

The True Witness.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JAN. 25, 1861.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

OUR latest dates are to the 16th inst. Gaeta still holds out, but it is rumored that the French fleet is about to be withdrawn. The bombardment of the fortress by the Piedmontese continues with unabated vigor, and the shells have reached the King of Naples' quarters. The general aspect of Europe is pregnant with symptoms of war, and the alarm occasioned by the enormous military preparations of France, has not been allayed by his Address on New Years Day, wherein he took the opportunity to declare his confidence in the preservation of peace.

The Secession movement progresses in the United States, and all hopes of an amicable compromise seem at an end. Georgia has joined the Secessionists.

FACTS VER. STATEMENTS

We find the following in the Toronto Globe:

Protestant journalists are often assailed by Catholics, and censured by liberal Protestants for publishing upon the Church of Rome or the conduct of its adherents. We have come in for our share—a pretty large one—of the anathemas of the Catholic Press for presuming to give publicity to items of this kind. It might be expected that those who complain so bitterly would never be found sinning in this way themselves. But take up any number of the Toronto Mirror, True Witness (the organ of the Lower Canada Hierarchy), or indeed any avowed Catholic journal, and what do we find? Not arguments against the doctrines of Protestantism, not proofs of its demoralizing, pauperizing, barbarizing tendency, as seen in the daily life of individuals, or in the history of the nations that profess it; not expressions of Christian sympathy for the deluded victims of a false faith, and of pious hope for their conversion; but the very opposite of all this—indiscriminate abuse, vile insinuation, insulting mockery, slang epithets, obscene comparisons, and not seldom attempts at irony, which, in most Protestant ears sounds amazingly like blasphemy.

We give the following from the True Witness as mild specimens compared with some we have seen. The religious exercises which Protestants have been asked to engage in during the present week, and especially the proposal to unite on the 10th instant in prayer to the Almighty for the conversion of Romanists, is the "occasion" which the Witness has innovated after the following fashion:—

"When such activity prevails in the brothels and in the meeting-houses, the revival mania has driven thousands to the one and filled the other with blaspheming maniacs; Rome trembles on her seven hills at the brightness of the coming of Garibaldi, and the people of the earth are rising in their might against the bondage of Popery; wherefore, it becometh the elect, the chosen people and all who snuff through the nose, to bestir themselves in the good cause. Prayer, incessant and united, must be made for the conversion—not of the heathen myriads of Protestant England, nor for the conversion of the brutalized Protestant masses of the United States—but for Papists generally, and for the Papists of Ireland especially; that the daughters of Erin may become pure as the mothers of Protestant Israel, and may be found clad in the white garments of a Maria Monk on the day when the Lord shall come to judge the nations. This is the object of the prayer, and we say, 'Pray away, gentlemen, till you are black in the face.'"

In the same paper we are told that:— "Protestantism is but the cloaca maxima of the Church, the sink into which she ejects all her impurities."

We cannot refrain from publicly expressing our gratitude towards the Globe and its editors, for the above expression of their ill-will towards, and general disapproval of, the course of the TRUE WITNESS. There is but one token which the Catholic gentleman would willingly accept from George Brown, or from any of his party—and that is, a token of hostility. The Catholic journalist, or public man, who should have the misfortune to win a good word from George Brown, would have therein proof strong as "Holy Writ," that, in some manner, and to some extent, he had betrayed the honor and interests of his Church; and we may set it down as a rule admitting of no possible or conceivable exception, that the honest consistent Catholic must always be the enemy of the Globe and that political party which the Globe represents; just as it is equally certain that no Catholic can be a friend or political supporter of George Brown, and the Protestant Reformers, unless he be emphatically a sneak.

But whilst we accept the abuse of the Globe, and the anger of Mister George Brown, as highly flattering compliments to our integrity, consistency, and fidelity to Catholic interests, we must, in justice to ourselves, take exception to the reasons by the Globe assigned for its notice of our humble selves. The Globe wisely distinguishes between "facts" and "statements;" the

former being identical with truth, the other—such "statements" especially as appear in the Globe—being for the most part identical with falsehood. Indeed with that journal, as with the evangelical press generally, the greatest care must be taken in discriminating betwixt its "statements" and the "facts"—and so in the case before us. It is a "fact" that the TRUE WITNESS has deserved the ill-will and abuse of the Globe; but the latter's "statement" of the grounds upon which he honors us with these marks of his disfavor are false. The one belongs to the realm of objective existences, or truth, with which the Globe has no connection; the other is of the same stuff as that of which its ancient vituperations of the "Dogans" and laudations of Garazzi were concocted, and which owed their origin to the purient imagination, corrupt heart, and brazen mendacity of Mister George Brown.

