

THE "FREE PRESS."

We were always aware that the Ottawa Free Press was in no way over scrupulous when it saw an opportunity of hitting an opponent or of making a point; but we were not aware that it was so anti-Catholic as to place false constructions upon statements made by Catholic papers, or to draw unwarranted conclusions from their remarks. In our last issue we said, in our editorial notes, that—

"We understand that the missions in Jamaica, W. I., are to be transferred to the American Jesuits. These missions were under the English branch of the Order, which section will take the South African missions. In November last Rev. William O'B. Pardow, Provincial of New York, visited Jamaica. This may tend to Americanize that island."

The same piece of news appeared in at least half-a-dozen of our American Catholic exchanges. There is nothing very extraordinary in the statement. Yet, the sage Free Press, in its anxiety to have a slap at the Jesuits, adds the following comment:—

"THE TRUE WITNESS seems to think with those who regard the Jesuits as underhanded and mischievous marplots in the state. By parity of reasoning we presume the English branch will make South Africa more Anglified than it is now."

What an almighty elastic imagination the writer of that paragraph must have. Far from it. THE TRUE WITNESS does not "think with those who regard the Jesuits as underhanded and mischievous"—not even the Free Press included. We would like to know what the establishment of a religious order in a country, or the changing of the field of labor for any branch of that order, from one country to another, has to do with the state, or how it can possibly be distorted into an evidence of underhand or mischievous workings. Even a half-witted creature could understand that the introduction of men—as teachers and preachers—of one race into a country, is likely to impart to many by whom they are surrounded, the manners, style of language, and customs which they necessarily carry with them. What has that to do with the State? Remove the French-Canadian Oblates from the Province of Quebec and replace them with the members of the order who were born, educated and have lived their lives in Ireland, will not the change tend to affect the manners, language, and customs of the people with whom they would come in immediate contact? What, again, would that have to do with the State? Is it underhand and mischievous for an American Jesuit, Oblate, Dominican, Paulist, or member of any other missionary order, to possess American manners, style of expression, and national characteristics?

We would pay no attention to this comment were it not for the obvious "underhanded and mischievous," as well as malignant and cowardly manner in which it is given. The Free Press never deigned to notice our irrefutable arguments that filled ten issues of our paper, upon the "Exercises of St. Ignatius," but it tries, in its miserable style, by insinuating what it dare not assert, to shoot over our shoulder a poisoned shaft at an Order it is unable to appreciate.

CONDOLENCE.

THE TRUE WITNESS desires to express its deep sympathy with Major Latour, of Laval avenue, and his family, in the death of their only daughter, a bright and promising young girl of twenty years. To any ordinary home such a blow must leave a lasting effect, but particularly to a person of such fine tastes, great sensibilities and sympathetic nature as Major Latour we can scarcely imagine the weight of the sorrow. However, he has the great consolation that

the gifted and faith inspired draw from the only source of consolation in such afflictions, and he knows fully how general and sincere is the sympathy felt by all his large circle of friends and admirers.

BRITISH POLITICS.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE COMING SESSION.

The Question of the Lords—Prospects of the Government Hanging Out.

A London despatch, dated January 12th, says:—"The proceedings of the Cabinet Council which was held last Thursday and about whose deliberations there has been so much speculation, were by no means as vitally important as were supposed."

"The Council began with the arrangement of the Parliamentary work for the coming Session, the sequence of the measures to be introduced, and the manner in which they should be presented. These questions being decided, the construction of the Queen's speech was taken up, and the question exhaustively debated. These topics constituted all of the matters discussed by the Council that were of public interest."

"The rumors which have been widely circulated of grave dissensions over the questions as to the advisability of an early dissolution in view of the Parliamentary situation, and the order in which bills should be introduced, are utterly without foundation, and the stories that serious differences have arisen between Lord Rosebery and Sir William Harcourt are exactly the reverse of the truth."

"All of the well-informed adherents of the Ministry know that the Cabinet is united and in thorough accord as to the policy to be pursued, though the Ministers have not yet decided upon the line of Parliamentary tactics which will yield best results."

"On minor matters the Cabinet is united, but the leading and delicate question, how to mention the House of Lords in the speech from the throne, was keenly debated in the Council and the various propositions submitted were exhaustively discussed. If the omission of any reference to the House of Lords from the Queen's speech could thwart the machinations of the Opposition, who are trying to force the Government into declaring themselves upon this question early in this session, the matter would be gladly ignored, but the majority of the Cabinet, in view of the official utterances of Lord Rosebery and Mr. Campbell-Bannerman upon the subject, are of the opinion that the Government are already committed to a declaration and must open Parliament with a formal announcement of their policy in regard to the Upper House."

"Lord Tweedmouth, a leading member of the Rosebery Ministry, said to a friend and parliamentary colleague to-day that the persistent reports of dissensions between the Prime Minister and Sir William Harcourt, or any other member of the Cabinet is pure invention, and that the Government feels safe of a sufficient majority to carry out its programme at the next session."

