

The True Witness

AND
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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1872.

ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR.
FEBRUARY—1872.
Friday, 16—Of the Crown of Thorns.
Saturday, 17—Of the Feria.
Sunday, 18—First in Lent.
Monday, 19—Of the Feria.
Tuesday, 20—Of the Feria.
Wednesday, 21—Ember Day. Of the Feria.
Thursday, 22—Chair of St. Peter at Antioch.

REGULATIONS FOR LENT.—All the days of Lent, Sundays excepted, from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday included, are days of Fasting and Abstinence.

The use of flesh meat at every meal is permitted on all the Sundays of Lent, Palm Sunday excepted.

The use of flesh meat is also by special indulgence allowed at the one repast on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays of every week from the first Sunday of Lent, to Palm Sunday.

On the first four days of Lent, as well as every day in Holy Week, the use of flesh meat is prohibited.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

No solution of the difficulties arising out of the contradictory interpretations put, respectively, by Great Britain and the U. States on the Washington Treaty has yet been arrived at; but as the resources of diplomacy are not nearly exhausted, such a solution may be still hoped for. Meantime the trouble, such as it is, has had a slightly depressing influence on the public funds—but not to any considerable extent.

The points in dispute are these:—The U. States contend that the arbitrators on the so-called Alabama claims are authorised to adjudicate upon, and if they see good, award damages for, indirect injuries caused to U. States commerce, and the general interests of the country, by the three or four Confederate men of war, that, built in English ports, contrived to elude the vigilance of the authorities, and get out to sea. These indirect damages are put down at about three hundred millions of pounds sterling, as amongst them are included the prolongation of the war betwixt the Northern and Southern States.

It is contended, on the other hand, that by the Treaty the duties of the arbitrators thereby agreed to, are limited to adjudicating upon, and awarding damages for, such specific injuries as shall be brought home to any of the said Confederate men-of-war in particular. By this view of the case, there is no room for the awarding of a gross sum for unspecified damages, such as the case, as stated by the agents of the U. States at Geneva, claim. There is of course much excitement in England on the subject, but it is subsiding; and there is every reason to believe that the claims of the U. States for indirect damages even if entertained by the Court and examined into, will be rejected as extravagant. The position of the British Government seems to be this: That it will not agree to the entertaining or discussing such claims before the Arbitrators, they not being in virtue of the terms of the Treaty, competent to adjudicate thereupon; the U. States contend that the said Arbitrators are competent, and insist upon their claims being heard, and discussed by that Court. Hence the trouble.

Mr. Brand, Ministerial candidate, has been unanimously chosen Speaker of the House of Commons, in lieu of Mr. Denison, resigned.—The seat of Mr. Nolan, the Home Rule candidate lately returned by Galway, is to be contested.

The French Assembly; it is said proposes to force upon M. Thiers the Presidency for life; considering the gentleman's advanced age, this would secure no long period of fixed government to France; and at any moment a rupture betwixt him and the Assembly would be liable to recur. Fixity or stability is to be found only in the loyal submission of France to the legitimate authority of her rightful king, Henry the Fifth.

We record with unfeigned regret the death of an illustrious Prelate of the Catholic Church in the U. States—that of His Grace the Most Reverend Dr. Spalding. Since his return from Rome, where he assisted at the General Council of the Vatican, his health has been weak, and he expired on Thursday the 8th inst., in the sixty-third year of his age, leaving behind him a great reputation for learning and virtue. R.I.P.

Latest telegrams inform us that Mr. Blennerhasset, the Home Rule candidate, has been returned for Kerry. There had been a severe storm attended with loss of life and property, on the South Coast of Ireland. Kelly, whom our readers will remember as having been acquitted on the charge of murdering Talbot of the detective police, has been tried and found guilty on the charge of shooting with intent at a policeman. The sentence is fifteen years hard labor.

The discussion on the Alabama claims' difficulty still continues in England. The Times is of opinion that the Geneva Conference will be a failure.