It is for instance, not a "fact," but a "statement," that the TRUE WITNESS does not base his arguments against Protestantism upon "its demoralizing, pauperizing, barbarizing tendencies, as seen in the daily life of individuals, or in the history of the nations that profess it." Why, in the very article to which the Globe alludes, that in which we described Protestantism as the "cloaca maxima of the Church," the sink or cess-pool into which Catholicity ejects all her impurities, all her fetid or feculent matter—we particularly alluded to the Globe's pet, and the darling of the conventicle, the notorious Chiniquy, as a "living illustration" of the truth of our remarks; and of which a Gavazzi, an Achilli, a Maria Monk, and thousands of others besides Chiniquy, are well-known and authentic proofs. That the Pope when he cleans his garden, throws the weeds over the Protestant wall, is an old saying attributed to the Protestant Dean Swift, and which we have but repeated in another form, giving a living example of its truth—or of the "fact" by us asserted, that Protestantism is the "cloaca maxima," or common cess-pool of the Catholic Church; whilst the Globe's assertion that our arguments against Protestantism are not supported by references to "its demoralizing &c. tendency," is merely a "statement" i.e. a falsehood.

So too with regard to nations and communities. An argument which we have constantly appealed to, as strong, almost conclusive, in favor of Catholicity as against Protestantism, is the comparative moral superiority of Catholic over Protestant or non-Catholic communities—of Ireland over England and Scotland, as illustrated by their several statistics of bastardy; of the moral superiority of Catholic Lower Canada over Protestant Upper Canada, as evidenced by the Official Criminal Statistics of the Province, and the state of the Penitentiary. We have adduced "facts" in support of our thesis; that we have not done so is merely a "statement," and a very impudent "statement," of the Toronto Globe.

We will admit that we have addressed our arguments against the practice, rather than "against the doctrines of Protestantism," because we are in profound ignorance as to what the latter are or in what they consist—et de non apparentibus, et de non existentibus, eadem est ratio.—We cannot argue with a nonentity; we know not how to direct our batteries against that which has no known tangible being.

The "doctrines of Protestantism," or Protestant doctrines, must be positive doctrines—not mere negations—in which all Protestants—i.e., all baptized Non-Catholics—agree as truth, and in virtue of which they are Protestant, or Non-Catholic; for doctrines held only by a section of the Protestant body, are no more Protestant "doctrines" than the three tailors of Tooley streets were the people of England. In like manner, Protestant "doctrines" must be "doctrines," no portion of which are held by Catholics; for "doctrines" any portion of which are common both to Protestants and Catholics, are not the exclusive property of the former, and cannot therefore be claimed as Protestant "doctrines." When the Globe shall have presented us with some body of positive truth, which all Protestants—from the Archbishop of Canterbury down to Joe Smith—agree in holding, but which is rejected by all Catholics; which is acknowledged as of divine obligation, by Anglicans, and Swedenborgians, by Methodists, and Mormons, by the "Free-Loivists" and the last sect hatched, or heated into a fetid and ophthalmic existence on the great putrescent Protestant dung-heap—then, but not before, shall we take it into consideration whether it be worth expending powder and shot upon, and whether the Catholic journalist can condescend to direct the batteries of his logic against it.

We will plead guilty also to the soft impeachment of "irony," or of "poking fun" at the prayer meetings of the Swaddlers. We cannot help it, but laugh we must, at the comicalities of evangelical Protestantism. There is one phase of Protestantism which is simply hideous and loathsome, bloodstained, and by no means mirth-provoking; such was the phase of French Protestantism, or "Denicism" in '93, and in the Italian Peninsula to-day, and of which the filthy

Garazzi is a prominent figure. But there is another phase of Protestantism—the Protestantism of the evangelical tea-party, the love-feast, and the camp-meeting—which is simply ludicrous, and whose very blasphemies provoke to laughter, and of which a Stiggins, a Sawley, a Chiniquy, and the "converted prize-fighter" are the types or representatives."

