

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, SEPT. 23, 1859.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The Italian question presents every day some fresh complication, and but slight hopes are now entertained that the Zurich Conference will be able to settle anything. A Congress of the Great Powers will then be appealed to; and perhaps, as a last resource, the sword will be employed to cut the knot which defies all the skill of the diplomatist to untie. "Important results," says the Times' correspondent, "depend on the issue of the combat expected soon to take place between the Pontifical troops, who are on the point of entering the Legations, and the forces of the Provisional Government. If the Papal troops succeed, it is thought that the Duke of Modena will re-enter his States at the head of his army—colors flying and drums beating. If, on the other hand, His Holiness' troops are repulsed, a rising in Naples is regarded as not at all improbable."

In the mean time it is gratifying to find that the humiliations and difficulties of the Sardinian government are daily increasing. From Milan we learn that a very hostile feeling is entertained towards the Piedmontese by the people of Lombardy; and the Times' Florence correspondent tells us that, had the French Emperor from the beginning of the troubles compassed the humiliation and annihilation of Piedmont, and the destruction of her influence over Italy, he could not have proceeded with more admirable foresight—and that the peace of Villafranca has placed Piedmont in a position far more precarious than she held when the Austrians first crossed the Ticino, and will probably demolish the popular prestige in favor of the King, and his government. This at all events is satisfactory; and must be looked upon by the Catholic as a just retribution upon a State which above all others has distinguished itself by its iniquitous and anti-Catholic policy.—Thus may all the enemies of the Church be humiliated, and put to shame!

The domestic news is of little interest. As a matter of course, the entire anti-Catholic, or Protestant press—from the mighty thunderer of the Times, down to the smallest cur of the pack—is howling in diabolical concert against the Pastoral of the Bishops of Ireland; whilst, on the other hand, we are told that the Catholic members of the Legislature are taking measures to carry out the views expressed in that important document. A sharp struggle betwixt the friends of "Freedom of Education," and the supporters of "State-Schoolism," may therefore be anticipated in the next Session of Parliament. On the side of the former will be found a considerable section of the Protestant body. Dr. Smethurst, convicted of poisoning a Miss Bankes, has had the execution of sentence of death pronounced upon him, suspended.

As we are going to press the Arabia from Liverpool, 10th inst., is telegraphed. The Zurich Conference had been suspended. Parma and Ronagna had pronounced in favor of annexation to Piedmont. The Great Eastern had left the Thames on her trial trip.

DEPARTURE OF MISSIONARIES.—On Friday, 16th inst., the Right Reverend F. M. Blanchet, Archbishop of Oregon started from Montreal for his distant Diocese. His Grace was accompanied by the Reverend M.M. Zephrin Poulain, Louis Piette, Cyrille Beaudry, and Fabien Jos. Mala, priests of the Diocese of Montreal, of whom the Rev. M. Beaudry is destined for the Diocese of Vancouver.

Besides these ecclesiastics, Mgr. Blanchet was accompanied by twelve of the Sisters of the "SS. Noms De Jesus-Marie" of Longueuil, to superintend the educational establishment founded by His Grace at Portland in his Diocese. The names of the young Missionaries who so cheerfully have devoted themselves to this noble work, are Sr. Marie David—in religion, Sr. Marie Alphonse; Sr. Adelaide Renaud—in religion, Sr. M. de la Misericorde; Sr. Mary O'Neil—in religion, Sr. M. Marguerite; Sr. Aglae Luister—in religion, Sr. M. de la Visitation; Sr. Vitaline Provost—in religion, Sr. M. Fr. Xavier; Sr. Catherine V. M'Mullen—in religion, Sr. M. de Calvaire; Sr. Melanie Vandandaque—in religion, Sr. M. Febronie; Sr. Alphonsine Collin—in religion, Sr. M. Florentine; Sr. Martine Lachapelle—in religion, Sr. M. Perpetue; Sr. Philomene Mesnard—in religion, Sr. M. Aiseme; Sr. Olive Charbonneau—in religion, Sr. M. Julie; and Sr. Celina Pepin—in religion, Sr. M. Agatha.

Two Sisters of the Providence Convent, Sr.

