

The True Witness.

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G. F. OLBERG, Editor.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, AUG. 28, 1863.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

WE are literally without any further details from Europe concerning the progress of the Polish question. The diplomatists are still busily at work interchanging Notes; but if Russia will make no concessions—and as yet she has given no signs of any such intentions—it is pretty clear that the Western Powers must either back out in not very dignified fashion, or fight. By reference to other columns it will be seen that the Italian Question, if for the moment lost sight of through the greater prominence which the Polish Question has assumed, is by no means set at rest. There are throughout the Peninsula great and growing discontents with the rule of Victor Emmanuel, and the adherents of the King of Naples are as numerous and as active as ever, in spite of the fusillades of the intrusive government. Rome at latest dates was quiet, and the health of the Sovereign Pontiff was good.

We have been regaled with stories, for the most part incredible, of the capture of Charleston, or at all events of its principal defences.—The truth seems to be that the bombardment has been carried on very actively by the Federals, and that the fire of the enemy has made a serious impression upon Fort Sumter. The draft at New York, which was resumed last week, has proceeded hitherto without any disturbance, or renewal of the riots. There are, so it is said, some 30,000 troops collected in the city to crush out any attempts at resistance, and order such as a Nicholas would delight in, reigns supreme in the great commercial capital of Yankeeedom.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Like the good boys in the story-books, the members of this branch of the Legislature quickly passed their Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, and were duly rewarded by His Excellency's gracious reception thereof, which sent them all back happy to their seats, and to the enjoyment of their *optum cum dignitas*, as Mrs. Partington has it.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The boys of the Lower House have been naughty, riotous, and calling one another bad names. First there was a long talk about the Essex election, some contending that Mr. Rankin ought to be admitted to take his seat at his desk at once; others affirming that according to precedent, and Parliamentary usage, the whole case should at once be referred to an Election Committee. Finally this opinion obtained the mastery, through the head-boy or Speaker's casting vote.

Then came on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. The Address proposed by the Ministry, was attacked by the Opposition boys, who offered amendments thereunto, and who reflected severely upon the conduct of the Ministers at the close of the last half-year, and before the House broke up for its summer holidays. As the debate was purely personal, and was all about why this one was kicked out of office, and why that one was, or was not, kicked out, we will not inflict it upon our readers; it threatens to be of great length, and will no doubt be the occasion for raking up many political scandals.

An amusing episode has been brought about by an article which appeared a few days ago in the *Montreal Gazette*, accusing the present Ministry of having attempted to purchase the political influence of the Grand Trunk Rail Road in favor of the Ministerial candidates at the late election, by the offer of an enlarged postal subsidy. This serious charge was substantiated by letters published in the *Gazette* over the signatures of Messrs. Ferrier and Brydges; and the attention of the Legislature Assembly having been called thereunto by Mr. George Brown, it was stoutly denied by the members of the Ministry implicated. The affair will, we suppose, be thoroughly ventilated, but it is a sad thing to see charges of corruption and personal dishonesty thus bandied from one side to the other of the Provincial Parliament.

THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS.—As a convenient mode of evading a difficult, or rather unanswerable question, Protestants still tell us, when pressed for a definition of their religion, that "it is the Bible—and the Bible alone." These are brave words no doubt; and unfortunately with too many men words pass current for things. For our own part, we candidly confess that we know not what idea Protestants attach to these words, and we doubt greatly whether they attempt even to connect therewith any precise or definite idea on the subject of religion. They furnish a convenient formula however with which to repel the troublesome enquiries of the captious Papist.

But if the Bible be the religion of Protestants, the Protestant religion must be in a very bad way. It not because the profane and dissolute assail it with argument and bold assertions, with wit, sneers and ridicule—for it has been so from the beginning; and it is no weak argument in favor of the divine origin of that religion whose earliest records are to be found in the Bible, that it has always been the object of attack to the profanities, and to those to whom Christianity holds up the terror of a strict judgment to come. But now-a-days the most formidable assaults on the strict veracity, the historical credibility, and above all on the inspiration of the Bible proceed, not from the libertines, the scoffers, and profligates, not from the avowed enemies of Christianity in particular, and of all supernatural or revealed religion in general: but from men of unblemished morals, of exemplary conduct, ardent in their professions of attachment to the Christian faith; from theological professors, and from high dignitaries of the Established Protestant Church of England, all in earnest and anxious to reconcile, if possible, the aspirations of their souls with the discoveries of modern science, and to bring such ancient dogmas of Christianity as they still retain, and would fain retain, into harmony with the results of Biblical criticism and nineteenth century neology. The most active and incessant modern assailants of the Christian Scriptures, would we doubt not gladly believe those writings if they could: but having, in rejecting the authority of the Church, rejected all reason for believing in those writings as holy or inspired records, and being at the same time reasonable beings, they find themselves by the force of logic, and sore against their will, compelled to reject the credibility of the Bible, first in the supernatural order, and then in the natural. They give up the inspiration, of which as a moment's consideration must convince them—they have not the faintest shadow of evidence; and having thrown inspiration overboard—they soon cease to attack much value to the Bible even as an ancient history.