The Mazzinians had a turn-out in Rome on Sunday to commemorate the proclamation of the Roman Republic in 1849. The Piedmontese government did not attempt to interfere, suspecting probably that in any disturbances which might occur in consequence, it would get the worst of it. There will soon be but two parties in Rome; that of the extreme revolutionists, and that of those who remain loyal to their only legitimate Sovereign, the Pope. Outside the government offices, Victor Emmanuel has few adherents.

A writer in the Montreal Witness of the 6th inst., over the signature *Un Ministre Heretique*, though that of "*Un Ministre Menteur*" would, we think, be more appropriate, tells the following story of the late Reverend Father Hay, Vicar General of the Diocese of Toronto:—

"When the late Vicar General Hay, of Toronto, was on his death-bed, he succeeded in sending a message to the late Dr. Burns, who at the time lived opposite the R. C. Bishop's Palace, when he was dying, asking the latter to come and see him 'as a neighbor, as a fellow-countryman and as a dying man.' The Dr. was not at home when the message came, but, as soon as he was informed of it, he went over to the palace. He was, however, told there that Father Hay could not then see him, as he was laboring under a severe fit of coughing. The second time the Dr. called he was debarred from going into the presence of the dying man by the excuse that he was asleep. Soon after he had to go on a missionary tour, but before he returned Father Hay passed into the eternal world."

The writer goes on, and insinuates that the dying Catholic priest wished to learn from the Dr. Burns the way of salvation as taught in the Protestant sect—whatever that may have been—to which the Dr. Burns in question belonged; but that the priests who surrounded the bed of the dying Vicar General, would not allow the much desired interview to take place; this is cited by the writer as a piece of "*Romish Trickery*." We have a word or two to say on the story, and the hypothesis of its narrator.

It is barely possible, though not very probable, that some heartless scoundrel, with a view either to playing a sorry practical joke on Dr. Burns, or to disturbing the dying Romish priest, and insulting him in his last moments, may have concocted a *bovius* message to the effect as recorded in the above extract from the Witness; but it is certain that the friends who stood around the bedside of their departing brother would have acted with great indecency and great cruelty, had they given effect to the design of the unprincipled and heartless joker, by allowing a Protestant minister to thrust his unwelcome presence upon a dying Catholic, in that supreme moment. Our own suspicion of the story is, however, that it is a pure lie; and this the more, because the names of the persons who transmitted the message from Vicar General Hay to Dr. Burns are not given.

The extraordinary hypothesis of the writer in the Witness is more easily disposed of.

Not a day passes but what men, who have passed all their lives as Protestants, seek on their deathbeds, or with the prospect of speedy death staring them in the face, to be reconciled to, or admitted within the pale of, the Catholic Church. But, and we say it without fear of contradiction, there is not, there never has been, and never will be, an instance of a Catholic who, during his days of health and strength, had practised his religion—and conformed to her precepts—desired to abandon, or dreamt of abandoning his Church and his religion on his deathbed. There are thousands, and tens of thousands, who never go to confession, who never go to Mass, who never approach the Sacraments, who eat meat on Fridays, who scorn the idea of fasting in Lent, and who, in a word, are, in every respect, thorough Protestants, who nevertheless on their deathbeds call loudly for a priest of the Catholic Church to reconcile them with their offended God Who soon will be their Judge. Such cases are common, of every day occurrence amongst all classes of society; from the King surrounded by his courtiers, to the condemned criminal in his cell, whose only attendant is the turnkey. We need not cite instances, for instances numberless will at once present themselves to the

mind of the reader; for such instances we need not even leave this City of Montreal.

