

The True Witness

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NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE question of intervention with the affairs of our belligerent neighbors in so far as Great Britain is concerned, is for the present set at rest. The last steamer brings us news to the effect that Lord Russell has given an official reply to the French Government, declining in good set terms the proposal for a joint mediation on the part of France, and Great Britain, with the view of bringing the civil war in America to a close.

In all other respects the news of the last steamer is devoid of interest. The Italian question remains in statu quo; and able editors, in very despair of some exciting political topic to discuss, actually turn their attention to Greece, and fall back upon the revolution which has lately driven the ill-starred Otho from his unenviable throne.

The Federal and Confederate forces are always just on the point of coming to blows, but neither seems in a hurry to commence the fray. The past week has not been diversified by any very important events, either in the political or in the military line.

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CEPARING OFF THE POOR.—A very high authority—an authority at all events very high in the estimation of Papists—assured His hearers—"Ye have the poor always with you." The speaker was neither a philanthropist, nor a liberal. He never propounded to the acceptance of His disciples any of the theorems of political economy; nor did He ever so much as insinuate that poverty was the one unpardonable sin, for which there was no forgiveness to be looked for, either in time or in eternity.

The Catholic Church, in her ignorance of the principles of sound political economy, has always been the friend of the poor and needy; the destitute, the homeless and the friendless have ever been the objects of her peculiar regard; and her Prelates, and her noblest children, have ever deemed it their highest privilege to be allowed to minister to the wants of those outcasts upon earth, in the foolish idea that, in so doing, they were ministering to Him Who, when earth, was the man of sorrows—Who had not where to lay His head.

Protestantism however soon dissipated these superstitions and antiquated prejudices. By the light of the new Gospel, the beggar was at once seen in his true colors, and the poor man at once stood revealed, an incorrigible scoundrel. Reversing the old creed, "Blessed are the poor—blessed are ye that mourn," it launched its fiercest anathemas against the one, and its arm has ever been heavy upon the other. To be rich, to be smart and successful in business, to amass wealth, and to attain, as Carlyle has it, to the dignity of a gig, these were the things which Protestantism held in honor, these the benedictions which it held out to its beloved children as the reward of their faithful services; but for the pauper it had, and still incalculates, the most profound contempt, and loathing. As charity and

chastity, and self-denial, are the virtues upon which Romanism mostly insists, so in the Protestant world, thrift, and smart business habits, and a stoical apathy to the sufferings of the poor, are hailed as signs of grace, and of predestination to eternal life.

So much is this the case that there is nothing which so encourages the hopes of those who believe in the regeneration of Italy by and through Protestantism, as the new policy which, since the success of the revolution, has been adopted by the Government of Victor Emmanuel towards the poor of his newly acquired Provinces. Under the old Romish regime, and in accordance with the infamous principles of Romanism, the poor in the Italian cities were allowed to roam abroad, to breathe the fresh air of heaven, to bask in the golden rays of an Italian sun, and whilst unrestricted in their enjoyment of these simple luxuries, were also not prohibited from appealing to the charitable feelings of their wealthier fellow-citizens. Thus it came to pass that Italian beggars were a source of constant annoyance to Protestant tourists; who wondered, and were indignant as they contrasted the condition of Romish communities, with that of those happy lands of Gospel light, and sanctuary privileges, where the beggar is treated as a felon, and where, though the "Bible is open," the pauper is locked up in a Poor Law Bastille, and treated with more indignity and cruelty than the vilest criminal in Newgate.

Thank God! however, exclaims the Protestant Great Britain, the Revolution has changed all this; and albeit by no means used to the thanksgiving mood, the correspondent of the London Times breaks out into a kind of Liberal "Te Deum," or canticle of praise, as he recounts the rigorous treatment of the Italian poor by the officials of King "honest-man"; and in rapturous language describes how these "nuisances" and pests of the earth, the beggars and paupers, have been cleared off by liberal Municipal dignitaries:—

"The wildest dreams of the philanthropist"—exclaims this John the Baptist of the new Protestant evangel, in a transport of joy and gratitude—"the wildest dreams of the philanthropist come true now and then. The age of miracles is any thing but past."

