

The True Witness.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JAN. 4.

ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR.

JANUARY—1867.

- Friday, 4—Octave of Holy Innocents.
- Saturday, 5—Vigil of the Epiphany.
- Sunday, 6—FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY.
- Monday, 7—Of the Octave.
- Tuesday, 8—Of the Octave.
- Wednesday, 9—Of the Octave.
- Thursday, 10—Of the Octave.

CHRISTMAS.—This great Festival was ushered in with Midnight Mass in the principal churches of this City, at which large numbers of our citizens—both Protestants and Catholics assisted.

St. Patrick's Church.—The interior of this fine building, through the liberality of our Irish fellow-citizens, and the exertions of its Pastor, the Rev. P. Dowd, presented a magnificent spectacle. The High Altar was as it were ablaze with lights tastefully arranged, and the other decorations of the sacred building were in keeping. The music selected for the occasion was Haydn's 16th Mass which was well rendered by the choir. The solos in particular were beautifully executed; indeed no pains have been spared by our Saint Patrick friends to secure the services of able musicians. The church was thronged, every aisle was crammed—and though every assistance was most generously tendered by the habitual congregation and every exertion made by the clergy of the Church, it was no easy matter to obtain even standing room, so great was the desire to obtain admittance.

The Gesu.—This splendid church, the erection of the Jesuit Fathers now happily restored to Canada, presented as the hour of Midnight on Christmas Eve chimed, a grand spectacle, as the Reverend Father Superior ascended to the Altar to celebrate the Birth of the infant Jesus. During the Offertory was well sung Lambillotte's Pastoral, and during the Communion, the joyous strains of the *Adesce Fideles* broke upon the ears of the kneeling multitudes, recalling the solemn moment when suddenly there appeared a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and singing, Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.

Whilst we cheerfully recognise the general urbanity of our Protestant fellow-citizens, and congratulate ourselves on the *entente cordiale* that obtains here in Montreal betwixt all denominations, truth compels us to state that the conduct of some well dressed persons—we do not say ladies or gentlemen—present in the church of the Gesu at Midnight Mass was indecorous to the extreme, and very offensive not only to Catholics, but to all right-minded Protestants.—People who cannot conscientiously behave reverently in a Catholic Church had better keep away altogether, since they are neither obliged, nor invited, to assist at Catholic worship; but all who attend must be given to understand that if they will not conduct themselves orderly and reverently, they will be turned out without ceremony. To the great majority of our Protestant fellow-citizens this admonition is we know unnecessary; but there are some well dressed "black sheep" amongst them who are by courtesy styled ladies and gentlemen because of their wealth—brother members of that shoddy-ocracy or plutocracy which is the bane and disgrace of this Continent. It is to these that our remarks are addressed, and we will hope not in vain.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The latest tidings from Ireland are reassuring. The Fenian excitement is dying out, and the promise of Mr. Stephens that he would certainly and at all hazards, raise the Fenian standard in Ireland before the 1st of January, 1867, has been signally falsified. A person of the name of Millen, styling himself General and "President of the Military Council of Ireland," has published a letter in the Dublin papers, wherein he denounces the C. O. I. R.—the mystic letters wherewith Mr. Stephens proclaims his rank as Chief Organizer of the Irish Republic—as a swindler, a bungler, and a rascal. This letter has created a profound sensation, and to deaden its force, it is by some cried down as a device of the British Government to ruin Stephens in the eyes of the people. Spies, and informers are as common in the Fenian ranks as blackberries, and it is impossible therefore to say who amongst

them is, and who is not, in receipt of Government pay. The actual whereabouts of Mr. Stephens is still a mystery; the only thing certain about the man is that he has got the money, and that he means to stick to it.

And should this prove to be the end of the matter, a blessed thing will it be for Ireland, which has too long been a prey to mercenary patriots and intriguers practising upon the ardent feelings of their generous, but too easily duped countrymen. We shall be spared a renewal of the horrors of '98, and the spectacle of the atrocities to which a civil war in Ireland would doubtless give rise. The result of such a war in the present position of the world cannot be doubtful. After a little hard-fighting and many a cruel act of retaliation, the flames of insurrection would be quenched in the blood of the insurgents. The Orange faction would again ride rough-shod over Ireland; and the last state of that unhappy country would be worse than the first. This the Catholic Bishops and Clergy of Ireland well know, and therefore have they never ceased to denounce in the name of the Church, and of Ireland, the unhallowed schemes of the Fenian secret society.