The different stages of this destructive analysis, of this dissolvent criticism, are well brought out in the April number of the *Edinburgh Review*, a periodical by no means hostile to Christianity, and which occupies a kind of middle ground between the evangelicals, and the disciples of the *Westminster Review*. The tone of the *Edinburgh* is reverential not scornful; and its attitude towards Christianity is rather that of an impartial judge—than that of a captious or censorious critic. The case of *Neology* *versus* the Bible or the "Protestant religion" is by this impartial and dignified judge thus summoned up: and there are few, if any, intelligent Protestants, acquainted with the state of the Bible question at the present day, who will object to his law—or to the sentence he pronounces.

The *Reviewer* deals of course with the question of Inspiration; and after noticing the evangelical theories upon this subject, he proceeds to show what are the facts at which modern criticism, conducted on sound Protestant and scientific principles, has arrived. Of course these results are mere negations, for as from nothing, nothing can be made, so from any number of Protestant premises you can only deduce a purely negative conclusion. Protestant criticism being by its nature of the dissolvent or destructive kind will pretend to tell what the Bible is not, it pretends not even to ascertain what the Bible is.

Now with respect to the theory of the plenary verbal inspiration of the Bible, Protestant criticism thus proclaims the last results of its analysis:—

"The truth is perfectly obvious that, whatever else inspiration may signify, it does not include the idea of a divinely guaranteed text."—*Edinburgh Review*, p. 262.

The critic then proceeds to consider the theory of inspiration as a guarantee against error in the statement of historical facts; and again he favors us with the result of his enquiries in the following words:—

"Inspiration, whatever else it means, does not mean a divine guarantee of an infallibly consistent statement of numbers or events."—*Id.*

Pursuing his investigations, the Protestant critic finds himself forced to admit that—

"Inspiration whatever else it means, does not mean infallible scientific accuracy."—*Edinburgh Review*, p. 263.

And again:—

"We find ourselves brought to the conclusion that inspiration, whatever else it means, does not mean a positively certain guarantee of literary genuineness."—*Id.*

When then the Bible, which is our "Protest-

ant Religion," is of such doubtful value; when in its records we can have no assurance of infallibility either in the natural or in the supernatural order, it would seem as if there were little left worth fighting for, or disputing about. Such a religious guide as Protestant criticism establishes the Bible to be, can but lead those who follow it into the ditch, or the quagmire of doubt; and if God have spoken to man only in the stammering, ambiguous accents of a book so prone to error, so wanting in all the essentials of a divine revelation, man would have been no great loser even if God had kept silent altogether.—The Protestant enquirer who admits the validity of the conclusions arrived at by the *Edinburgh Review*, must perforce of two things do one: He must either renounce his religion, i.e., the "Bible alone," or he must impugn the justice and intelligence of God.

Of what use to man can such a book be as that which Protestant dissolvent criticism makes out the Bible to be? This question though not stated by, evidently forces itself upon, the attention of the *Reviewer*, who knows not however how to answer it, or how to evade it. Nevertheless as usual with Protestants in difficulties, and when out of their depth, he splashes up an enormous volume of words, and effects his escape in the general confusion or haziness of idea which such a splutter necessarily occasions; he leaves us with the assurance, neither very intelligible nor very consoling, that "whatever men may mean by calling the Book 'inspired,' they find it to be at any rate 'inspir-ing.'" In other words, it acts upon the human conscience as calomel does upon the liver; and promotes a secretion of active religious consciousness, just as the protochloride of mercury administered in duly proportioned doses, stimulates the organs upon which it acts, and promotes an abnormal secretion of bile. Viewed in this light, the Bible is a kind of moral purgative which, judiciously exhibited, opens the patient's heart.

Man—for this is the meaning of all this laudation of the Bible as "inspir-ing" if not "inspir-ed"—must thus spin his religion as best he may out of the depths of his moral consciousness. Revelation, or communication from God to man, there can upon this hypothesis be none; and the Protestant religion is therefore just what every man, being "inspired," by a non-inspired book, may throw off or eject from his own conscience—and very nasty feculent matter men are in the habit of throwing off. This would not be so bad, or at all events so disagreeable to Catholics, were Protestants not in the habit of thrusting their unsavory and most offensive mess upon others, and of trying to cram it down our Catholic throats as if it were clean wholesome spiritual food. Thus treated, we hurl it back to them with contempt, with a feeling akin to nausea, and unmitigated astonishment at their consummate impudence.