"I walked about in Bologna all day yesterday, and looked in vain for one beggar. It was a holiday, too, ALL SAINTS, and the whole population was out of doors; yet neither on church door steps, nor in market square, nor at our hackney carriage door, nor anywhere were our eyes saddened by real or feigned distress, or our ears importuned by the mendicant's wail."

And in a strain of triumph at this palpable and incontestable evidence of the progress of Liberal and Protestant principles in Italy, he exclaims in a kind of holy rapture:—

"Where are all the miscreants now?"

The explanation of this seeming miracle, which so surprises and so delights our Protestant friend, is easy. The Municipal authorities have provided a "huge workhouse," or prison, in which they have incarcerated the miscreants, the wretches who in this age of progress and enlightenment, and Protestant civilisation, are guilty of the crime of nakedness, poverty, and hunger. Thus have the poor been cleared off; and by such a process have the blessings of the Revolution been extended even to the lowest and vilest classes of society. "We have lived," says the Times' correspondent—and in these words the blessings of modern Liberalism are summed up:—

"We have lived to see the last beggar out of Bologna, as we had seen Turin and Milan clear of the same plague before."—Gloria Deo in excelsis.

And what has been done in Bologna, Turin and Milan will, it is confidently expected, be accomplished also throughout the land—and even in Rome, itself, whenever the yoke of priestly rule, and of the Papacy shall have been thrown off, and the corrupting influences of Catholicity neutralised by the life giving principles of the evangel according to Gavazzi and Garibaldi.

"We have made, or are rapidly making an end to mendicancy wherever we shake off priestly rule; and we shall drive it from the very steps of the Vatican, the moment we have turned out, or at least disowned its chief inmate."

No doubt of it. If Protestant principles with respect to the treatment of the poor had been in the ascendant in Judaea some eighteen or nineteen hundred years ago, the B. Virgin and Her Son would have been committed to jail or the workhouse, as vagrants; and the political economists of the age would have announced the fact, as a proof of progress, and in the words of the writer in the Times would have cried out with glee—"Where are the miscreants now?" The Apostles and first preachers of a religion brought to earth by One who was actually born in a stable, and whose first cradle was a manger, would have been summarily disposed of by the then municipal authorities, by committal to hard labour and solitary confinement, as "nuisances;" the importunate beggar who sat daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple, would have been quickly warned off by the police; and the eyes of the pagan visitors to Jerusalem would not have been allowed to be saddened by such sights of distress; or their ears importuned by the mendicant's wail.

The world has moved at a great rate since the outbreak of the Protestant Reformation; and in nothing is this movement more remarkable than

in the change which it has wrought in the condition of the poor, and in the feelings entertained towards them by their wealthy brethren. The modern system of dealing with pauperism has perhaps some advantages—but these advantages are altogether for respectability in its gig, and by no means for Lazarus in his rags. The ears of the former are scrupulously protected against the wail of mendicancy; his chaste eyes must not be saddened by the sight of distress, and respectability may make merry accordingly and recount with glee the new order of things. But how is it with Lazarus? with the wretch immured within the walls of the thrice accursed Poor House,—that last and heaviest curse of poverty—that standing and eternal disgrace of the nineteenth century, into which no man woman or child can once enter, without being degraded and brutalised for ever. To receive alms in the name of God, and for the sake of His dear Son, is no humiliation to the receiver; but a State provision for the poor, but the system of Poor-houses, and the compulsory machinery which modern Protestantism has substituted for the Catholic Convent and the Voluntary system, humiliate and degrade the recipient, and all who fall beneath their blighting influence. The beggar may be a pitiable object, but the State provided for pauper is indeed contemptible; and in nothing is the innate dignity of the Irish character more conspicuous than in this; that even in the worst of times, and under the heaviest pressure of hunger, the poorest Irish peasant can rarely be compelled to submit to the deep humiliation of the State provided Poor-house. The man who once enters one of these abominations, can never recover his self respect. He must needs if he has aught of honest pride within him, feel himself crushed, blighted, and degraded for ever; and whilst on the one hand there can be no possible necessity for legal or compulsory provision for the poor, there where one spark of Christian charity is still alive, and where the Church is allowed free scope for the exercise of her beneficent functions—so on the other hand, there is no surer sign or symptom of the decay of Christian life amongst a community than that adduced by the Times' correspondent as a cheering proof of the spread of Liberal principles in Italy. We would say that it was a sign of the relapse of the Italians into Paganism, only we could not so far label the latter. With all its abominations, will all its filthiness, brutality and disregard for human suffering, Paganism had no abomination so rank as the modern Protestant Poor-house, over whose portal should be inscribed the motto:—