We have nothing worthy of much notice from Continental Europe. Up to the latest dates all was quiet at Rome. The war in Candia still continued, and it is said that revolution is imminent in Spain.

FREEMASONRY.—On this subject the *Transcript*, of Friday last, has an article, wherein our contemporary criticizes pretty freely, or very rashly, the action of the Catholic Church towards the Freemasons, and all other secret organizations.

"In some countries, the Church, as the protector of the people against the wiles of the devil, has been so unwise as to take notice of its secret meetings.—But now every unprejudiced person knows that they have no association with the Illuminati, and Carbonari in Italy, or with any politically disaffected.—In Canada we believe them to be a loyal body."—*Transcript*, 28th ult.

This last statement we will not call in question. We believe that in Canada, and the British Empire generally, the Freemasons are, as a rule, quite as loyal as are any other of Her Majesty's subjects. But the world is large, and is not all comprised within the limits of the British Empire; and the loyalty of the Freemason subject of Queen Victoria is no argument, or guarantee for the loyalty of Freemasons in other quarters of the globe.

Our contemporary is in grievous error, though we dearest in perfect good faith, when he asserts that there is no connection betwixt the organization known as Freemasonry, and that of the *Illuminati*. On this subject we refer our very ill-informed friend the *Transcript*, to the works of M. Louis Blanc, than whom few men in Europe at the present day have more carefully studied the great social questions, or more deeply probed the social wounds, which disturb the peace, and menace the very life of the existing social order of Christendom. The testimony of M. Louis Blanc is, if favorable to the hostile action of the Catholic Church as towards Freemasonry, decisive; for in the first place, or in so far as the moral value of his testimony is concerned, he cannot be suspected even of partiality towards Popery, or even Christianity in any form; and in the second place, or with respect to his intellectual competency as a witness upon the matter in dispute, it is certain that no living man has had better or more ample means of information, than has the great Socialistic writer whom we cite.

Now what is his testimony? He deposes, and by clearest evidence establishes the fact, that *Illuminism*, as preached by Cagliostro and Weisshaupt, is but a degree, an advanced degree of Freemasonry; to the inferior degrees of which it stands in the same relation that the plant stands in as towards the seed, that the fully developed man stands in as towards the child. Amongst British Freemasons, few, if any, have ever been admitted to the higher degrees of the Order; they are for the most part profoundly ignorant that far beyond, and far above, the degrees to which any of them, even the most advanced, have attained, there exist other degrees, other secrets, other oaths, other rites and ceremonies of institution, and to which other obligations are attached. The initiated into the lower degrees of Freemasonry are as ignorant of what transpires in the Lodges of these higher and more sublime degrees, as are the profane vulgar of the transactions of the ordinary Masonic Lodge. Nay! they are far more ignorant; for whilst the existence of the latter is known to every body, the great mass of Freemasons are not even aware of the existence of those degrees to which we allude, and of which M. Louis Blanc gives some of the particulars. What amongst British subjects generally passes for Freemasonry is but the first step to, or vestibule of an immense and by them unexplored temple of whose very existence they are ignorant; in their highest orders of the craft, they are but in a rudimentary state, embryo Freemasons at the best. This we remind the *Transcript* is not our saying, but that of M. Louis Blanc, whose moral and intellectual competency as a witness will be but

lightly affected even by the incredulity of our Little Peddlington Solos.

Further, M. Louis Blanc deposes and establishes the fact that the French Revolution of the last century was in great measure the work of the Freemasons, whose work he defends and eulogises especially for this—that its peculiar features as a social, and anti-Christian Revolution were stamped upon it by the Freemasons.—But here again we must refer our contemporary to the voluminous author whom we cite; and more especially to those passages of his works, wherein he treats of the relations existing betwixt Continental Freemasons, and the Duke of Orleans, Philippe Egalite, and the election of the latter to the post of *Grand Orient*. Were our contemporary but a little better posted up in the social history of the eighteenth century, he would not be so rash as to pass censure on the Church for anathematizing Freemasonry, and for having without exception, excommunicated all its adherents. But it is the rule that ignorance should be presumptuous, and the *Transcript* offers no exception to that rule.