"*Un Ministre Heretique*" may deceive himself on this point, but he cannot deceive others. For this world Protestantism may be all very well. It is good, if to eat, and drink, to accumulate money and make a position in society, be the chief ends for which man was created. As a business religion, Protestantism has no doubt its advantages; and for young men beginning life, either in the grocery, or in the dry goods line, there is nothing—as they all know—so conducive to success, and the establishing of a good business connection, as "*Joining the church*"—for so taking stock in some of the evangelical sects is usually called. But when man is called upon to wind up his affairs, when he feels that the moment is come for him to prepare to render an account of the deeds done by him in the flesh; when he knows that already the word has gone forth, that this night his soul shall be required of him—then Protestantism loses in his eyes whatever charms it may once have presented to him; and then do the claims of the Church which he has despised assert themselves with strange and mysterious force. Ah! it is not till a man lies on his deathbed, till he feels his sight grow dim, and till the cold sweat of approaching dissolution gathers clammy on his brow, that he can fully appreciate the blessedness of being a Catholic, and a child of the Holy Church. It may be that in his hot youth, and when his passions were strong, he refused the cross which daily and hourly she presents to all her children, deeming it too heavy for his shoulders. But not so now; not now, when the world with all its momentary pains, and profitless enjoyments, is fast fitting away, and eternity is opening to his anxious gaze. Then will he cling more tenaciously than ever to that faith which has sustained him in the long, and often painful pilgrimage of life; which has been his solace in affliction, his shelter in the storm and in the summer heats—"*in astu temperies, in fletu solatium*." Not then, nor at that dread moment will he dream of revolting against the tender mother who has nursed him in her bosom, guided him in all times of trouble, and sustained him when fainting beneath his burden; but faithful to the last to her teachings, clasping to his bosom the image of his crucified Redeemer, and with child-like trust, relying on the merits of Him Who by dying conquered death and hell,—he will look undismayed, the king of terrors in the face; and so with his last breath will be enabled with the Apostle to exclaim triumphantly—Oh grave where is thy victory! Oh death, where is thy sting!

What, we should like to know, can Protestantism in any of its thousand phases, offer to the dying man, to smooth his passage to eternity, that the Catholic Church does not offer to all her children, who truly repent them of their sins, and with contrite hearts turn, even in their last moments, to Jesus? What inducements can it hold out to the departing, to persuade him to renounce his faith, and to reject the last tender offices of the spiritual mother who has watched over him from the moment he was presented at the baptismal font, to the last hour of his existence? and who then bids him go forth from this world in the name of God Almighty who created him; in the name of Jesus Christ Son of the living God who suffered for him; in the name of the Holy Ghost who had been infused into him; in the name of all the heavenly host awaiting him around the eternal throne?

In a word, Protestantism is to Catholicity what Deism is to Christianity; and as both before and since the time of Voltaire, thousands, who in their days of health had scorned the claims of Christianity, and repudiated the obligations it imposes, have turned, or sought to turn to Christ on their deathbeds—whilst there is no one recorded instance of a Christian having under like conditions renounced Him and His religion:—so we assert without fear of contradiction, that there never has been, never will be a case of a dying Catholic turning Protestant—though not a day passes but what in his last moments some Protestant or another seeks to be reconciled to the Catholic Church.

Sir John A. Macdonald has given his opinion on the case presented to him by the Catholic minority of the Lower Province—strongly urging that the late action of their Provincial legislature with respect to schools, was in violation of the terms of the Confederation Act. Sir John's opinion is unfavorable to the Catholic remonstrants. He takes the ground that the Act of Confederation proposes to protect the educational rights of minorities, there only where, before its passing, special legislative enactments recognising denominational schools already existed; no such schools were by law established, or by special name recognised in New Brunswick when the Confederation Act was passed; therefore concludes Sir John A. Macdonald, he cannot recommend the Privy Council to grant the petitioners' prayer, that the late School Act passed by the N. B. Legislature be disallowed. Sir John does not

touch upon the merits of the case, nor does he allude to the justice of the claims put forward by our New Brunswick friends.

We much regret this opinion, we must confess; and it seems to us that it implies too much respect for the letter of a law, whose spirit and manifest intentions it disregards. But at the same time we must allow that Sir John A. Macdonald is an able lawyer, and therefore a far better interpreter of an Act of Parliament than we can pretend to be; and his antecedents, and his general liberal dealings with the Catholics of Canada, are such that we dare not impugn the perfect honesty of his decision—in spite of which, however, we trust that some means may yet be found of obtaining justice for our fellow Catholics in the Lower Province. They must not be discouraged, neither should they cease from constitutional agitation, though thereby their Province be convulsed from one end to the other.