LaRocque—in religion, Sr. Pudent; and Sr. Honoria Stales—in religion, Sr. Agnes, on their way to join their Sisters already established at Fort Vancouver, Diocese of Nesqually, together with Sr. Ellen Tucker—in religion, Sr. M. De la Providence; and Sr. Catherine Grefe—in religion, Sr. De Bonsecours, of the Sisterhood of St. Anne, and destined for the mission already existing at Vancouver's Island, formed part of the religious convoy, which was attended also by several lay persons. The Reverend M. Brouillet, V.G. of the Bishop of Nesqually, left Montreal on Wednesday, the 14th inst., for Washington, where important business connected with the Mission demanded his presence, and from whence he will proceed to join his fellow-travelers at New York. On the 20th inst., the united body was to embark at the last named port to proceed on their respective routes.

On the same day, 16th inst., two of the Sisters of the Grey Nunnery, Sister Pepin, and Sister Ether, were to start for Red River, where for several years there has been established a branch of their valuable institution.

In the course of last week, Montreal was honored by a visit from Monseigneur Raphael Valentin Valdivieso, Archbishop of Santiago, Chili, accompanied by two Priests of his Diocese, the Reverend M.M. Francisco Martinez Garfias, and Miguel R. Prado. His Grace is on his way to Europe, but wished to pass through Montreal, with the object of visiting the Mother House of the Providence Sisters, of whom there is established a colony both at Valparaiso, and in his own Archbishopric City.

PHENOMENA OF THE "REVIVALS."—Our readers are no doubt well aware that there has been going on in the North of Ireland one of those singular movements known amongst Protestants as "Religious Revivals." Much has been written, much ink has been shed, and many opinions expressed as to the authorship of those movements. By some they are attributed to the Holy Spirit, by others to the devil; whilst on the other hand, there is a large class who contend that the phenomena of the Protestant "Revival" are all explicable on natural principles; that to account for them, it is unnecessary to invoke either Divine or Satanic agency; and that they belong to the same purely psychological natural order, as do the phenomena of Mesmerism, or "Animal Magnetism." This latter hypothesis has much in its favour. It is now proved beyond doubt that the "Revival" excitement manifests itself most speedily and decidedly amongst those who by temperament, and in virtue of their peculiar physical development, are most easily brought under the influences of Mesmerism. Nervous elderly females, whose organs of digestion are in bad condition, and whose habits are sedentary, fall the first victims to the Revival epidemic; whilst the eueptic, or those whose bowels are in good order, for the most part escape unscathed. That there is an intimate connection between the brain and the bowels; that the healthy exercise of the functions of the one, are to a great degree dependent upon the regularity of the latter, are facts admitted by all medical men; and though we may not be able to trace the chain link by link, yet we may assume as certain that there is a constant and harmonious reciprocity of action betwixt the purely animal, and the intellectual organs; and that an unhealthy or abnormal condition of the one, reacts upon, and tends to generate, an unhealthy and abnormal condition of, the other.

There is besides that undefined, undefinable, but still natural quality, known as "Sympathy;" a quality not peculiar to man, but common to all animals, and which often manifests itself at certain seasons very decidedly amongst mares, and cows. In a crowd one woman goes off in a fit; and nothing more common than that immediately one or two more shall be affected in a similar manner. Why it should be so, we cannot tell; that it actually is so, no one will venture to deny. So also in the phenomena of Mesmerism. The Mesmeriser appears to control all the faculties of his subject; to stimulate them at one moment to a condition of abnormal activity; and at another moment to lull them into an almost preternatural calm. In the present state of science, in our actual ignorance of most of those great physiological problems, amongst which nevertheless, we live and move, and have our being, it would be presumptuous to affirm that the influence of the Mesmeriser is supernatural: that it is—more than is every other power and quality with which man is invested—either from God, or from the devil; and it would be equally rash to conclude that, because some of the "Revival" phenomena transcend the powers of the mere physicist to explain, therefore they must be attributed either to immediate Divine, or Satanic agency. The inexplicable is not necessarily the supernatural.

To these two causes then—to a disordered state of the bowels, and to that other mysterious though natural quality known as "Sympathy," to which even the brutes are subject—may in our opinion be assigned all the phenomena of the "Revivals" that have from time to time, and in diverse localities, occurred amongst Protestant communities. We have not it is true sufficient data to speak dogmatically upon this subject; but we feel confident that, if we had a full and accurate diagnosis of the several cases of conversion reported as having occurred at Belfast and elsewhere, we should find that dyspepsia, or irregular-

ity of the bowels, was an active, if not the principle, agent therein; and if the laws of sympathy—or of that mysterious connection betwixt man and man, betwixt beast and beast, in virtue of which, the soldier on the battle field is transformed into a hero, the individual member of a mob stimulated to fiendish fury, and at the voice of the orator, the hearts of thousands and of tens of thousands are made to throb in concert and in uniform pulsation—if we say these mysterious, though natural laws were known to us, we should no longer have to seek either in heaven or in hell, for an explanation of the phenomena of the "Revivals."