LOYALTY OF CATHOLICS.—We think that it may safely be conceded from the general tone of the Catholic press in the U. States that, as a body, the Catholics of America are opposed to the present war; opposed no less to the principle which that war involves, than to the barbarous and unconstitutional manner in which, on the part of the Northern States, the war has been carried on. This must we all concede to the *Witness*: but does it thence follow that the Catholics of the U. States are justly obnoxious to the charge of disloyalty which in an article copied by our contemporary is applied to them?

The answer will of course depend upon the definition that may be given of the word "loyal." With one man it means one thing with another man, another thing; but in the case of the United States—we think that we shall not be far wrong if we define it as denoting adhesion or fidelity, not to a person, but to the fundamental and essential principles upon which the Union of the several Sovereign States that in the reign of George III. wrested their independence from Great Britain, was contracted. Understood in this sense, the opponents of the present war are the only truly "loyal" men in the Northern States; and as for the most part the Catholics of America oppose the war, it follows that they are, not exclusively indeed, but essentially loyal. It is not because the Northern opponents of the war justify the secession of the South, but because they condemn the means resorted to by the Northern States to subjugate the Seceded States, that they oppose the war; for that war they contend is repugnant to the spirit of the Constitution, and can only be successfully waged upon a system fatal to the liberties of the North. The loyalty of the "copperheads," or opponents of the war, is a moral loyalty; a loyalty or fidelity to the law and to the Constitution as it was. The loyalty of which the Abolitionists or Jacobin party boast is merely a material loyalty, or adhesion to territory.

For from the very outset of the contest, it must have been evident to the most superficial observer that on the part of the North the war was waged, solely for territory; and that the emancipation of the negroes was merely a pretext resorted to in the course of the conflict as

a means, but was not proposed as its end, or object. Now the Constitution "as it was," though it carefully and abundantly provided against any interference on the part of the Federal Government with the question of Slavery, and left that question, absolutely under the control of the several States—made no provision of any kind either for coercing back to the Union, any of the States which might at some future period be disposed to secede therefrom, or for retaining possession of, and governing such States when coerced or brought back by force of arms into the Federation. From these premises the anti-war party concluded that, as it was impossible to save both territory, and the Constitution "as it was"—that as there was a necessity for selecting betwixt the loss of the one, and the loss of the other, it was better to sacrifice territory for the sake of their Constitution, and their free institutions, than to sacrifice the latter for the sake of territory, which even when acquired would turn out to be as difficult to deal with as was the celebrated elephant won by the unlucky gentleman in the lottery.

Subsequent events have fully confirmed the wisdom of those who opposed the war on constitutional grounds. The South is not subjugated: the seceded territories have not yet been re-annexed; but the personal liberties of the people are lost for ever; but a military despotism of the most revolting pattern has been imposed upon the people of the Northern States; but the Constitution has been violated in every essential particular; and should the Federals succeed in subduing the South, even to their hearts' content, they will then discover to their cost, and when too late to repent, what a monstrous edifice of tyranny they have been piling up, and cementing with so great labor, and so copious an effusion of blood. They will find that in subjugating the Confederates they have subjugated themselves; that in crushing out "State Rights" in the South, they have by the same process effectually destroyed the autonomy of the States in the North. Every act of the Washington Cabinet in prosecution of the war has been in flagrant violation of the fundamental or essential principles of the Constitution "as it was," to which the "copperheads" as they are called are loyal or faithful. According to the letter and the spirit of that Constitution, both President and Congress were prohibited from in any manner interfering with the laws of the several States which recognised and regulated negro slavery within their respective borders; and yet in violation of the express and stringent stipulations of the Constitution, the President of the Northern States, at the instigation of the Abolitionists or Jacobins, has not only assumed to himself the right to emancipate the negroes; but in violation of the laws of civilized warfare he has put arms into the hands of these illegally emancipated slaves, and now bounds them on to cut their master's throats. We assert then fearlessly, that if loyalty in the United States consists in faithful adherence, not to territory but to the Constitution, the President at Washington and his abettors are the "traitors," and that the "copperheads," or opponents of the war are alone truly loyal. Nor can it be argued that Acts of Congress have made many things legal to the Federal Government, which by the Constitution "as it was" were illegal. The functions of Congress are not analogous to those of the Imperial Parliament; they are not unlimited and undefined, for they were closely limited, and strictly defined by the very act which called Congress into being. The Imperial Parliament on the contrary, is omnipotent, so that it can legally or constitutionally do anything except turn a man into a woman, or a woman into a man. But no one ever dreamed of attributing such high functions and prerogatives to the Congress of the United States, whose powers are derived from, and were defined by, the several sovereign and independent States which by their voluntary Union created it, with certain definite and limited functions. They therefore who have aided and abetted Congress in its late illegal and anti-constitutional legislation, not they who have in the name of the States opposed that legislation, are the disloyal and the traitors.

