

## The True Witness

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

IS PRINTED AND PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

At No. 223, Notre Dame Street, by

J. GILLIES.

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TERMS:

To all country subscribers, or subscribers receiving their papers through the post, or calling for them at the office, if paid in advance, Two Dollars; if not paid, then Two Dollars and a-half.

To all subscribers whose papers are delivered by carriers, Two Dollars and a-half, if paid in advance, but if not paid in advance, then Three Dollars.

Single copies, price 3d, can be had at this Office; Piquet's News Depot, St. Francis Xavier Street; at T. Riddell's, (late from Mr. E. Piquet), No. 22, Greff St. James Street, opposite Messrs. Dawson & Sons; and at W. Dutton's, corner of St. Lawrence and Craigie Sts.

Also at Mr. Alexander's Bookstore, opposite the Post Office, Quebec.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 1862.

## NEWS OF THE WEEK.

To the Catholic, the condition of the Italian question, as involving the fortunes of the Sovereign Pontiff, must be of paramount importance; and considering the share that their Government has had in encouraging and promoting the revolutionary movement in the Italian Peninsula, Protestants may well feel as interested therein, and ask themselves how far they are morally responsible for the acts of the revolutionary authorities whom they have assisted in calling into existence.

This however is a question which Protestants do not willingly entertain, and which when forced upon them they do their best to shirk. Yet it will be pressed upon them; and however painful and humiliating the answer thereunto may be, that answer will be given some day — if not by our own contemporaries, at least by posterity.

Of late both Lord Derby and Lord Normanby have made themselves exceedingly troublesome by forcing this question upon the House of Lords. The same ungrateful task has been performed in the House of Commons by Sir Geo. Bowyer, who on the 27th ult. brought before the public the atrocities of the Piedmontese in the Kingdom of Naples; and put some very indiscreet questions to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, thereby ruffling considerably the temper of that ordinarily placid individual. We find the following report of the debate in the London Times:—

"Sir G. Bowyer desired to put a question to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, which would show that no unnecessary delay ought to take place in bringing the affairs of South Italy before the House. The question he had to ask regarded another Proclamation of the celebrated Major Fumel.—The proclamation was as follows:—

"NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

"The undersigned, charged with the destruction of brigandage, promises a sum of 1000 for every brigand who may be brought to him, dead or alive. The same reward will be given to any brigand who shall kill one of his companions, and his life shall, moreover, be spared. The undersigned declares that any one who shall give shelter to the brigands, provide for their subsistence, or give them the slightest relief; or who shall see them, or even shall simply know their place of refuge, without immediately giving notice to the civil and military authorities, shall be immediately shot. For the protection of flocks the shepherds are invited to form several centres with a sufficient armed force, because in case of attack they will not be permitted to plead the excuse that the cattle were taken by force. In three days all the villages must be burnt, and the towers and uninhabited country-houses must be unroofed and the windows walled up. After the lapse of the said time they will be burnt, and all cattle and sheep not guarded with a sufficient force will be killed. It is explicitly forbidden to carry bread or other food out of the commune. Every one transgressing this order will be considered as an accomplice of the brigands. Provisionally and for the present circumstance the Syndics are authorized to give to the peasants permission to carry arms, on the responsibility of the proprietors who may ask for this to be done. Each member of the National Guard is responsible for the territory of his commune. The undersigned can see none but two parties — the brigands and the opponents of the brigands (cofrabrigantes). All who stand indifferent will be classed with the brigands, and the most energetic measures will be taken against them, because when the common interest requires their assistance it is a crime to refuse to give it. All disbanded soldiers who do not present themselves within four days will be considered brigands."

"This document," continued Sir G. Bowyer, "was dated from a place called Celico. There was also another circumstance with respect to which he wished to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs a question. He had read an article in an Italian newspaper the *Stella del Sud*, making the following statement:—

"The captain of the guard mobile was traversing the district of Salice, in the commune of Bernalda, and having met some of the shepherds of the country asked them if they had seen an armed band. They answered in the negative. After some time it appeared that a sanguinary contest took place between the guard and an armed body. The captain, believing that he had been deceived by the country people and shepherds, returned, after a period of three days, to the locality where he had met them, and there captured 13 unfortunate countrymen, and drove them into a cabin. Then, by firing on them, he set fire to the place, and by that means 13 innocent men were burned to death."