In the meantime, we would suggest to those who take an interest in "Revivals" to collect facts; and disregarding theories, to address themselves seriously to the task of detailing the symptoms manifested in those who have succumbed to the "Revival" excitement. We should like to know something of the lives and habits of the several converts previous to their conversion;—whether they were great eaters and drinkers, or habitually temperate in diet; whether they were of sedentary, or of active habits of body; and, above all, whether they were eueptic or dispeptic. Until these facts be collected and collated, a full and reliable history of Revivalism is impossible; still, well meaning men—Ministers, Editors of Evangelical journals, and others—will constantly be falling into the ludicrous error of confounding congestion of the liver, with hardness of heart; and of attributing to supernatural and divine agencies that which, after all, may be but the results of indigestion, or of an irritated condition of the mucous membrane.

These considerations have been suggested by the perusal of an article in our evangelical contemporary, the Montreal Witness of a late date; in which the writer, giving an account of the Irish "Revivals," unhesitatingly, but as it seems to us, most presumptuously and illogically, attributes them to supernatural or Divine agency. We maintain that all the phenomena therein related, are easily explicable upon the hypothesis of purely natural agencies; and that there is, therefore, no necessity for invoking supernatural assistance, or of implicating the name of God therein. The Witness ought to bear in mind the old precept, admirably applicable to Protestant Revivals, "Nec Deus intersit," &c.

Let us look at some of the phenomena adduced as indicative of the hand of God. First we are told that there have been "wonderful doings in the North;" but that "the awakening has not reached the South;" though there is a "great shaking among the bones." This, translated from the language of the Conventicle into plain English, means that the epidemic has not yet extended, but menaces to extend, itself into the South of Ireland, where the writer adds that the "bones" are:—

"very dry! oh yes very dry withered up here in Clare."

Then we are told that a Mr. Guinness has made a batch of 90 converts, who are rejoicing in the truth, many others enquiring and anxious, "but this number happy." But from this positive conclusion as to the divine origin of "Revivals" can be drawn; for Joe Smith made many converts, and Mormons and Mahometans often profess to feel "happy" in their respective creeds; and yet the Witness does not pretend that either Mormonism, or the faith of Islam, is of divine origin. In short the whole argument is fallacious. From the subjective impressions of the worshipper it is impossible to conclude to the objective truth of the religion that he professes. We will however proceed with our examination of the evidence adduced by the writer in the Witness.

Of the milk girls of Belfast we are told that they:—

"spend their dinner hour in reading and prayers and singing, and some of the milk owners had to discontinue their work, there were so many convinced of sin, they would think of nothing but getting rid of their burden."

The manner in which the Belfast milk girls spend their dinner hour is certainly not conducive to health; and rather tends to corroborate our theory, of indigestion, and a disordered state of the bowels, being the prime agents in the Belfast conversions. In like manner the refusal of the girls to work, upon the plea of wanting to get rid of their burdens, is indicative of laziness, rather than of Godliness.

Then a girl, perhaps after eating too much or too fast, goes off in a fit; and this is cited as a proof of the Divine presence:—

"I saw a woman swooning away while reading a chapter; she first fell back, her hands clasped and her eyes closed, exclaiming 'Oh my sins my sins,' complaining also of 'the weight on her heart.'"

This again favors our theory. The "weight on her heart," was most probably occasioned by pressure on her stomach; and the consequence probably of bolting her victuals, and of a too hearty meal. We are told also that these fits last "from 6 to 40 hours, some shorter, some longer;" and that the more gross their lives have been, the more they seem to suffer." Quite in accordance this with our theory too; and the only really extraordinary thing connected with it, is the mode of cure employed towards the patients:—"The only way to impart relief is to repeat slowly texts of Scripture pointing to the Saviour."

Ammonia, even brandy and water, have been tried, and with good effect in similar cases, tho' there are some medical men who would advocate an active antiphlogistic mode of treatment; and we must confess that, in our opinion, either would be as efficacious for good, as the mode recommended by the writer in the Witness. It is strange, however, to see how the faith in charms still lingers in the British islands; and that in this enlightened XIX century there are people who still cling to the belief that a person who has swooned away, or gone off in hysterics, may be

brought round by reading texts of Scripture over him slowly. The talented author of "Adam Bede" describes the English peasant of the last century, as stopping at home on wet Sundays, and reading three chapters of Genesis, under the firm impression that he derived some good therefrom. His superstition was apparently close akin to that of the Belfast "Revival" converts of the present day.