"It seems to be commonly understood that Mr. Labouchere will bolt, but it is not believed that he will carry with him more than two votes besides his own."

"Lord Rosebery and Prof. James Bryce are to speak at the Universal Suffrage Congress at Cardiff, on January 18th, when, it is understood, that the Premier will give the Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation a full statement of the Government's programme in regard to the House of Lords. The Congress will afterward wind up its session with the passage of a resolution reaffirming the Anti-Lords declarations of the Leeds Conference."

"In regard to dissolution, the leading members of the Liberal party recognize the fact that the uncertainty of the Government's position may precipitate its fall within a fortnight after the resumption of the House. The Ministerial whips report that according to the most reliable information obtainable the Government's majority of sixteen in the House depends upon the adhesion of the Radical wing to the Ministry, the full vote of the McCarthyites, and the abstention of the Parnellites from voting with the Conservatives. Still, the Government are confident that they will be able to hold out until the main measure and

a popular budget are introduced, and these are relied upon to gain sufficient adherents to enable them to pull through. Sir William Harcourt expects that the showing of a substantial surplus will enable the Government to shape the budget so that it will appear successfully to the people in the next election, and it is believed by the Liberal leaders that their internal discords will not prevent the McCarthyites from meeting in Parliament with an united front."

THE COOLUN.

(BY MARTIN McDERMOTT.)

[We reproduce this beautiful poem at the request of a number of our readers. The Coolun is the name of one of the most beautiful of ancient melodies; the Avonmore is the Munster Blackwater.]

The scene is beside where the Avonmore flows—
'Tis the spring of the year, and the day's near its close,
And an old woman sits with a boy on her knee—
She smiles like the evening, but he as the sea!
Her hair is as white as the flax ere it's spun—
His brow as yon tree that is hiding the sun!
Beside the bright river—
The calm, glassy river,
That's sliding and gliding all peacefully on.

"Come, granny," the boy says, "you'll sing me, I know,
The beautiful Coolun, so sweet and so low;
For I love its soft tones more than black-bird or thrush,
Though often the tears in a shower will gush
From my eyes when I hear it. Dear granny, say why,
When my heart's full of pleasure, I sob and I cry

To hear the sweet Coolun—
The beautiful Coolun—
An angel first sang it above in the sky?"

And she sings, and he listens; but many years pass,
And the old woman sleeps 'neath the chapel-yard grass;
And a couple are seated upon the same stone,
Where the boy sat and listened so oft to the croon—
'Tis the boy—'tis the man, and he says while he sighs,
To the girl at his side with the love streaming eyes,

"Oh! sing me sweet Oonagh,
My beautiful Oonagh,
Oh! sing me the Coolun," he says and he sighs,

"That air, Ma Stor, brings back the days of my youth,
That flowed like the river there, sunny and smooth!
And it brings back the old woman, kindly and dear—
If her spirit, dear Oonagh, is hovering near,
'Twill glad her to hear the old melody rise
Warm, warm on the wings of our love and our sighs—

Oh! sing me the Coolun,
The beautiful Coolun!"
Is't the dew or a tear-drop is moistening his eyes?

There's a change on the scene, far more grand,
Far less fair—
By the broad rolling Hudson are seated the pair;
And the dark hemlock fir waves its branches above;
As they sigh for their land, as they murmur their love;
Hush—the heart had been touched and its musical strings
Vibrate into song—'tis the Coolun she sings—
The home-sighing Coolun—
The love-breathing Coolun—
The well of all memory's deep-flowing springs.

They think of the bright stream they sat down beside,
When he was a bridegroom and she was a bride;
The pulses of youth seemed to throb in the strain—
Old faces, long vanished, looked kindly again—
Kind voices float round them, and grand hills are near,
Their feet have not touched, ah, this many a year—
And as ceases the Coolun,
The home-loving Coolun,
Not the air, but their native land faints on the ear.

Long in silence they weep, with hand clasped in hand—
Then to God send up prayers for the far-off old land;
And while grateful to him for the blessings he sent—
They know 'tis His hand that with holdeth content—
For the Exile and Christian must evermore sigh
For the home upon earth and the home in the sky—
So they sing the sweet Coolun,
The sorrowful Coolun,
That murmurs of both homes—they sing and they sigh!

Heaven bless thee, Old Bard, in whose bosom were nursed
Emotions that into such melody burst!
Be thy grave ever green!—may the softest of showers
And brightest of beams nurse its grass and its flowers—
Oft, oft, be it moist with the tear-drops of love,
And may angels watch around thee, for ever above!
Old bard of the Coolun,
The beautiful Coolun,
That's sobbing, like Erle, with sorrow and love!

A devotion that is spreading with unexampled rapidity in France is that to St. Anthony of Padua as the friend of the indigent. Each city, each parish is erecting a statue to St. Anthony, and what is known as l'Œuvre du Pain (the

society for providing bread for the poor) is effecting great good among those whom the distress of recent years has reduced to a state of actual misery.

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