"Now, what he wanted to know from the Government was, whether they had been more fortunate in reference to the case to which he had just drawn their attention, than they had been on a former occasion, and whether they had received any information with respect to events so important. He also wished to know whether the Government, in the event of their not having received the information, would immediately endeavor to ascertain the truth or falsehood of the statements which he had laid before the House—of their truth he himself had little doubt—and would, in the event of their turning out true, address some remonstrance to the Piedmontese Government with regard to the atrocious means taken by them to keep down the people of the Two Sicilies."

Mr. Layard, the official thus adjured, rose to reply. With reference to the proclamation by Major Fumel, he admitted its authenticity, and

that the British Government had received information from Naples that a copy of that proclamation had been brought under the notice of Her Majesty's Consul, who had mentioned it to the Governor of Naples. The latter pretended that he had no information on the subject; but, after some time, he learned from the Syndic of the district that Major Fumel had prepared a draught of the proclamation in question, but that it was not printed. Mr. Layard expressed his surprise that Sir G. Bowyer should have been able to procure a copy of the proclamation, and his opinion that the questions which the hon. gentleman had asked might be more appropriately put in the Turin Parliament. On the burning of the thirteen shepherds he had no explanation to give, having no information.

So far Mr. Layard on the subject; here is the explanation, and attempted palliation, given by the correspondent of the London Times, who writing from Naples under date 22nd ult., says:—

"Nothing was known here of the circumstances on the 18th inst. Since then inquiries have been made by telegraph, and the following is the answer:—

"The proclamation was not printed nor written by the Major, but the Syndics were permitted to affix it in order to frighten (allure) the populations. It had not however been carried out, and, fearing unpleasant inquiries, the Prefect had directly sent information of it to Turin."

The same writer continues:—

"I confine myself as closely as possible to the wording of the answer, without being too literal.—The whole affair is very confused, and there is an evident design to throw the responsibility from one person to another. One thing is clear, that if the civil authority can affix such proclamations within the knowledge of the military power, or if a Major in the National Guard can do so of his own free will, or, again, if syndics can be permitted to trifle with such weapons, there can be no responsible Government, and there must be a number of local despots. I make these remarks in the most friendly spirit to the Government, who will better serve the interests of Italy by measures of legality, justice, and humanity, than by proceedings which must of necessity alienate the masses."—Times's Corr.

From this it is evident that the stories we have heard of the atrocities of the Piedmontese authorities in the conquered Kingdom of Naples are no forgeries, but stubborn facts; that the most infamous and sanguinary proclamations are issued by the said authorities to "frighten the populations" who hate Piedmontese rule; but that warned by repeated exposures, and afraid of publicity, these proclamations of the Piedmontese Government are not printed, but only written, so as to prevent an unnecessary multiplication of copies, and of damning evidence of their brutality, towards the unfortunate Neapolitans.

For the rest, it is clear that the Sardinians are making no progress towards the subjugation of Naples; and the Times correspondent assures us that, "brigandage," that is to say, armed resistance to the foreign mercenaries of Piedmont, "must henceforward form an important feature in my correspondence;" thus showing that resistance is not crushed, and that the movement for national independence is daily assuming more gigantic proportions. Garibaldi is to visit Naples, and his intrigues are dreaded by Rattazzi and by Victor Emmanuel, by both of whom the *filibuster* is looked upon with an evil eye. The Pope's health is re-established, and on the 26th ult. His Holiness issued a Decree for the canonisation of the Japan martyrs; and also pronounced an Allocution in which he declared, that the Temporal Power cannot be considered as a dogma, but as an actual ordination of Providence—and that the independence and liberty of the Head of the Church were absolutely necessary.

The official organs of the French Empire strenuously deny that there exist any prospects of a change in the personnel of the Cabinet; which of course confirms the suspicion in the public mind that some great and important changes are in contemplation, and indeed determined upon. There is a good deal of discontent against the Spanish Government entertained at Paris, on account of the action of the former in Mexico.

The great naval action betwixt the *Merrimac* and *Monitor* has excited deep interest in England. It is looked upon as inaugurating a new era in naval warfare and coast defences; and has given rise to anxious debates in Parliament upon the propriety of continuing the fortification of our Seaports, which it is argued must in future be protected chiefly by iron-clad boats of the *Monitor* class.

