

REMITTANCES

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THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE. MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DEC. 29, 1854.

OUR LAST ISSUE FOR '54.

The old year is drawing to a close. Its hours are numbered. Before we have the pleasure of addressing you again, fifty-four will be numbered with the years that were, and fifty-five will occupy its place. These days of transition, from old to new, are days of solemn thought—days when the earth is overhung with heavy clouds, exercising a corresponding influence on the minds of men—days when every one might say with the poet—

"The melancholy days are come, The saddest of the year."

This is at all times the case; the passage from the old to the new year, is ever a solemn season; but is it not doubly so now? The year that is gone has left hundreds of families desolate and sad, even within the narrow limits of our own city; and, casting our eyes around, we see that the edict of death went forth over the whole earth—Montreal had but its share, of the chastisement. Standing thus on the threshold; as it were, between past and present, we look back on a year of pestilence and slaughter.—Looking forward to the future, what do we see thro' the thin veil of time? Alas! the picture is far from cheering. There we behold nought but war—war—sanguinary, ferocious war:—"nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." The signs of the times are ominous;—they who run may read them. It is more than probable that the war now raging in the Crimea will be a general war ere another year is out, unless the good Providence of God is pleased to appease the storm. The nations of Europe are hovering around the vortex created by "the Turkish question;"—one after one is drawn in and engulfed in the horrors of warfare. Where this will end, none but God knows. In the neighboring Republic, the powers of darkness are at work, stirring up men's souls to evil, exciting persecutions against the people of God, and madly driving out from amongst them the "ten" who would have saved their Sodom from destruction.

Never was nation more visibly given over to its own reprobate folly. These people are themselves unsealing the phial of God's wrath, in their heathen ignorance of its effects. Never since the days of the Jewish Decidde was there any folly like unto theirs. They call themselves at peace with the world, but peace there is none for them; "they say there is peace, and there is no peace"—terrible illustration of the words of Scripture.

For us who have really peace—that "peace which surpasseth all understanding"—"that peace which the world knoweth not"—let us "rejoice in the Lord"—thanking the God of nations that the fearful scourge of war has not yet reached us, and beseeching Him that He may forbid its approach to these peaceful provinces.

Wishing you, our kind friends, all the blessings of which you stand most in need for the coming year, and tendering you our warmest thanks for your cordial support, during the past year, we take our leave for the present, hoping you may all be alive to read, and we to write at the close of fifty-five—that is, if it be the will of God—to whom be glory, honor, power and dominion, for ever and ever.—Amen.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

From the seat of war the intelligence is anything but cheerful. No progress has been made since the bloody battle of Inkermann on the 5th of November; the fire of the besiegers is slackening, whilst that of the defenders of Sebastopol is hotter than ever.—Overmatched in everything, in artillery, in numbers, worn out with fatigue, harassed with continual assaults from the garrison, their ranks decimated by disease and the bullets of the enemy, hardly can the Allies hold their position on the heights from whence they cast many a wistful glance on the Russian stronghold. To add to their sufferings, the terrible gales which raged for several days during the middle of November, have destroyed the greater part of the transport ships; on board of which were the ammunition, stores, winter clothing for the troops, and medical comforts for the sick and wounded. As a set off to these disasters, all that we have to boast of, is, that our army is still in position before Sebastopol, but with little hopes of getting into the city for many a long day.—Reinforcements are indeed arriving, but in barely sufficient numbers to repair the waste of the campaign, and to keep up the effective force of the besieging army to its original standard.

Under these disheartening circumstances, it is not to be wondered at, if complaints are rife, both at home, and with the army, as to the manner in which the

campaign has been managed, and the elite of our troops sacrificed. Ugly rumors are afloat as to misunderstandings between the leaders of the expedition, and as to gross misconduct in others. As yet indeed these have scarcely attained a definite form, but enough has transpired to convince the public that they are not without foundation. Several officers have, it is said, sold out, disgusted with the hardships of the service; others, feigning sickness, have returned home on leave of absence, and the report that the Duke of Cambridge had left the army, is confirmed:—

"There is no doubt of the fact," says the Nation—"His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge is insane. The reason assigned is the shock experienced at seeing some of the Guards stabbed on the ground by the Russians. The first appearance of the disease was an insult to a distinguished officer.—The rumor is; that he struck Sir De Lacy Evans."

Other accounts assign as the reason of H. R. Highness' abandonment of the army, a violent altercation which he had with Lord Raglan, as to the manner in which the Guards were handled during the action of the 5th. Lord Forth, son of the Earl of Perth, is another officer named as having returned to England on account of a refusal to obey certain orders from the Commander-in-Chief. When amongst the officers of an army such events occur, it is too much to be feared that the example will not be without its effect upon their subordinates.