"All ye who enter here, leave Hope behind!"

Hardly has the Protestant world in general, and the English speaking portion of that world in particular, recovered from the shock inflicted by the appearance of "Essays and Reviews," and lo! another work of a similar tendency makes its appearance; emanating this time not from a Protestant layman, not even from a simple clergyman, but from an Anglican Bishop, from one of the Right Reverend Fathers of the Church "As By Law Established." We allude to the lately published work of the Anglican Bishop of Natal, Dr. Colenso, on the Pentateuch, and the supernatural element in the writings of the great Lawgiver of Israel.

Dr. Colenso has long been remarkable for his very liberal views on matters of faith as well as of morals; and it was in all probability this very liberality which, in the first instance recommended him to the favorable notice of the British Government, from whose hands all ecclesiastical preferment proceeds. "Above all, Gentlemen, no zeal," was the advice of the great Talleyrand to his diplomatic subordinates; and an indifference to all dogma, and to truth generally, is the one thing needful in the candidate for episcopal honors in the Church of England. The Prime Minister of the day, in the filling up of vacant Bishoprics looks out principally for what are termed "safe men"; that is for men who express no very decided opinions upon matters of religion; who, on questions such as Baptismal Regeneration or the "Sacramental System," invariably act upon the hypothesis that of contraries both may be true; and who for the sake of quiet are perfectly content to deny, or at all events to hold in abeyance the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

Such a man was the late government Archbishop of Canterbury, and such a man is the Anglican Bishop of Natal. The latter some time ago acquired great notoriety, and much applause from his very liberal interpretation of the Christian law of marriage, and his large and philanthropical application of that law to his Zulu converts. Finding that amongst the latter the practice of polygamy generally obtained, and fearing that if he insisted upon the law of "one with one" he should altogether fail in attracting the heathen to his diocese, Dr. Colenso declared his intention of tolerating polygamy amongst his flock, as an institution perfectly compatible with Christianity. The effects of this judicious liberality were soon apparent. The Zulus, being no longer required to abandon their impure habits, as a condition, sine qua non, of admission to Baptism, and having a guarantee for the indulgence of

their animal lusts as Christians, were naturally less hostile to the new religion, than they would have been had it presented itself to them in the guise of a faith which imperatively required of them to crucify the flesh and the lusts thereof.—So far, Dr. Colenso's liberality was highly approved of; and his mode of making things pleasant naturally recommended itself to evangelical Protestantdom. But unfortunately for himself, and the peace of "Our Zion," Dr. Colenso's liberality did not stop here.