Passing over some other instances; and alluding only to the marvellous change reported to have come over the Orangemen, who on the 12th of July are said to have met in their Lodges without getting drunk or making beasts of themselves—a miracle which we are too much of a sceptic to believe without better testimony—we come at last to the great and "crowning mercy;" the proof on which apparently the writer mainly relies.

"Numbers are stricken down in the streets at night; and sometimes they are carried into the police barracks, and from thence resounds prayer and praise."

The first part of this statement we can readily credit. "Numbers are stricken down in the streets of Montreal every night;" very often too they are carried into the station house, by ministering angels in blue coats, and with batons in their hands; and it is by means uncommon for the persons thus "stricken down in the streets" over night to be "brought up" to make their appearance in the Police Court in the morning.—But the "prayer and praise!" Is not the writer in the Witness mistaken? May he not have confounded certain invocations on the lips and eyes of the Police, with sounds of prayer? and the time-honored melody "We won't go home till morning," with the strains of the "Old Hundredth?" Are we, in fine, to look upon the persons "stricken down in the streets at night," as in a state of grace, or as in, what the profane call, "a state of beer?"

Our readers, however, must judge for themselves. For their information we have laid before them the more prominent features of a Protestant "Revival"—such as "swooning away," getting "happy," and being "stricken down in the streets at night." We do not pretend fully to account for these things; we have a theory of our own, but we impose it on no man as an article of faith. Only this would we remark:—

That in the phenomena, as recounted by Protestants themselves, there is nothing but what can be accounted for on purely natural principles; whilst there is much—the fits, the foamings, the contortions, and uncouth bellowings—which are not easily reconcilable with the description of the operations of God's Holy Spirit of love and gentleness, revealed to us by Christianity. These things accompanied the celebration of the Pagan mysteries of old; they formed part of the foul rites wherewith the impure deities of heathenism were invoked. To the worshipper of Baal and of Ashtaroth, and to those who bowed down before Moloch, they were appropriate; but cannot by any stretch, we do not say of charity, but, of indifference, be looked for amongst the followers of the Crucified. Sable Africans, dancing round their hideous Fetich, and making night hideous with their cries, do no doubt indulge in such freaks as the Witness attributes to the Revivalists of Belfast; but that honest, decent citizens, clad in broad-cloth, and with their nether limbs encased in the bifurcated garment, the emblem of civilisation, should nightly howl, and foam at the mouth, going into fits, and otherwise making themselves exceedingly unpleasant, is a phenomenon, which must be put down to the account either of the devil, or of mental hallucination; itself the result of a disordered stomach.

The hostility with which the Globe honors the TRUE WITNESS is highly complimentary to the latter; and conclusive both as to its fidelity to those interests which it professes to advocate, and as to the wisdom of the course it has hitherto undeviatingly pursued. A Catholic journalist may be sure that he is right when he is denounced by the Protestant press; and on the other hand, it is equally certain that the Catholic writer, or publicist, who can win a good word from George Brown or any of his political allies, must be a traitor to his religion, and a sneaking double-faced scoundrel. It is as impossible to do one's duty as a Catholic, and at the same time to avoid the animosity of the Globe, and that section of the Protestant world which the Globe represents, as it is to serve two masters; and we believe that, without egotism, we may boast that we have incurred the ill-will of George Brown and of all his friends; whilst we are sure that, without the slightest violation of truth, we may assert that it ever has been, as it ever shall be, our constant object to merit that ill-will. The louder, therefore, that the Globe howls, and the more rabid the denunciations of the TRUE WITNESS by the "Protestant Reform" press, the more firmly are we convinced of the wisdom of our policy, the more strongly are we confirmed in our determination to adhere thereto.

But whilst we claim for ourselves the merit of having endeavored faithfully to incur the hostility of "Protestant Reformers," our modesty, our sense of our own unworthiness, forbid us to accept the high compliment paid to us in a recent editorial in the Globe; wherein the TRUE WITNESS is placed on a level with the Tablet, as an uncompromising, ultramontane organ of Popery. This is praise higher than we deserve; for without endorsing the local politics of the latter, this much may be said for the Tablet, that there is not a more honest, a more ably conducted, a more thoroughly Catholic, and therefore, a more anti-Protestant, paper published on the other side of the Atlantic. If it has faults, of this at least no one can accuse it, of sneakingly trying to curry favor with "Liberal Protestants," or of advocating an alliance betwixt Catholics and the enemies of their Church.