A deputation from the Corporation of Limerick, bearing a petition in favor of the claims of the Catholic University to be put upon an equality with the existing Protestant Colleges in respect of conferring Degrees, has been received by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, but the prayer of the petition has been refused. Evidently some time must yet elapse before the Catholics of Ireland can expect the full recognition of their rights.

No official account of the great battle of the 6th and 7th instant has yet been given to the world by the authorities at Washington; we are therefore left to glean the truth as best we may from the confused and contradictory accounts furnished to the newspapers by irresponsible correspondents. The result seems to be this.

That on Sunday, General Beauregard surprised, and thoroughly routed the Yankees with great

slaughter; and that the panic amongst the latter was as complete as at the ever memorable battle of Bull's Run. Whole regiments turned tail and ran away; nor could they be again persuaded to come up to the scratch, or to face the disagreeable music of the Southerners. On Sunday in short the latter gained a complete and glorious victory.

On Monday the Yankees received great reinforcements; and General Beauregard retreated to the lines from which he advanced, carrying off with him a large number of prisoners. On the second day the advantage seems to have been slightly on the side of the North. Neither party can justly claim a victory; for the fact remains that the Northerners have not lost the initiative, nor have they been compelled to yield one inch of ground by them wrested from their opponents. On the contrary, we hear that the Yankees have again advanced in force up the Tennessee river, and captured an important railroad post, thus cutting off all communication betwixt the Confederates at Corinth, and those at Alabama.—We learn too that after a smart cannonade Fort Pullaski has surrendered unconditionally. Some excitement was created by the reappearance of the *Merimac*; but the *Monitor* did not venture to attack her, although she captured and carried off three Federal vessels from the enemy. Sick-ness is said to be breaking out in the Federal camp, in the shape of malignant typhoid; this, if true, will arrest their march of conquest. A telegram states that the Committee on the Conduct of the War is about to institute an investigation into the causes of the surprise at Pittsburgh. This would indicate that the Federal authorities do not look upon the battle which was the result of that surprise, as a success to Federal arms.

THE MONTREAL "WITNESS" ON THINGS IN GENERAL.—If our public men go astray it will not be from want of looking after; if our Legislature errs, or fails in its duties, our respected contemporary the *Montreal Witness* will at all events have nothing to reproach himself with.

He gives indeed the very best advice, gratis, and upon all subjects. On Temperance, and Prohibitory Laws; on Sunday observances and the scandal caused to the faithful by the drums and bugles of profane Guardsmen and unregenerate Fusileers. On all these topics he is great, even though his greatness be that of a bore; but upon the subject of Romanism, Romish encroachments, and Romish Corporations especially, he transcends himself. Never perhaps is he so illogical and so mendacious, and therefore so ultra-evangelical, as when attacking and slandering our Catholic institutions.

He is publishing a series of articles, replete with the wisdom of Little Bethel, luminous with the splendor of the conventicle, upon "Measures which the People have a Right to Expect from Parliament." Stiggins, Pecksniff, and Mawworm speaking in the name of the people of Canada, emulous of the undying glory of the "three tailors of Tooley Street," lift up their voices like the prophets of old to rebuke, and warn, and to instruct the rulers of the land; but we much fear that, even as ungodly kings turned a deaf ear to the remonstrances of the Seers of Israel, so will our profane and carnal legislators many of whom are known to indulge in occasional "goes" of beer, and to be guilty of the abomination of a pipe—turn a deaf ear to the voice of the man of the *Witness*, who clad in black cloth coat and white choker deems himself set up as a sign to a perverse and adulterous generation.

Our friend, rather our guide, guardian, and light to our paths, is troubled about many things. He is troubled about beer, and he is troubled about "bacey"; he is troubled about the band which, till a weak concession to Puritanical prejudice and superstition silenced it, marched with the troops to Church on Sundays; he is troubled about nables, and peg-tops and bats and balls on Sabbath days; he is troubled about the salvation of the souls of us poor misguided Papists; but above all he is troubled and sore exercised in spirit about our religious, charitable and educational establishments. Only think what a time the poor man must have of it! With so many cares ever pressing upon him; with his chaste eyes daily shocked by the sight of Popish abominations; and his soul grieved with the reflection, that his pious labours in our behalf are all unappreciated, and that charm be never so wisely, we will not come out of Babylon and be saved.