We gather hope too from this: That the *Minerve*, the Ministerial organ in Lower Canada, comes out strongly and ably in defence of the Catholic claims, and puts their case in a far more favorable light than does Sir John A. Macdonald. We offer a translation of the article:—

(Translated from the *Minerve* of the 8th inst.)

"THE CATHOLICS OF NEW BRUNSWICK.—Sir John A. Macdonald, has just made known his opinion on the question of separate schools in New Brunswick. For the following reasons it is addressed * to Catholics.

"The Act complained of is an Act concerning Common Schools, and the Acts which it repeals refer to Parochial, Grammar, Superior, and Common Schools.

"No allusion is in these Acts made to Separate, Dissident, or Denominational Schools; and the undersigned finds that no law establishing such Separate Schools exists."

"Strictly, very strictly speaking, perhaps Sir John is not wrong: the letter of the law may be upon his side. It is absolutely the *summa lex, summa injustitia*; every law too rigorously interpreted is an injustice. It has pained us much to see the honorable Minister of Justice give to his opinion the semblance of a predetermination—*d'un parti pris*—which we are incapable of imputing to him, but which will certainly be interpreted as such.

"Sir John pretends to believe that he has said everything when he says that he can find no law establishing dissident schools in New Brunswick. But at least he might have told us why he did not consider, under these circumstances, the custom of the Province as a kind of law. All privileges do not have their source in written law. Custom is a high authority, often on a level with a written law, because it is taught else but a law sanctioned by universal practice, and unanimous approval.

"We would not that the Bill for Confederation should seem as having sinned the good faith of the Catholics of New Brunswick; who, taking the custom established in their Province for the existing law, trusted in the honesty of their compatriots, and asked for no more. To them it is surely a cruel awakening, we will not say, deception.

"If the mechanism of our new federal system admit of such word-trickery—*jeux de mots*—soon there will be no security for any one; it is their turn to-day, to-morrow it will be ours. Let not the confidence that reigns amongst the Catholics of Lower Canada be killed."

The *Minerve* is right. Some play upon, or tricks with, words may yet be attempted, in the terms of the Confederation Act, which shall disconcert the designs of its French Canadian framers, and render void, and of no effect, all its provisions for Lower Canadian autonomy.

* Did not our contemporary intend to write "addressed" instead of "addressed"?

AN INCENTIVE TO PRAYER.
(Communicated.)

We know the Church will eventually triumph over its enemies; but we know neither the time nor the way which God in his foresight has chosen. What must we do? Strive, wait and pray. Strive to be worthy of the religion we profess, strive to be firm as adamant, strive to be united in heart and soul as were our first fathers in the faith. Wait for the good time; wait patiently and trustfully, leaving all to Him Who "feedeth the birds of the air," and Who is often nearest at hand, when He seems farthest away. Above all, pray that the Church's enemies be converted, or, if they stubbornly refuse the proffered grace, that they be humbled and no more impede the work of God—*ut inimicos sancte. Ecclesie humiliare digneris*. In the words of a great Belgian orator,* speaking of the fifteen thousand Catholics of Brussels, who lately went, in a body, to pray, in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, for the Father of the Faithful,—"*prayer is our best weapon and our firmest hope. Governments bind themselves not to pray; it is just as if they bound themselves not to hast!* But the people can make up for governments that do not pray; and, since social prayer should not be offered up in secret, let it invade both town and country; let the very stones of our streets cry out to heaven for mercy! *Lapidæ clamabunt!*"

The efficacy of this weapon led to the formation of that vast League of praying souls, which has, of late years, gathered associates in all quarters of the Globe. The *Apostleship of*

* Mr. G. Verspeyen, who delivered a splendid address before the General Assembly for Peter's Pence, at Ghent, on the 12th December, 1871.