This premised, we may avow our perfect

agreement with the political sentiments respecting "Liberal Protestants" expressed by the Tablet, and which have provoked the strictures of the Globe. With the Tablet we hold that "Whigs and Liberals are to be condemned according as they are true to Whig and Liberal principles, which are bad;" and on the other hand, we hold with our respected Catholic contemporary, that "Tories and Conservatives are to be condemned according as they are false to Tory or Conservative principles, which are good, but which our actual Tories and Conservatives continually misunderstand, violate, or neglect."—From these opinions we see not how any Catholic, how any friend to civil and religious liberty, how any one acquainted with British history during the last two centuries, and familiar with the political antecedents of the Whigs can possibly dissent; though they must, no doubt be unacceptable to "Protestant Reformers" who naturally do not like to be reminded of their political antecedents—startling to the ignorant, or imperfectly educated amongst Catholics—and infinitely offensive to that section of the latter body known as "Liberal Catholics," of whom Cavour may be taken as the type or representative.

The Whigs, so long as true to "Liberal Protestant" principles, have always been the persecutors of the Catholic Church, and the enemies of civil and religious liberty for Catholics. To the Whigs, or "Liberal Protestant" party, are we indebted for all the penal laws, from the Revolution to the reign of Victoria, that have been enacted by the British Legislature for the suppression of Popery. Orangeism makes no secret that its leading principles are those which placed a Dutchman, and the House of Brunswick, on throne. But the Revolution was essentially the work of the "Whigs;" and Orangeism is, therefore, the true exponent and guardian of Whig principles, and its "Grand Lodge" the ark where the Whig covenant is still preserved. A Tory Orangeman involves a contradiction in terms.

The Tories on the other hand, whilst true to Tory principles, have always been the friends of Catholics and religious liberty for Papists; but unfortunately for themselves, and for us, they have too often been false to those principles, and have adopted those of the Whigs, their political enemies; whilst on the other hand, the latter have occasionally proved false to "Liberal Protestant" principles, and have picked up the articles of political faith which the Tories had cast away. For it must be remembered that in voting for "Catholic Emancipation," the Whig was acting in violation of all his political antecedents; whilst the so-called Tory in opposing it, was in reality abandoning, and playing false, to the principles of the party whose name he bore.

And so has it been always and everywhere.—The "Liberal" has invariably approved himself a persecutor and a thief. It has been by the "Liberals" that the Church in Spain, in Mexico, in Sardinia, and throughout the world has been robbed and plundered. It is by the "Liberal Protestants" of Canada, that the robbery of our churches and hospitals, colleges and asylums, is recommended; it is by the same party of "Protestant Reformers" that "Representation by Population" as a means of inflicting on us the curse of "Protestant Ascendency" is advocated; and still is it from the same party that the most incessant, and the warmest opposition to "Freedom of Education" for Catholics proceeds. In all this they are but acting strictly in accordance with Whig or "Liberal Protestant" principles, and are, therefore, to be condemned; whilst on the other hand, their political opponents have justly incurred blame there, but then only, when they have sided with the "Protestant Reformers," and have arrayed themselves on the same side of the House as that on which George Brown and his political friends take their stand. Our Ministry, for example, calls itself "Liberal Conservative." In so far as it is "Conservative"—and as true to Conservative principles therefore at variance with the "Protestant Reform" party—its conduct has been, on all politico-religious questions, irreproachable; whilst on the other hand, on all questions whereon it has deserved and encountered Catholic opposition, it has been false to its Conservative principles, and has taken up with those of its opponents the "Protestant Reformers." That Catholics have many and serious causes for hostility to the present Ministry is true; but on account, not of the "Conservative" element that it contains, but because of its Liberalism, because of its unworthy concessions to our natural enemies, the "Protestant Reformers."

No man knew this better than the great O'Connell; no Irish statesman ever denounced the "base, brutal, and bloody Whigs" in more forcible language than did Ireland's best patriot, and most talented son; and he was too good a Catholic, and too good an Irishman, to believe that the honor of his Church, or the interests of his native land, could be promoted by those whom all history declares to have been the most rabid enemies of the one, and the systematic oppressors of the other.

And this is what the Tablet teaches in its sentence of condemnation on modern "Liberals;" this is what we, in our humble sphere, would desire to impress upon our readers through the columns