But even from the lips of the members of the secret society in question, of members who have attained only to those very inferior degrees to which British subjects ordinarily attain—can we establish its anti-Christian principles. Dismissing M. Louis Blanc, we call into court a Protestant minister, the Rev. Mr. McGill, Rector of St. Paul's Church, Peru, Illinois.

The above named Protestant minister being asked whether he were a Freemason? replied in a series of stanzas, which we find copied without criticism in almost all our English Montreal papers; and which stanzas, we may therefore—we think—fairly assume to represent the true character of Freemasonry, in its inferior degrees and under its least offensive aspect.

Well! this witness tells us how "by the help of a friend" he obtained admittance within the charmed precincts of the Society; whereupon the following were to him the results:—

"Here my conscience was taught  
 With a moral quite fraught  
 With sentiments holy and true"

Now if in the above there be any meaning at all, that meaning is this:—That from Freemasonry, the writer, the Rev. Mr. McGill, a Protestant minister, with "an open bible" in his hand, learnt a moral, and received in his conscience the impressions of true and holy sentiments, which he had not learnt, or received from Christianity, or the religion of which he was a teacher. But is not this to set Freemasonry either above Christianity, or in opposition to it? Above it, if the truths which it teaches are in the Christian order, but merely transcend those previously taught by the Son of God: in opposition to it, if the "moral," and the "true and holy sentiments" taught by Freemasonry are diverse from, or contrary to, those that Our Lord Himself preached. In one case Freemasonry is set up as the necessary supplement of Christianity; in the other case as its antagonist: and under either of these aspects, it is an insult and an outrage to Him Who was the author and the finisher of our faith. If Freemasonry teach only those moral truths which Christianity already teaches, it is useless, supererogatory; if something different, it is anti-Christ.

We mean nothing personally offensive by these remarks, because we are fully prepared to admit that in so far as the Society in question exists here, it is but a sort of convivial, and charitable club, and that its members are personally innocent of any designs against religion or society. But, as in other countries Freemasonry is of a very different character; as it is a well established fact that it is one of the prime actors in the great Revolutionary drama;—and as it is lauded by the friends and apologists of that work, for the important share it had in bringing about the terrible political, religious and social cataclysm of the eighteenth century, we contend that the structures of the *Transcript* upon the hostile attitude always assumed towards it by the Catholic Church—the sole legitimate teacher and guardian of moral, and of all that is holy and true—are false; and excusable only on the grounds of their author's ignorance of the true facts of the case, and of the actual workings of Freemasonry in the countries of Continental Europe. Again do we recommend to him to study the works of the great Socialistic and Revolutionary writer, Louis Blanc, ere he again presume to sit in judgment upon the Church.

We would again remind our readers that no notice can be taken of anonymous communications. Correspondents must attach their names to their letters, if they desire to see them inserted in the TRUE WITNESS. This law admits of no exceptions.

Our Kingston correspondent *Enquireur*, who treats of a certain no-Popery lecturer, shall be attended to. Press of business has hitherto prevented us from giving to him the answer which the importance of the questions put to us, demand.

The Christmas Day collections taken up from the congregations of St. Patrick's, St. Ann's, and St. Bridget's Churches, amounted to Three hundred and eighty four dollars and a quarter.

THE SWEETSBURGH TRIALS.—These trials have come to an end at last, and this is the only satisfactory feature about them. The prisoners were all defended by B. Derha who, of course, as their lawyer availed himself of every point of law that could be raised in their behalf. For this no one should blame him, for according to the ethics of the Bar, the first, indeed the only duty of the lawyer is towards his client. The rule may be good or bad, but that question we care not to discuss; still whilst it is the rule, adherence thereunto cannot be made a matter of reproach against the legal advocate of the dirtiest scoundrels that ever by a legal subtlety managed to cheat the gallows or the whipping post.