The Morning Chronicle of Quebec, having falsely, but we trust unintentionally or through misconception, accused the TRUE WITNESS of holding the infamous and anti-Catholic doctrine that "Protestant marriage is a modern system of concubinage"—was addressed in the following terms by a correspondent—to whom we return our sincere thanks for his able vindication of our views upon the marriage question:—

(To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle.) Sir,—In your issue of this day, you say, in speaking of the True Witness, that that journal "holds the liberal doctrine that Protestant marriage is a modern system of concubinage, and that those of us, generally, who are inclined at times to read the Bible, have the poorest possible chance for a future state."

Now, Mr. Editor, allow me to tell you that you have never seen, and never shall see, in the True Witness, a single line which could corroborate your statement about his pretended doctrine on Protestant marriage. He has frequently condemned the laws of divorce as introducing legal concubinage in our society; and, on that point, he is supported by many respectable Protestants, mostly of the Church of England, who do not grant to human nature the same liberty as Protestants of some more liberal sects; but he has never spoken irreverently of Protestant marriage which is respected and acknowledged as valid by the Catholic Church. As for the Bible reading you are also in error; you have never seen and never shall see in the columns of that journal, a single line to condemn indiscriminately Bible reading. What he condemns and ever shall condemn in Bible reading is the authority given by liberal Protestants, even to the most ignorant, to explain to word of God, according to the dictates of their own judgment, without reference to any authority. On that point Mr. Editor, you may rest assured that the True Witness is again supported by many respectable Protestants, who laugh at the absurdity of such a doctrine.

I have thought it my duty to address you these few lines of explanation. In a mixed community like ours, it is important, for the sake of peace and good understanding, to contradict statements which might be an obstacle to both.

A FRIEND OF THE "TRUE WITNESS"

Quebec, January 18, 1861.

To this the Chronicle, being unable to adduce a single passage from the TRUE WITNESS in support of its allegations as to the latter's doctrine respecting "Protestant marriage," added the annexed comments:—

[We publish the foregoing letter out of respect to its author; but the columns of the True Witness have, nevertheless frequently contained articles the most offensive, even to non-sectarian Protestants—in regard moreover to the institution of marriage. Will our correspondent please read the following from the last Witness? It refers to Protestant Prayer Meetings.—Ed. M. O.]

The comments of the Chronicle are amusing, if not to the point. We have, no doubt, said many things "offensive to Protestants" inasmuch as we believe Protestantism i. e. the denial of Catholicity, to be based upon error; error sometimes intellectual or of the head—sometimes error of the heart, or moral repugnance to the truth. We cannot speak respectfully of error; we cannot but pronounce unqualified condemnation upon the system of Protestantism, which, if Catholicity be from God, must be from the devil; but we would not willingly speak offensively of Protestants either as individuals, or as a body, or transfer our condemnation of their erroneous system to its professors. Protestants, thank God! are invariably inconsistent; they shrink, for the most part, from carrying out Protestantism to its logical consequences; and the worst of them are better than, and indeed too good for, their religious, or rather irreligious system. That by their practice of the natural virtues, by their amiable conduct as citizens, by their active charities, and forwardness in every natural good work, Protestants often set Catholics a good example which the latter would do well to follow, is a truth we have often asserted, but which involves no concession in favor of Protestantism; so neither does the expression of our unqualified abhorrence of Protestantism, imply any abhorrence of those who are the victims of that miserable system.

With respect to our remarks upon the "Revivals," we have only to remind the Chronicle that it is from Protestant journals, and from the Northern Whig in particular, that we have derived our information as to the disastrous and disgusting intellectual, and moral consequences of those extravagant outbreaks of hysterical fanaticism. We have it on undoubted authority, that the "Revival Hysteria" has in numerous instances sent its victim to the lunatic asylum, and in perhaps still more, to the brothel.—Young men and young women in violent animal convulsions, may seem to the Chronicle to be living instances of the power of the Spirit; but not only to all Catholics, but to all impartial persons, they are melancholy examples of the degradation to which man is reduced by listening to the voice of passion rather than to the salutary counsels of the Church, and of the power which the devil still retains over the minds and bodies of his followers. The subject is one which for many and obvious reasons we cannot discuss at length in our columns; and we would therefore content ourselves by referring the Chronicle to the records of illegitimacy among Methodists of Wales, the results of their "burning" system—and to the details of "religious

hysteria" as manifested in the notorious impurity of certain Oriental religions, in whose howlings, contortions, and beastly physical phenomena are to be found a remarkable similarity with the most striking features of Protestant Revivals.