The Liverpool Times calculates that, since the battle of the 5th, the British army has been reinforced by about 15,000 men of all arms; thus raising its effective strength to about 31,000. The French have received still greater additions to their numbers; and, united, the two armies muster about 90,000 sabres and bayonets. A body of Turks, about 40,000 strong, under Omar Paicha, is about to embark for the Crimea. It is now determined that the troops shall winter in the Crimea, and wooden houses, capable of sheltering 25,000 men, are already on their way, or in course of construction.

Austria has, it seems, at length consented to take part with the Western Powers against the Eastern colossus. The terms of the treaty are not certain; that Austria has been forced to accede to them, much against her will, and that she will prove but a lukewarm ally, is, we fear, but too certain. To remain neuter any longer was impossible; to declare openly on the side of Russia would have entailed the loss of her Lombard provinces, and would have been immediately followed by a Mazzinian outbreak in Italy.—As the less of two evils Austria has therefore given in her adhesion to the Allies; who we suppose will guarantee to her the tranquility of Lombardy, though they will hardly be able to prevent another Hungarian insurrection, and the revolt of her Slavonic population. In the Spring we may expect to witness an appeal to the Polish nationality, and an attempt made, to raise up, in a Polish kingdom, a barrier against Russian aggression. That such a scheme is in contemplation, is pretty certain, from the tone of the public press in France and England; but the experiment will be a most dangerous one, and if persisted in, will scarce fail to lead to another uprising of what are termed the "oppressed nationalities" of Europe. Besides, the Poles are Slaves; and as such are far more likely to sympathise with their brother Slaves, than to subservise the interests of the Teutonic nations of the West. The war has hitherto been treated as the Eastern Question; before long it may become the great "Slavic Question." The cause of Europe, of Western Civilisation, depends upon the issue of the contest now raging in the Crimea. For the armies of the West there is now no retreat, no alternative betwixt complete triumph, or irretrievable destruction. If our troops retire from the contest without having planted the proud standard of Britain and the imperial eagles of France on the citadel of Sebastopol, then will the old prophecy of the first Napoleon be accomplished, and Europe "will become Cossack." The London Spectator thus speculates on the consequences of a failure before Sebastopol:—

"If Russia retains Sebastopol, henceforth Europe not only cannot prevent Russian conquest of Turkey, except at the expense of a permanent occupation of the Black Sea by a superior naval force, if even that could be effectual, but Russia will have established her superiority in military power to the utmost force the most fortunate combination has been able to bring against her. If we fail to take Sebastopol, we have tried our strength under the most favorable combination against Russia, and Russia is too strong for us.—From that failure the mission of Russia to conquer and absorb will start with renewed zeal and irresistible prestige; she will no longer need to proceed by degrees, to feel her way with caution and cunning; she will only have to accept the destiny assigned her, and to develop it as suits her purpose. An Imperial ukase would be omnipotent from Tobolsk to London, from Archangel to Ceylon; the limits of States would remain, if at all, as mere geographical divisions; the institution of States, if at all, as mere machinery for carrying out the will of the monarch, whether he continued to date from Moscow or Constantinople."

Ireland is at present in a very distracted state.—It must be known to our readers that some of the Bishops have issued an injunction to their clergy forbidding them to take an active part in politics. This has much annoyed Mr. Lucas and the party with which he acts; and, in consequence, a deputation composed of the above-named gentleman, and some of his friends, are on their way to Rome, to lay their grievances before the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff, beseeching him to interpose betwixt the Irish Prelates and their priests. The deputation was expected to arrive in Rome about the middle of November.

On the 20th ult., the first session of the Prelates, now assembled at Rome from all parts of Christendom, was held in the Vatican. We borrow the following details from the Univers:—

"At nine o'clock took place in one of the halls of the Vatican, and under the presidency of Cardinals

Brunelli, Caterini, and Santucci, the first meeting of the Bishops on the important question which has just assembled at Rome so many of the lights of the Church. Nothing is allowed to transpire either of the subjects to be discussed, or of the mode adopted for the discussion. All those who are engaged in the question are bound to secrecy. The sitting continued until one o'clock, and the second took place yesterday (Nov. 21). The cardinals are not present at these meetings. After the discussion of the bishops they will have their meetings in secret consistories, under the presidency of the Pope himself. An official list has just been published, which declares the number of prelates present at Rome on the 18th ult. to be—fifty-one cardinals, thirty-seven archbishops, and fifty-seven bishops. More have arrived since, and others are coming every day. The number of strange prelates in Rome amounted on the 23rd Nov. to one hundred and six, independent of those usually resident in the city; and some Spanish and other foreign prelates were on their way to Rome through France."