Against the Fenian raiders, thefts small, and thefts great, were most clearly proved. One fellow stole a horse from a widow; another helped himself to what he needed, "convey the wise it call;" and on the whole a more precious lot of thieves and rowdies than these invaders of our Canadian soil, evidently never broke loose from the Penitentiary. They were simply thieves and criminals of the lowest type such as of old used to graduate under the Jew Fagin, and were afterwards sent out to Botany Bay in ship loads; it was a perfect folly to treat them as political offenders. Of course, whether through blunder or through design we know not, the indictments were so well drawn up that, though larceny, horse stealing, and petty thefts, could be brought home to the prisoners, the particular act laid to their charge could not be substantiated—and thus the fellows got off, to gladden the bells of New York, by their presence, and probably ere long to be a burden on the finances of the country which they select as their abode. The trials and their results are thus described and summed up the *Montreal Herald* and *Transcript*, respectively:—

THE FENIAN TRIALS.—The Fenian trials at Sweet'sburg are ended at last. Three of the prisoners, as will be seen by our correspondent's despatch, have been condemned to death, a sentence which had to be passed according to Statute, but which in no one regards in any other light than as a farce. From the conduct of two of the prisoners while the solemn words of the condemnation were addressed to them, it is plain that they looked upon them as a solemn mockery, and felt convinced that for this time at least their lives were in no danger. Whatever may be thought of the effect of the trials, it is but right to say that during the whole proceedings Mr. Justice Johnson, who presided, displayed an impartiality, dignity and fairness in the highest degree worthy of the position he occupied, and by his judicious conduct maintained the decorum which ought at all times to characterize a Court of Justice.—*Montreal Herald*.

The results are as follows. Of the 16 persons held as Fenian prisoners when the court opened, Courban and Powers were discharged, because the Grand Jury ignored the bills against them; Rogers, McGowan and Howard have been discharged without trial; Gilgan, Reardon, Carroll, Owens, and Morrill were tried and acquitted on the more serious charge; and two jurists disagreed on the robbery charge; and five now remain in jail: Holmes, under a sentence of two months imprisonment for larceny; Crawford, under a sentence of three months imprisonment for receiving stolen goods; and Madden, Smith and Crowley under sentence of death.

The police and military will remain here until further orders. It is believed that the condemned prisoners will not be removed to Montreal, but will remain in the Sweet'sburg jail.—*Transcript*.

The *Montreal Witness* of the 22nd ult. publishes an appeal on behalf of the *Pointe aux Trembles* Swaddling Institution. We give one extract, as illustrative of the truth of what we have always asserted; to wit:—that the French Canadians who allow their unhappy children to attend this institution are morally of bad character, perfectly indifferent to all religious considerations, and actuated solely by material motives, such as the desire for food and clothes, by the cares of their backs and of their bellies.

After complaining of the destitution in which the above-named Swaddling Institution finds itself, the Appeal goes on to say:—

"It is those of whom the parents are Roman Catholics that give the most uneasiness, because those parents value instruction very little, and make little or no sacrifice to obtain it."

This is letting the "cat out of the bag" with a vengeance. It is tantamount to a confession that the sole motives which induce Catholic parents to allow their children, to attend a Protestant school, are material motives; and that the only parents who do so degrade themselves and sacrifice their children are wretched creatures, such as are to be found in all communities, who care not one straw for instruction of any kind; and who, provided that their animal wants are gratified, are perfectly indifferent to what becomes of their own souls or those of their children. If the *Pointe aux Trembles* Institute can continue its supplies of "shoes, clothes, flannels, stockings, &c." well and good; they are content that their little ones should remain therein, and be made Protestants of; but if it cannot, if the clothes give out, and the victuals fail, then it is to be feared, that the parents will withdraw their children, and the designs of the proselytizers will be balked. This it is which gives so much uneasiness to the Directors of the Institute.

No respectable Roman Catholic, no Roman Catholic nor dead to every sense of decency, and morality would allow a child of his to attend the Institute: sooner by far would he follow him to the cemetery, and weep over the innocent, unperverted little one's grave. It was scarce necessary then to inform the public, through the *Witness*, that the Roman Catholic parents who have children in the *Pointe aux Trembles* Institute—are miserable creatures who would sell their own souls or those of their children for half a gallon of Molson's whiskey, and a pound of tobacco.

CASSELL'S ILLUSTRATED FAMILY PAPER—December, 1866. Messrs. Dawson Bros., Montreal.

This very handsomely and profusely illustrated serial, contain a large assortment of interesting, instructive, and amusing reading matter for young and old. The engravings alone are well worth the subscription.

CALENDRIER ECCLESIASTIQUE ET CIVIL.—1867.—This very useful sheet has been brought out in their elegant style by Messrs. Fabre & Gravel, and bears on its face the approbation of His Lordship, the Bishop of the Diocese. It contains much valuable information, and is indeed a Civil as well as an Ecclesiastical Calendar.

CHRISTMAS ORDINATION AT THE GRAND SEMINARY OF MONTREAL.