Yet is he not cast down; he delivers his message and speaks the word that is in him—that is the word of valice and of falsehood; and his heart burning within his bosom, he thus takes up his parable against religious corporations:—

"The Religious Corporations about Montreal, for instance, have large surplus revenues, and are constantly buying up, as opportunity offers, desirable properties which still further increase their surplus revenues."—*Montreal Witness*, 11th inst.

We speak of course, only in so far as Catholic "Religious Corporations about Montreal" are concerned; and we say that, as referring to these, the statement of the *Witness* is the contradictory of truth. So far from having "large surplus revenues," all our Religious Corporations,

with one or two exceptions, have barely sufficient to enable them to meet the constant and heavy demands made upon them. Of the great majority the revenues consist only of the donations of the faithful, and the produce of the manual labors of the Religious, and the inmates of their several institutions; whilst the most wealthy are obliged strictly and closely to economise their means in order to be able to make head against the vast amount of pauperism which our city contains, and with which, but for these Corporations, it would be burdened; and to meet the many and constant demands made upon their resources, for charitable and educational purposes. Every penny of their revenues is devoted to these purposes; and it is to them that Montreal is indebted for its numerous and excellent schools, colleges and hospitals; for its many asylums for the aged, for the infirm, for the orphans, and for every form and description of suffering humanity.

It is true, as the *Witness* complains, that these Corporations never die; that their property is not being divided or brought under the auctioneer's hammer; that in consequence they do constitute a kind of landed aristocracy; and do thus, to a certain extent, reproduce the political and social conditions wrought in Europe by the laws of entail and primogeniture. The facts we admit;—but instead of deducing therefrom consequences to be deplored, we find therein much ground for congratulation, and most excellent arguments in favor of Corporate bodies.

All history shows that, though we may have equality, we cannot have liberty, in the best sense of the word—i.e., personal or individual liberty—without an hereditary and powerful landed aristocracy. The great feature which distinguishes the social and political life of Asia from that of Europe, is the absence in the former of anything approaching to an hereditary landed aristocracy. Asia has always been the land of equality, and therefore of abject slavery. The barber of to-day may be the Pacha of to-morrow, with absolute control over the lives and fortunes of millions; the Pacha of to-day may be the abject bastinadoed wretch of to-morrow, grovelling in the dirt, without a single trace of manly dignity about him. And it is so, because Asia has a bureaucracy, or rather a Jack-in-Office-ocracy, but never an aristocracy, never a body of powerful gentlemen, who in the language of the nobles of Arragon, could address their sovereign, "We who are as good men as you," &c.

And in France, if liberty is no longer possible, it is because the revolution not only checked the inordinate power of the Crown, and abated the insolent pretensions and arrogance of the *parvenu* courtier, and placeman who flattered about the throne, and affected the manners of a *grand seigneur*; but because it foolishly, and unfortunately for the best interests of civilisation, swept away the landed gentry, the true aristocracy of every country; and made their restoration an impossibility by its arbitrary laws for the division and subdivision of landed property. The fathers of the revolution secured equality indeed; but they did so by sacrificing liberty, and the possibility even of liberty; for there is no instance in history of a free people which did not possess an hereditary landed aristocracy in some form or another.

The truth of this proposition is not affected by the fact that sometimes, as in Ireland at the present day, the members of such an aristocracy sadly neglect their duties, and make a cruel use of their rights. The abuse of an institution is no valid argument against it, for what is there that may not, that has not, been abused? Besides Ireland is in an exceptional or abnormal position. Her true and rightful landed aristocracy have been forcibly driven out and their place has been supplied by aliens, in blood, in language, and in religion; and to these disturbing accidents, and not to the inherent defects of the system itself, must be attributed the discontent of the Irish with the land tenure of their country. In England and in Scotland the case is different; and in these countries, all that exists of civil and religious liberty is due, first to the old Catholic Church, and in the second place to their powerful landed aristocracy.

Now the danger to society and liberty on this Continent proceeds from the total absence of this class; and anything, any institution which in any manner, and however imperfectly, tends to supplement an hereditary landed aristocracy is, *pro tanto*, or in so far as it approximates to a landed aristocracy, a pillar, or support to our dearest liberties, and a barrier against demagoguism and democratic absolutism, which constantly menace American society. Neither king nor parliament—though kings can make Dukes and Counts, and confer titles—can make an aristocracy, any more than man can make an oak; for all aristocracies grow, and grow slowly, having their roots deep in the soil, even as has the oak; and it ought therefore to be a subject of congratulation to every lover of freedom, that we have in Canada growing up an institution which in some manner, and in some measure may fulfill the purposes of an hereditary landed aristocracy. Apart therefore from the material services which our undying ecclesiastical Corporations render to society by their care of the poor, the sick, the friendless

and the ignorant, they are to be highly valued for the important moral benefits which they confer; by reproducing in our ultra-democratic community, some of the consequences which in the Old World flow from the existence of an important element in its social system, without which Europe would still be grovelling in the dust of the stagnant plain of Asiatic despotism and equality.