When the Zulu chiefs asked him whether in the case of their professing themselves Christians they would be compelled to live chastely, and to content themselves with one wife apiece, the Right Reverend Father in God sent to them by them by the British Government, at once replied in the negative, and by thus quieting their fears, removed one great obstacle to their becoming Protestant Christians. But another difficulty, intellectual this time, not moral, presented itself to the Zulus. "If we embrace your faith, your religion"—again they asked of Dr. Colenso—"shall we be required to believe that part of the book you call the Bible, which is comprised under the name of the Pentateuch?" "Oh, by no means," again replied the liberal and accommodating Anglican Bishop. "I do not believe in those writings myself, and cannot therefore require of you that you should believe in them. Of the Pentateuch a good deal I know may be false, mere myth or legend—and the remainder, it is well known, is a lie." So in substance spoke the Protestant Bishop to his spiritual children, with the view of making Christianity easy of acceptance to them; and surely such a religion as that which this State official preaches must recommend itself to the heathen, seeing that it makes no importunate demands upon them, either upon their intelligence or their morals; and that it does not, like Popery, attempt to subordinate reason to faith, or to put a curb upon the indulgence of any of the animal passions.

Nevertheless a wail rises up from the Evangelical community over the work in which the Acts of this, the latest of the Protestant Apostles, are published to the world; and though he has said and done nothing but what is perfectly in harmony with all Protestant precedents, and Protestant principles; though in his sanction of polygamy, and mode of dealing with the Canon of Scripture, he has but faithfully walked in the footsteps of St. Luther—yet an outcry is raised against the free-spoken and liberal Bishop, as loud and as fierce as that with which the writers of the "ESSAYS AND REVIEWS" were assailed some short time ago.

And yet it is not strange that Protestantism should thus shrink from Protestantism, or that its own foul image, faithfully reflected in the writings of its own Prelates and clergy, should thus strike it with affright. Of old, so the poets tell us, the youth fondly gazing on his own fair features mirrored in the tranquil waters of the placid stream, pined away, the victim of hopeless love, until the gods took pity on him, and transformed him into the sweet flower which still bears his name. Very different in this respect, from the fate of the lovely son of Liriope, is that of Protestantism. It too sees in the writings of its learned and talented professors, the faithful reflection of its own unlovely features,—and seeing, it starts back with awe, for it sees reflected as it were, the hideous features of the fiend himself.

PROTESTANT MIRACLES.—A Romish miracle, no matter by what amount of evidence sustained, is, and by its very nature, must be incredible; because if admitted to be true, it would be difficult to deny the truth of that religious system in evidence of whose truth it was performed. All miracles, ceased—such is the Protestant hypothesis—with the Apostles; and though the historical evidences of purely Romish miracles in comparatively modern times, are to the full as strong as any that can be adduced in support of the truth of any of the miracles recounted in either the Old or the New Testament, still for the reason above assigned, Protestants pay no heed to them; they content themselves with denying the possibility of a Romish miracle; and "the thing that is impossible"—as the poet says—"can't be, and never, never, never come to pass."

With Protestant miracles, with miracles worked for the sake, and at the intercession of some white-chokered man of God, even upon the most trivial occasion, the case is different. That such miracles may, and actually do frequently, occur, is gravely asserted in all evangelical publications; and to contest their truth, or to suggest a natural explanation of the circumstances connected with them, would expose the imprudent sceptic and objector to the charge of being a "wessed of wrath" urged against the elder Mr. Weller by the red nosed man at the never-to-be-forgotten Meeting of the Brick Lane Branch of the Ebenezer Temperance Association.

As a specimen of these Protestant Hagiographa, we present our readers with selections from a tale which we find in the last number of an evangelical organ of the Church of England printed in Montreal, and called the Echo; the

latter again copied from the Sunday School Times; and we may, therefore accept it as a fair specimen of the milk with which the babes of grace of the conventicle are regularly fattened. The story may be called "A Pussy Cat, and the Man of God," and runs in this wise:—

"A good man, a preacher of God's word," so it begins, "was stopping in an out of the way place where he felt seriously ill. He recovered nevertheless, but was weak, and his stomach failed him, so that he could not eat of the ordinary fare of the family with whom he was stopping. In the affecting words of the narrative:—

"When he went to the table with the family the sight and smell of the victuals made him feel sick, and he could not possibly swallow a mouthful of them."—Sunday School Times.

In this emergency the "good man,"— "went and told his heavenly Father about it; and our Father sent him something he could eat. What was it? and how did God send it? In this way.—

It.