SATAN REPROVING SIN.

A great meeting has been lately held in New York to congratulate Smith O'Brien on his release—at which a great number of Irishmen, and descendants of Irishmen, as well as native Americans, assisted; this was natural, and in very good taste. In the course of the evening, however, after a "vitriolic" speech from John Mitchell, a Mr. Doherty addressed the meeting, and, alluding to the Czar, elicited from his audience the most enthusiastic cheering for the Russian despot; this, it strikes us, was in exceedingly bad taste, on the part of Catholic Irishmen, and not calculated to increase our respect for American notions of liberty. We shall be told it was the enemy of England that the Czar was cheered; and that it is but natural that Irishmen, who have so little cause to love England and England's rule, should exult in the anticipated triumph of England's enemy. All this may be very true; but the treatment of Ireland by England for the last three hundred years has, it must be admitted, been most brutal; and such as perfectly to justify the hatred which Irishmen bear to their oppressor. But this has been because England has been Protestant, and Ireland Catholic; it has been the product, not of national antipathies, but of religious intolerance; and as such all honest men must unite in denouncing it. But of all countries in the world, the United States has the least right to reproach another with religious intolerance. If we except some of the Southern States, founded chiefly by Catholics, her whole history, from first to last, is but a bloody record of cruel, remorseless persecution; and if there be a nation on the face of the earth which Catholic Irishmen should look upon with loathing and aversion, it is that "Great Yankee Nation," which has given birth to the illustrious Protestant order of "Know-Nothings." That an Irish Catholic should not love England—that he should even desire her humiliation—is natural enough; but that he should sympathise with a Yankee, or that the Yankee should sympathise with him, is incomprehensible.

It is because England is Protestant, that she has been unjust towards Catholic Ireland. But is America then less Protestant?—or are the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers, the canting blackhearted Puritans, the framers of the Connecticut Blue Laws, entitled to taunt England with her cruelties towards Catholic Irishmen? Has "Know-Nothingism" then ceased to be a fixed fact, and convent burning a regular Yankee institution? Judge O'Connor, in opening the proceedings, well observed—"that the Irish owed England nothing; that England had given Ireland neither justice nor clemency; and that England might perhaps sue some day in vain for justice and clemency from others." But what, then, has Protestant America done for Irishmen?—unless indeed they happened to be renegades to their ancestral faith, and false to the religion of St. Patrick!—What justice, what clemency, has America ever extended to Catholics? Answer the charred rafters of Charlestown convent—answer too, the ruins of desecrated churches, which, throughout the breadth of the land, testify that Protestantism in America is tenfold more a persecutor, tenfold more a child of the devil, than it was in the Old World; and in that very England which Yankee Protestants have the impudence to reproach as wanting in "clemency and justice to Catholics."

We mean not to draw a veil over the iniquities of British Protestant rule—we have no design to apologise for the abominations it has perpetrated in Ireland. But then it must be remembered that Protestantism is not essentially English; that England once was Catholic, and may, by the Grace of God, become Catholic again. Its Protestantism is but a black spot upon its otherwise admirable national character; a spot, foul indeed, but which may yet be washed out—an excrescence, loathsome indeed, but which may yet be excised. Otherwise it is with the New England States. Protestantism is of their very essence; it is the vital principle of their national existence; it taints the air they breathe, and corrupts the food they feed upon; they can get rid of their Protestantism only by ceasing to be Yankee. And thus we see that, at the present day, America is far more violently anti-Catholic even than Protestant England, whose Protestantism is but an accident; thus we see that in Protestant America the Catholic Irishman is far worse treated than he was in his native land; and that in the "Liberal" United States, "Social Persecution" against Popish Paddies has become so intense and unremitting, that Irish Catholics are now being from the country—which once they looked upon as a "Land of Promise"—as from a pestilence. Read the following from an American journal—the Detroit Catholic Vindicator—and say whether the TRUE WITNESS has exaggerated the wrongs which are daily inflicted upon Irish Catholics by the Protestants of America, who cheer lustily for the

Czar" as the champion of civil and religious freedom.—Other nations have laws and institutions which may be considered arbitrary and oppressive, but there is no concealment or hypocrisy about the matter; those who live under them know what they have to expect and what to obey.—It is an honest mode of dealing at all events. The United States, on the contrary, has a beautiful and attractive political system; but according to the modern and prevailing opinion, the people may be as oppressive as they please. This system is the admiration of those who are not familiar with the practice which obtains under it, as the other is the detestation of those who are not acquainted with the local proceedings of other nations.