Prayer, whose object is "to promote the glory of God, the triumph of the Church, and the salvation of souls throughout the world," now includes almost six million members, whose zeal is kept up, in a great measure at least, by reading the "*Messenger of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*." This invaluable magazine, published in French at Toulouse, exercises its beneficial influence in a far wider sphere than any other periodical the world has yet seen. Our assertion no doubt seems incredible, and yet it is none the less true,—for "there are more things in heaven and earth, than are dreamt of by many." In fact, the number of those who read, or hear the French "*Messenger*" read, would almost justify our estimate, since few religious communities, where French is spoken, are without it; since its pages are full of letters from India, Syria, South Africa, South America, the distant islands of the Pacific, and the recently established missions of the Arctic Ocean,—letters which all attest the power the Heart of Jesus exerts, through the "*Messenger*," even to the ends of the earth. Now, if we bear in mind that there are at least eight foreign editions of this periodical; that Italy, Spain, England, Germany, Holland, Flanders, N. America, and S. America have each their "*Messenger*;" and that all these various editions, though mainly filled with original matter, invariably borrow from the French magazine its spirit and its best articles,—we shall be enabled to form an approximate idea of the unparalleled circulation enjoyed by this unassuming little pamphlet.

That the prayers which its pages recommend are not offered in vain, we have abundant proof. Every month the Toulouse edition contains a certain number of acknowledgements of graces received; for instance, last month there were no less than fourteen hundred and seventeen. But we need not go so far.—The February number of the "*Messenger*" published by the Reverend B. Sestini, S. J., at Woodstock College, Howard County, Maryland, contains some very remarkable facts under the heading of *Graces Obtained*. One person speaks of "a son, not heard of for years," who "has written to his relatives," and adds; "many other favours have been granted which I could hardly recount; for all which I feel grateful beyond expression." Another says: "I return thanks for a great grace granted to my father recommended in November. On the third Friday of that month he received Holy Communion for the first time in more than thirty years. A third:—"*The employment lately asked through the prayers of the Apostleship, I have, thanks to the Sacred Heart, obtained.*" A fourth:—"I beg our pious Associates, to whose prayers I am indebted for the favour, to join with me in returning most heartfelt thanks to the Sacred Heart for the conversion of my father, who, at the advanced age of sixty years, overcoming a thousand difficulties that worldly prudence opposed, received the sacraments of the Church for the first time on the Feast of the Epiphany." The above are a few specimens of a certain kind of practical "philosophy," that speak volumes to those who are gifted with sound minds and upright hearts.

If any should wish to test the efficacy of this League of Prayer, they need only send their intentions to the Director of the Apostleship, at Woodstock; or even, be content with reading the "*Messenger of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*," where they will find, in the beautiful articles it contains, the intentions it suggests, and the graces it records, a powerful incentive to that spirit of earnest, confiding prayer which is to save the world from anarchy and ruin. The last number of this admirable magazine begins with the *Paradise of God*, or the Virtues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Then comes the story of *St. Blasius and his companions*, followed by *Historical scenes of the Fourth Century of the Church*, where the times of Julian the Apostate wear a striking resemblance to our own. We next meet with three pieces of simple, touching poetry,—*The Wanderer's Return*, *Thoughts Before the Altar*, and *Sonnet on the Sacred Heart*. *God our Father* is the first of a series tending to raise the confidence of pusillanimous souls. *The Saints Canonized by Pius IX* form a long and interesting catalogue classified by nations. Another article treats of the *Solemn Conservation of the Society of Jesus to the Sacred Heart*, on the feast of the Most Holy Name, January 14, 1872. *The General Intention for the present month* is, "*The Catholic Press*;" prayers are requested "for the generous Christians, who are defending, by means of the press," the rights of the Church, "that, by the courage with which they give testimony of the truth, they may check the present triumph of error, and prepare for it a speedy downfall." The long list of *Graces Obtained* reveals the hidden triumphs of undoubting prayer. Finally, the last pages contain a record of about seventy convents, colleges, churches and monasteries of the United States, which have been affiliated to the Apostleship,—and the *Particular Intentions* for the current month; the letters, in which