On the marriage question, we have but to repeat the words of the Chronicle's correspondent, with respect to the doctrine of the TRUE WITNESS. We hold, and have always asserted, that Protestant Marriages—contracted by baptized persons, betwixt whom no natural impediments to matrimony exist, and in good faith—that to say, with the intention of entering into the Christian relations of man and wife—are chaste, honorable, holy, and indissoluble, because sacramental unions—the contracting parties being themselves, to themselves, even if unconsciously, the Ministers of the sacrament. Such unions may be wanting indeed in certain special supernatural graces conveyed by the Church in her Nuptial Benediction on the newly married couple; but they are nevertheless chaste and holy marriages, which it is not in the power of man, or of man's law to dissolve. Hence our opposition to Protestant Divorce Laws, which opposition has always been based upon the assumption that "Protestant Marriages" are indissoluble, because sacramental, unions of one man with one woman. One with one, and for ever, until God Himself doth them part.

We ask therefore as a right, as a bare act of justice, that the Quebec Chronicle, having misrepresented us as to his readers, shall publish the foregoing paragraph, in which we have stated in our own words, our doctrine on the subject of "Protestant Marriages"—the doctrine which we have always asserted, and in defence of which we have spoken some very harsh, and intentionally offensive, things of Protestant Divorce Laws; which we look upon as merely laws to legalize concubinage and adultery, and to bring "Protestant Marriage" which we respect, and desire to see respected, into disrepute.

This we have said, and repeat, that the sexual union which can upon any pretence whatsoever be dissolved, is not Christian Marriage; and that one essential difference betwixt marriage and concubinage is this—That one is a Sacrament—even to those who are unconscious of, or deny, its sacramental character—and therefore indissoluble; whilst the other is a purely human connection, or civil contract, which of course may be dissolved at any moment by the mutual consent of the contracting parties. The second unions of divorced persons, whose former partners are still living, we do not however call concubinage—for that would be too mild a term—but simply adulterous and therefore filthy sexual connections. No power on earth can dissolve the marriage tie, or release man and wife from the obligation of mutual fidelity.

THE "COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER" ON FRENCH CANADIAN EMIGRATION.—It is of immense advantage to the Protestant journalist that, in treating of matters pertaining to Catholicity, he does not recognise himself as being bound over to keep the truth; that he is not restrained to the narrow, and heavily encumbered domain of facts; but that he is at liberty to give full scope to his fancy, and to draw upon his imagination for the statements upon which he erects his superstructure of argument. The Catholic journalist has no such liberty allowed him; and therefore finds himself often seriously embarrassed in his contests with his unencumbered Protestant adversary. Yet truth, though it may be an embarrassment in the day of battle, is a valuable armor which it is not prudent to cast aside.

Our light-armed cotemporary, the Commercial Advertiser, by not adhering to this maxim, has seriously exposed himself, in an article in which, professing to account for the emigration of French Canadians to the United States, he assigns, as the cause of that emigration, the heavy ecclesiastical burdens to which the Catholic cultivator is subject in Lower Canada. A person of a more prosaic habit of mind might have found abundant reasons for that emigration in the scarcity of unsettled land in Lower Canada, worth the trouble and expense of clearing; in the greater facilities of sending farm produce to market which the United States afford to the settlers in that part of the world; to the severity of the Lower Canadian climate, the length and rigor of its winters, and many other physical causes which it would be tedious to enumerate. Facts, if stubborn, are often uninteresting; and from the region of facts our cotemporary takes pleasant refuge in the domain of fancy. Thus, answering the question, why does the Lower Canadian emigrate?—with eye in a poet's frenzy rolling, he replies as follows:—

"We answer compulsory tithes and priestly exactions and domination: it is these that are depopulating the French Canadian districts; it is their absence which makes the United States so attractive to its youth."

"We have shown that the habitant is a poor and frugal man, as a consequence he has nothing to spare, and he is not fond of demands upon his means the payment of which seriously circumscribes his few comforts. His crop frequently too small for his necessities, is made still less by the tythe rigorously exacted; the calamity of a death is increased by exorbitant charges for placing the body in the earth, and assisting the soul beyond it; the joy of his marriage is clouded by the fees of the cure, and the hope

of a christening darkened by the shadow of a new demand. To-day his little stores is diminished by tithes, to-morrow it is made less by the demands of the fabrique, the next day it is exhausted by some priestly service to the dead or living. Moreover his spiritual guide not content with taking possession of his purse, enforces his authority over his body, directs his politics, commands his votes and treats him as a child in everything but his capacity to pay all the demands of the church upon him.

