' has published a book entitled '*Dogma and Ritual of High Magic*,' which book is accepted almost as a Revelation from Heaven by his followers."

The adepts in "Chiromancy" are not without their prophets; and a M. Desbarrolles has published a work—"The Mysteries of the Hand"—which professes to teach how to gain an insight into the future destinies of any given person by the study of the lines of his hand; an art which we fondly hoped had been for ever consigned to gypsies and such like small deer, but which is now it seems assiduously pursued by the countrymen and contemporaries of M. Renan. Astrology also has its votaries, and the correspondent of the *Herald* adds:—

"Fortune telling from cards, and the study of numbers as a key to the art of divination, are all greatly in vogue just now."

Then follows a long list of modern and ancient works on magic published, and for sale by the leading librarians of Paris, on which our informant thus comments:—

The sight of this list is positively enough to make one rub one's eyes, and ask oneself in wonder 'in what year are we living?' and 'what Great Book of Destiny, or General Repository of the Occult Sciences, compiled from Albert le Grand, Nicholas Hamel, Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa, Etteilla, Gail, Lavater, &c., containing the Explanatory Dictionary of Dreams, the Art of Knowing the Future, the art of telling fortunes by cards, the language of flowers, the art of black magic, and the art of white magic, by Frederic de la Grange.'

Besides these, and a lot of other works with similar titles, Dantou's list of new books includes various others on the Kabbala, Alchemy, Solomon's Seal, Aaron's breast-plate, and every branch of the "shadowy science."

The works on the Kabbala and Magic seem to be less popular than those on the hands and the art of telling the fortune by the aids of cards.

The Kabbala dealing in the complicated relations of numbers, and in 'philosophic' abstractions in regard to the Divine, to Cosmogony, and the existence of created beings, goes over too much laborious speculation, to attract many students. As for magic, notwithstanding its well known division into 'Black' and 'White'—the former bringing you into communication with Bad Spirits, and the latter with Good Ones—the word still carries with it an odour of graves and brimstone which repels the popular imagination. A magician is still popularly conceived of as a dubious sort of being, something between a man and a Ghost, with a high cap, a long beard, a wide mantle, and an incomprehensible wand, who kills children and black cats at midnight in some dark grove, or cavern, and boils their bones and blood with frogs, snakes, poisonous herbs, and perfumes, in a dreadful big cauldron, over a fire not kindled by any earthly alumnite. So the sale of the books on magic is not much more lively than that of the works of Kabbalistic lore.

The favorite branches of "Occult" learning are Palmistry and Cards. The new book on Palmistry alluded to above—and which is but one of the many in vogue on this subject—has already reached its fourth edition; and so great is the interest created by it, that the author, besieged by incessant applications from people wanting farther instruction, or an interpretation 'from headquarters' of the signs of their hands, has opened a course of lectures for students of palmistry, and has his days of 'reception' for people willing to pay him a fee of 20 francs for a 'consultation' on the lines of their hands.

As for the Cards, their students and professors are legion. You can scarcely go to a *soiree* without meeting some amateur, or hearing of the wonderful skill of some professional adept. Of the latter, one, in particular, enjoys a vogue such as no one has arrived at since the days of the famous Mlle. Lenormand. But what I have to say about this singular person, and the extraordinary things attributed to him, must be reserved for my next letter.

The consideration of these things, the contemplation of the last results of the material and rationalistic philosophy of the XIX century, should reconcile us poor Papists with our religion, and teach us to esteem more highly the privilege which we enjoy, in that by our faith we are delivered from the attacks of a degrading superstition. The sneers of the enlightened freethinkers of the age will scarce affect Catholics, if they but give themselves the trouble to note the results of "freethinking" and modern materialism, as exemplified in the actual moral and mental condition of those who in the pride of their intellect have discarded Christianity, and the teachings of the Church as a pack of fables fit only for children and old women. Assuredly the men who study the Kabbala have no right to laugh at those who hear Mass; neither have they who have renounced the counsels of the priest in the Confessional, for the revelations of the Chiromancist, any reason to boast of having thereby made a good exchange.