"Some of the people of the United States, whilst they receive with much gusto the admiration of the world as possessing the freest government; indulge themselves in the practice of petty tyranny, and seem to think that they have asserted a sovereign's authority when they have shot, maimed, and made suffer, some poor foreigner, oppressed the Catholic Church, and executed a magnanimous attack upon the institutions connected with her, such as Orphan Asylums, Charity Hospitals, and Churches.

"Social persecution is not only the most oppressive, but it is the most degrading to those who practise it. It argues a degree of moral corruption, which no circumstances can excuse or palliate."—Detroit Catholic Vindicator.

Yes indeed. England has her faults; but it is not for America to reproach her with them, seeing that in the latter, all the worst vices of the first are reproduced, and exaggerated tenfold.

Some of the Catholic constituencies of Upper Canada seem by no means well pleased with the conduct of their representatives in Parliament. A Mr. Aiken, M.P.P. for the County of Peel, who owes his seat to the Catholic vote, has provoked some very severe, and, no doubt, well merited censures from a writer in the Toronto Catholic Citizen; and if the Catholics of Upper Canada would but look closely into the votes of some others of those gentlemen, whom by their suffrages they assisted to a place in the Legislature, they would soon discover that others as well as Mr. Aiken have proved themselves unworthy of the confidence reposed in them by Catholic constituencies. "We can now"—says the writer in the Citizen—"clearly distinguish the difference which exists between an independent and consistent Conservative, and a pretended Reformer—a name in the present instance used only to disguise demolishing principles." It is a pity that the Catholics of Upper Canada did not more clearly distinguish the difference at the elections in the course of last summer. We might perhaps, in that case, not have had quite so many Liberals, and "pretended Reformers"—not so many secularisers and demagogues of the George Brown and J. M. Ferres stamp—but we certainly should have had a greater number of honest, consistent and independent men, from whom Catholics might have expected a favorable hearing.

The Session is now over; that Session to which the Catholic Institute of Toronto, under the inspiration of its venerated President, referred when, in a meeting held in the month of May last, it unanimously Resolved:—

"That the Catholic Institute of Toronto pledges itself to oppose, by all constitutional means, the re-election of the present Ministry, and of any of their supporters, IF, AT THE NEXT SESSION OF THE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT, FULL JUSTICE IS NOT DONE TO THE CATHOLICS OF WESTERN CANADA, WITH REGARD TO THE FREE WORKING OF THEIR SEPARATE SCHOOLS; and that this Institute invokes the sympathy and assistance of their fellow Catholics in Eastern Canada."

As the "next" Session, alluded to in the above Resolution, has passed, would it not be well for the Catholics of Upper Canada—with a view to another general election which cannot be far distant—to ask themselves a few questions as to what has been done by the men whom they sent to represent them in Parliament with reference to the School Question?—and, how far "full justice" has been done to them "with regard to the free working of their Separate Schools?" We fear that the results of such an enquiry will not be very agreeable to the friends of Freedom of Education; and that it will appear that a satisfactory solution of the great question which has so long occupied the serious attention of the Pastors of the Church, and which so vitally concerns the interests of the Catholic laity, has been rendered almost, if not altogether, impossible by the suicidal policy of nominal Catholics, who, in their desperate hurry to approve themselves docile tools of the Ministry, forgot entirely to insist upon the recognition, in the Clergy Reserves Bill, of the right of Catholic separate schools to share equally with the Protestant schools, in all sums accruing from the secularisation of the Reserves, and rendered applicable for School purposes. That justice to Catholics imperatively demanded the insertion of such a clause in the Bill, is certain, and was admitted by Ministerialists themselves. It is equally certain that, of the members owing their seats in Parliament to the votes of Catholics, not one was to be found in the House, honest enough to redeem his pledges made on the hustings, or to make one effort to procure for his Catholic supporters, the first instalment even of that "justice in regard to the free working of their Separate Schools" which they were entitled to demand. The result of this treachery may thus be shortly summed up.—The sums accruing from the secularised Reserves are now handed over to the County Municipalities, and are therefore applicable to School purposes. But from the almost exclusively Protestant composition of those bodies in Upper Canada; it is morally certain that not one penny thereof will be given to the assistance of Catholic Separate Schools; which, even now, owing to the poverty of their supporters, and the innumerable difficulties which an unjust law, and a most oppressive administration of that