The story then goes on to narrate how, as God sent of old a raven to feed the prophet Elijah, so—we almost feel ourselves guilty of profanity as we copy the tale—He sent a pussy cat to feed the Protestant man of God troubled with a delicate stomach:—

"One morning as he was leaning feebly against the doorway, to feel the fresh air from the green forest blow softly over his forehead, a little playful cat came and rubbed herself against his legs, and laid something down at his feet, and ran away. He looked to see what pussy had dropped there. It was a plump little bird which she had just caught and killed. He took it up and cooked it for himself. It tasted good, and he felt better when he had eaten it. You may be sure he did not forget to thank God for it.

"But what was his surprise when playful pussy came again next morning with another bird. That was not all. She brought them to him again, and again, and again; and when he patted her head and stroked her fur, she would purr and seem so happy, and go walking around his feet and rubbing herself against him. The little cat fed the man of God till his health and strength came back.—But when he was quite well, and could eat anything on the table, she left off bringing birds; and this is the strangest part of the story, but it is all true.

"The minister says that he never could think why she left off coming—indeed, he could not see why she ever came at all; only that he was sure that the same God who sent the ravens to feed Elijah, had sent the little cat to bring him food."—Sunday School Times.

It is rather too bad, seeing the kind of stuff with which an intelligent Protestant public regales itself in the way of miracles, that we should be laughed at for our credulity for giving credit to miraculous stories testified to by witnesses who give their names, and all particulars; and all of which particulars have been carefully examined and sifted, with a view to the detection of truth, by a tribunal the names of whose members are also given to the world. So exacting in respect of proof of an alleged miracle is that tribunal, that it has passed into a proverb that it is a miracle to prove a miracle at Rome. And yet we are reproached with credulity; whilst such miracles as the above narrated, the victors wherein and witnesses to which are alike anonymous, are gravely related in Protestant journals, and are seriously propounded to the acceptance of Protestant faith. No one dreams of asking—"Who was the man of God to whom the above miraculous dispensation of a pussy cat happened? Where and when did it happen? who were the witnesses to its having happened?"—and thousand of other similar questions which naturally present themselves. On the contrary; the Protestant journals once for all dispose of these pertinent but troublesome queries by the asseveration that "it is all true."

ROME AND NAPLES AVENGED.—The insecurity of the streets of Italian cities under their former masters, is the constant theme of the admirers of the new regime. They conclude by a process of induction peculiar to themselves, that because street robberies, accompanied with impunity in the streets of Rome and Naples—therefore the Pope must be a tyrant, and Francis II., a monster of iniquity. We will not criticise this logic; but we will ask what, if it be sound, must we conclude as to Queen Victoria. Is she also a tyrant? are her subjects bound to rise in rebellion against her?

For what Papal Rome is said to be, what Naples under the Bourbons is said to have been—that London under the reign of Her Most Gracious Majesty actually is. In the streets of London, in the most crowded thoroughfares, and in broad daylight—there is not, so the London Times informs us, security for either person or property. People are garrotted, and robbed with perfect impunity; and an afternoon walk down Pall Mall, or along the Hay-Market is attended with as many risks, as of old awaited upon the solitary and benighted traveller upon Hounslow Heath. Here is what the Times says on the subject; and it certainly ought to silence, even if it cannot put to shame, the denouncers of Italian misrule:—

"In London, however, we have a nightly repetition of outrages which at first sight would be thought incredible, and this is the alarming feature of the case. Men are garrotted in the Haymarket after garrotting in the Haymarket has become a public scandal. These 'street attacks' are continued though everybody now knows that he may be attacked in the streets, and though every constable in the force ought to be on the alert against a notified species of crime. If we cannot put an end to such a state of things, the conclusion will be, not that some incredible act of audacity may chance to succeed, but that the machinery now maintained for the protection of life and property is altogether insufficient.—Times.

Again in the same article, the Times tells us that:— "We have slipped back to a state of things which would be intolerable even in Naples, and all because