"Precise with the spread of education among the people, with their knowledge of other systems and countries where a different condition of things exists has the popular irritation against these burdens increased, and borne fruits. The young resolve not to bear what their father's have suffered, and they take the first opportunity to escape from it by becoming denizens of a country where the law gives the Clergy no claim upon their produce, and where the competition of creeds diminishes the exactions, and moderates the pretensions of their ministers."

The Commercial Advertiser had previously admitted that the Catholic population of Lower Canada "are industrious and frugal, and live contentedly on very little . . . have few artificial wants," and that upon the whole they carry out into practice the evangelic counsel contained in the words of the apostle: Habentes autem alimenta, et quibus tegamur, his contenti sumus. Tim. I. c. vi. v. 8.

This, the result of priestly domination and Romish teachings, should be taken into the account, and allowed as a very considerable set-off against the evils of priestly rule.

The latter are however greatly exaggerated by our Protestant cotemporary, even if, for the sake of argument, we admit that a Church Establishment, and the compulsory support of a Clergy, are per se evils. In the first place, tythes levied only upon one portion of the cultivators' crop—upon cereals only—and amount only to one bushel in twenty-six. In the second place, the funeral charges, including the expense of digging a grave, need not exceed, upon an average, the sum of two dollars. In the third place, the marriage fees paid to the priest for his services, and keeping a Register, are at the utmost, one dollar and a half; whilst the statement of the Advertiser, that the "tythes of a new christening are darkened by the shadow of a new demand," is a pure poetic fiction, the poetic fact being, that no priest is allowed to receive any sum, however trifling, for his services in administering baptism, either to the child or the adult. Lastly, the Advertiser alludes to the demands of the fabrique as amongst the causes which contribute to drive the French Canadian from his native soil.

To all this it would not be irrelevant to reply that, even a Popish priest is as well entitled to material remuneration for his services as is the Protestant minister; and that as yet amongst all the numerous sects of Protestantism we have not heard of one whose members are not obliged to pay for the support of their clergy, and for the building of their places of worship. Even grave-diggers, of the most evangelical stripe, will scarcely dig a grave for nothing; and if the ground is hard frozen, as often happens in Canada, they will be hard-hearted enough to exact a proportionate price for their labour. Why then should Catholic priests, Catholic masons, Catholic carpenters, Catholic plasterers and Catholic grave-diggers be expected to give their services gratuitously.

Now the fact is, that the French Canadian Catholic, an emigrant to the United States, he retains any vestige of Christianity whatsoever, is taxed far more heavily for religious purposes in the free Republic, than in priest-ridden Canada. He has to pay higher fees for marriage, and that whether he be married with religious rites, like a Christian, or before a Justice of the Peace, like a heathen. Graves cost as much at least in the United States as in any part of British North America; and churches, chapels, and meeting-houses do not, we can assure the editor of the Commercial Advertiser, grow spontaneously either in Vermont, or in the State of Connecticut. Indeed, the fact is, that professing Christians of all denominations in the United States are taxed far more heavily for the support of Religion, than are the Catholic habitants of Lower Canada; and the only means by which the latter can relieve themselves from this burden in the United States, is that of rejecting practically religion altogether. But this resource is open to the Catholic in Canada; for, by formally renouncing his connection with the Catholic Church, he is released from all legal obligation of contributing towards the support of her Ministers or her sacred offices. As an illustration of the truth of the facts by us adduced above, we may mention this as of our own knowledge—That French Canadian Catholics, resident in the United States, are often in the habit of coming over the lines into Canada, in order to avail themselves of the opportunities of obtaining the services of the Church gratuitously; whilst, in the United States, where the Voluntary system obtains, they would have been obliged to pay fees to the officiating priest or minister, for the same services. This simple fact at once and conclusively disposes of the highly poetic fictions of our Protestant cotemporary.

But if, as the Commercial Advertiser implies, Church Establishments, compulsory provision for the support of a Clergy—if tythes, burial-fees and a fabrique, be so great evils in the case of a Catholic Church Establishment, whose members alone are bound by the compulsory obligation of

\* The distinction is important.—Ed. T. W.