If ever anything in the world, has more than another displayed the means of an all-directing Providence, for raising man's thoughts from all that is earthly and mortal, and fixing them on that transcendent bliss of Heaven's immortality, it is the ceremonies of the Catholic Church, whose doctrine ever permanent, ever pure and true, will never allow any cloud of doubt to hover around the minds of its pious members, to impede their aspirations from enjoying the presence of Him, Jesus Christ—the Divine Founder of His Church on earth and His Spirit's dwelling-place, at all times, on all occasions, but more vividly to be traced on the solemn and auspicious occasion of a sacerdotal ordination. Something indeed superhuman, always hovers around the church or place in which this religiously grave, and admirably holy ceremony of a priestly ordination is performed—for the recipient, illuminated by the divine light of the Holy Ghost, and strengthened in his faith by the plenitude of His graces, sees pictured to himself, stream after stream of the divine light of the true faith, breaking through the world's dark avenue and barriers of infidelity and dissension, till, at last satiated by the teachings of "Unity and Verity," and is lost in silent meditation on his soul's divinity—recalled to his mind by his social intercourse with God, and the ceremony of his holy religion that is about to elevate him to the high and saintly office of the priesthood.

Hail, sacerdotal dignity!—you words that sum and complete all bliss—give and receive all bliss, and always fullest of the same when most is given—spring-head of temporal and spiritual felicity! always deepest when most is drawn;—emblem of Jesus Christ himself, overflowing most when greatest numbers drink of that essence of love, which binds the uncreated persons of the Blessed Trinity—the Father, Son and Holy Ghost—that centre to which all Catholicity gravitates and the sacred deposit of the precious treasure of the heavenly doctrine.

But, who would or could express in words—that must talk in vain—the enravishment the most pre-eminent, which those experience, whose happy lot it is to respond to the Heavenly calling of the sacred ministry!—behold the meeting scene itself on the moment of their ordination, and thence infer their worth and happiness in the sight of a Being Omnipotent, all-seeing and unseen; whose Omnipotent hand has led them in the path of sanctity and perfection from the very instant that their primitive innocence was typified by the regenerating waters of Baptism, which made humid their infant brows, and washed away from their souls the stain of Adam's sin—to be united, in soul forever with God—the proprietor of its immortality. Yes, happy they and happiest of their kind, whose hearts, fortunes and own mortal forms, the gentle voice of piety and sanctity has united and blended together in the unity of faith—to be sacrificed, if necessary, for the cause of religion and greater glory of Him, who laid eternity's foundation stone, and built upon it the Church, in which it is their duty to propagate the Gospel and adorable name of Jesus Christ—"the Way the Truth and Life"—the Holy, Just and Good. 'Tis not the coarser ties of human laws, often unnatural and foreign to the mind, that has bound those under the garb of religion, whose names we subjoin, and the pleasing sight of whose ordination we had the happiness to witness on the 22nd inst.; but, the harmony itself of the laws and words divine, attuning their passions into love, meekness and charity towards benighted men, on whom their sacerdotal graces, perfect esteem and ineffable desire of sympathy of heart and soul, for the love of God and the gathering of souls to Heaven, will eventually exert their softest power and influence to render their future happiness secure.

Yes, pleasing indeed was the scene that praise and prayer have urged us to testify, as we entered the Church of the Grand Seminary, to see and hear the venerable and saintly Bishop of Montreal, placed on the steps of the altar and exhorting the many to be ordained, in a strain the most paternal and affectionate. He told them all to place themselves in the immediate presence of God, and call to mind the grand favors which His Almighty hand was about to bestow on them—he felt assured that they had all been long preparing for this happy day, and was certain that they had brought with them the holy dispositions acquired in their silent retreat; he did not forget to inculcate on their minds the necessity of prayer, for he not only admonished them to pray for one another, but also, for their absent parents that they might lead a holy and religious life; for said he, you wouldn't wish that you should gain Heaven yourselves, and not assist those to gain it also, who exerted their parental endeavors to give you the education that you have now acquired, which admits you into the Sanctuary of the Church. This admonition indeed will never be forgotten by those to whom it was addressed, for its effects were soon observed in their unobtrusive forms and appearance, as we beheld them advancing towards the Altar of God, to receive from His hands an everlasting recompense for their long study and silent retreat, which prepared them for the reception of God's choicest