And it must be remembered that there is no analogy whatever, no resemblance however remote, betwixt the relations which subsist betwixt the Imperial Government, and its Provinces or Colonial Dependencies, and those which subsist betwixt the Federal Government, and the several States of which the old Union was composed. A British Colony, though endowed with a separate legislature of its own, holds from the Imperial Government; and therefore there can be no doubt that when a collision betwixt Colonial authority, and Imperial authority occurs, the allegiance of the colonist is due to the latter, and not to the Colonial or Provincial Government, which is but the creature of the other, and owes its being to Imperial legislation. But in the United States this order is reversed. The Federal Government did not create or authorize the State Governments, but the State Governments by their several and independent acts, created and gave all its power to the Federal Government. The latter therefore holds from the

States; and when a collision betwixt the two authorities occurs, it is clear that the primary allegiance of the citizen is due to the Government of his particular State. The truly loyal men are they who uphold this fundamental principle of the American Constitution "as it was;" they who violate or ignore it are the real traitors. Not in upholding "State Rights," but in opposing them, but in aiming at the Republic "one and indivisible" of the French Jacobins, does treason consist—treason against the Constitution, treason against individual liberty, and against the well-being of the human race.

For "State Rights" in a community destitute of the elements of an aristocracy, constitute the only safe guard against centralisation, which is but another name for despotism. Hence it is that the constant assaults of Jacobinism in the United States—of that party whose aspirations are after a government of the French Republican pattern—have always been directed against "State Rights." For the same reason every true conservative, every loyal man must make the maintenance and even the extension of those "Rights" his peculiar study. It is this, and not any hankering after the peculiar domestic institution of the South, that enlists the sympathies of the conservative classes in England, and of the Catholics on this Continent on the side of the Confederates. The triumph of Northern arms, and Abolition principles means Jacobinism; it means Republic "one and indivisible," the destruction of local self-government, the abolition of the autonomy of the several States, and the inauguration of centralised despotism.—They, therefore, who are loyal to the principles of liberty and self-government must be opposed, both to the principles upon which the present war was commenced by the Northern States, and to the methods by which it has since been carried on.

The Northerners object however that the war was forced on them by the South, and that therefore the latter is responsible for it, and for all its consequences. If asked how the South-erners forced on the war?—the Northerners will say that the former first violated the terms of the Union. But this plea is false, for the first violations of the terms of the Union were on the part of the Northern States. The latter, by their so-called "Personal Liberty Acts," and by their constant opposition to the "Fugitive Slave Law," violated in one very important particular the terms of the Union. They asserted, implicitly on their own behalf, the right of any particular State to modify the terms of that Union, and to nullify the acts of the Congress or Federal legislature. It is no answer to say that the "Fugitive Slave Law" was immoral, and that the reddition of runaway slaves to their Southern masters was *malum per se*, an outrage upon the "higher law," which no one was bound to perpetrate. These would have afforded good reasons to Massachusetts and other Northern States for refusing to contract, or for seceding from, a Union which imposed such onerous and such demoralising conditions upon them; but they did not justify them in deliberately violating the terms of a contract by them deliberately and voluntarily entered into. According to the letter and spirit of the Constitution, the men of Charleston had just as good a right to open fire upon Fort Sumter, as had the men of Boston to interfere in any manner with the "domestic institution" of the South, or to oppose any obstacles, moral or physical, to the restoration of the fugitive slave to his legal master; and as the Northerners made no scruple of violating the express stipulations of the Union on this point, so also that Union was no longer in any point binding on the other party thereunto. He who in any one particular violates a contract, has lost for ever the right to insist upon its observance in any other particular, by the other contracting party. And so with the Northern and Southern States. The former by constantly and deliberately setting at naught the terms of the treaty, contract, or Union, which imposed on them the obligation of giving up all fugitive slaves to their masters, not only first set an example of asserting the supremacy of State over Federal Legislation, but absolved the Southerners from all moral or legal obligation to adhere to any of the stipulations contained in the aforesaid contract or Union. The North, not the South, was the aggressor, because the North first violated the fundamental conditions of the Union "as it was." It is monstrous to suppose that a covenant whose conditions the Northern Abolitionists when it suited their prejudices to do so, broke through as if they were spiders' webs, should to the Southerners prove as letters of iron. And though it may be urged that, in contracting the Union, the Northerners should never have stipulated to give up to his master a fugitive from domestic slavery, no honest man, no one in short but a Liberal, or in other words, a rogue, will argue that having once entered into such an agreement, the Northerners were at liberty not to carry it out to the letter, and in the spirit in which it was made.

As Catholics we are proud of the attitude adopted by our coreligionists in the United