These views may be unpopular, because we know that the abuse of "landed aristocracy" is part of the stock in trade of every itinerant stump orator and peedy popularity hunter in America. But though unpopular, nay! because unpopular, they may be, and probably are strictly true. But at all events the motives of the *Witness*'s hostility to our Corporations are sufficiently transparent. It is because he looks upon them as the bulwark of Popery, that he hates them; it is as the silent but most eloquent preachers of the Catholic doctrine of good works that he hates, and would fain silence them. They are obstacles to the proselytising schemes of the Soupers, as well as impediments in the way of the demagogues; and as a demagogue and as a Protestant the *Witness* seeks their destruction.

DEVELOPMENTS OF PROTESTANTISM.—If any of our readers have given themselves the pains to peruse certain articles which we have transferred to our columns from those of the London Times, on the subject of "Spiritualism," they must have been surprised at the great and rapid spread of this new doctrine amongst, not the poor and ignorant only, but the educated and the refined. "Spiritualism" is no longer the superstition of the vulgar and illiterate; it has become, to a considerable extent, the faith and religion of the learned, and so-called upper classes of English Protestant society. This is a phenomenon which deserves our attention.

The facts that the business of a "medium" is so lucrative in the middle of the XIX. century, as to enable its professor to live in the highest style of wealth—that the doors of his mansion are obstructed from morn to night by the equipages of the aristocracy—that he charges one guinea per hour for an interview with his clients—and that the latter are so numerous and so urgent that it is necessary to make arrangements for the *seance* on a previous day—are startling; and would be incredible were they not attested upon the best authority, and deemed by the London Times of sufficient notoriety and importance to justify the devotion of two "leading articles" to the subject of modern "Spiritualism," and its votaries.

But what is "Spiritualism?" it may be asked. In general, Spiritualism may be defined as the belief in the objective reality of communications from an ultra-mundane or Spiritual sphere; and that these communications, though they may manifest themselves at any moment, and under any circumstances, are generally evoked by, and through the agency of one who, in the language of the adepts is termed the "medium." Through the latter, and by arbitrary signs for the most part mutually agreed upon, though sometimes by other means, it is believed that the dead in the body, can communicate with their friends and acquaintances in the flesh. Rapping, Table-turning, and other phenomena, which are said to occur during the communications, are not essential, but merely accidents or accessories; rude artifices to which the Spirits in the first instance resort, to attest their presence, and to give notice of their desire to communicate with their friends and relatives. The word "Spiritualism" in short, as used at the present enlightened day, is but a modern euphuism for that which, in the dark ages, was styled necromancy, or holding conversations with the dead. Mr. Forster is to be found by the curious in Bryanston Street, Portman Square, London, and surrounded by nineteenth century "fizzins"; yet he pursues the same unbalanced trade as that which of old, in Endor, she pursued whom, in his distress, and when no longer, either by dreams or Urin, or by the voice of prophets the Lord answered him, Saul consulted. How shall we deal with that which we read in Kings, xxviii. 14. 15. and following verses? or how shall we discriminate betwixt the witch of Endor, and Mr. Forster of Bryanston Street, Portman Square?

Of the character of the phenomena of "Spiritualism" we will hazard no opinion. If, on the one hand, it may well be argued that there is nothing therein which may not be explained on perfectly natural principles, so on the other hand, we cannot, seeing that all religions that are, or ever were, are based upon the hypothesis of the existence of an ultra-mundane or spiritual world, and the reality of communication betwixt the terrestrial and the ultra-mundane—assert the impossibility, and a *priori* incredibility of any such communications, without denying the fundamental truths of all religious systems, and taxing the Christian Scriptures themselves with error and untruth. When some years ago Pastors were issued by the Catholic Bishops of this Continent against the evocation of Spiritual phenomena, such as rapping, table-turning, and against taking any part in the *seances* of the Spiritualists, the Pastors of the Church offered no opinion, and