

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

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G. E. CLERK, Editor.

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We beg to remind our Correspondents that no letters will be taken out of the Post-Office, unless pre-paid.

The figures after each Subscriber's Address every week shows the date to which he has paid up. Thus "JOHN JONES, August '63," shows that he has paid up to August '63, and owes his Subscription FROM THAT DATE.

MONTEAL, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8.

ECCLIASTICAL CALENDAR.

DECEMBER—1865.

Friday, 8.—FAST—IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, Obl.

Saturday, 9.—Of the Octave.

Sunday, 10.—Second Sunday in Advent.

Monday, 11.—St. Damasus, P. O.

Tuesday, 12.—Of the Octave.

Wednesday, 13.—FAST, St. Lucia, V. M.

Thursday, 14.—Of the Octave.

The "Forty Hours" Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will commence as follows:—

Saturday, 9.—N. D. de Toutes Graces.

Monday, 11.—St. Ambrose.

Wednesday, 13.—Hospice Lajeumerais, Verannes.

NEWS OF THE WEEK

The capture of Mr. James Stephens, Head-Centre of the Fenians in Ireland, has, we are told, put the Government in possession of piles upon piles of documents, wherein all the secrets of Fenianism, of its organisation, and of its ulterior designs, are laid bare.

The most important event of the week has been the meeting on the 4th instant of the Congress of the Northern States. We say of the Northern States, because members returned by the Southern States are refused admittance, although regularly elected.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF INSPECTORS OF ASYLUMS, PRISONS, &c.

The inefficiency of our actual system of secondary punishments is well brought out by the recommendations which in a Special Appendix to their Report, the Board of Prison Inspectors feel themselves called upon to make to the Government.

When the State sends a criminal to the Penitentiary, it is evident that, no matter what his offence, it must give him a sufficiency of food and clothing, to keep him in health; that it must lodge him, and furnish him with the best of medical attendance when sick.

sands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of the honest and industrious working classes are most meagrely fed, rarely or never tasting animal food, most wretchedly clad, most wretchedly housed, very insufficiently warmed in winter, and destitute of all such luxuries as baths, lavatories—in a word, of all that conduces to health, cleanliness, and personal comfort.

So much for the purely physical aspect of the case; and it must also be born in mind that the convict enjoys many moral and intellectual advantages in jail, to which, too often, his honest and hard-working fellow-subject, who is taxed for his support, is a total stranger.

That this is no overdrawn picture of the advantages which the convicted criminal in the Penitentiary enjoys, and at the expense, too, of the hard working honest man, all will admit; and certainly at first blush it would appear as if the maudlin philanthropy of our age had done its best to put a premium upon crime, and to hold out inducements to a dishonest and criminal life.

Hard and repulsive labor should therefore form one essential part of our system of secondary punishments; and of all labor the most repulsive and the hardest is non-productive labor, such as shot-drill, the crank, and the treadmill.

Much of this is due to the abominable system

of making long protracted periods of imprisonment the chief feature of our secondary punishments. This is a grievous error, which underlies and vitiates the entire system. Punishment to be effective as a deterrent, should, as a general rule, be short and severe; and for this purpose should consist in very hard, repulsive, non-rewarding, or non-productive labor, such as that of the treadmill, the crank or shot-drill; and in all cases of infamous crimes, such as outrages upon women, deliberate outrages upon the person, theft, swindling, forgery and frauds of all descriptions, should be supplemented by smart corporal punishment, in the shape of an application of the cat-o-nine-tails.

Nor let it be said that society is too humane, too enlightened again to have recourse to the old modes of dealing with thieves, cheats and swindlers that our forefathers practised. We are not a bit too humane, not the least too enlightened—for we do flog, and that pretty severely, only for a class of offences entirely different from those infamous crimes for which we would reserve exclusively the use of the lash.

Of course we design no imputation on the Penitentiary authorities, for so long as the present abominable system of shutting up large numbers of men for long terms of years, in a common building, is persisted in, the most severe the most deterrent of secondary punishments, that is to say corporal punishment, must be resorted to if we would avoid mutiny; and we are well aware that it is only in extreme cases, and with great reluctance that the Warden and his brother officers have recourse to the lash.

IMPORTANT LEGAL DECISION.—Our Lower Canadian papers publish an elaborate judgment delivered on the Lower Canadian School Question, by Mr. Justice Sicotte sitting in the Superior Court, District of St. Johns.

M. Sicotte in pronouncing judgment argued that the word "inhabitant" should in the School Law receive a broad and liberal interpretation, so as to include all holders of property taxable for school purposes, whether the said proprietors be resident, or non-resident.

With respect to the higher law, or principles upon which the judgment was based, we may without impertinence say a few words, expressive of our gratification at not only the decision arrived at, but at the great and important principles laid down by the Judge—and of which the subjoined is a concise statement:—

"The examination which I have made into this subject leads me to believe that the right of the rate payer to superintend the employment of his rate in public education is the corollary of his right to the exercise of his religion and of his faith, and that the law examined as to its object in its whole, and in its details, has consecrated a principle, so just and necessary to peace in a country where races had shelter in their contrasts, and religions protect one another by their diversities."

This is the view that the TRUE WITNESS has always taken of the school question, insisting for Upper and for Lower Canada alike, that to the tax payer belongs the right of determining how his school tax shall be applied—and that this right is the corollary of his right to determine for himself, as against the State, what he shall believe, and how he shall worship God.

We read in our exchanges that there is a regular "war of races" at New Orleans between the Creoles, that is to say the citizens of French origin, the descendants of the original settlers, and founders of the Colony—and the Yankee or Anglo-Saxon section of the population.

"The American element has control in the City, and is determined that French shall not be taught, and that the next generation of Creoles shall be thoroughly Americanised."

There is something very ludicrous in the impertinence with which the Anglo-Saxon population of the United States arrogate to themselves, and their portion of the Continent, exclusively, the name of Americans and America; as if all the descendants of Frenchmen, Spaniards, Portuguese settled in America, North or South, were not just as much Americans as are the citizens of the United States.

But if the language of certain of our neighbors is ludicrous from its impertinence, their actions are often odious because tyrannical. Such is their treatment of the French Creoles in New Orleans—the descendants of the first settlers—who it seems are to be "improved off the face of the earth," denationalised, and made Yankees of; and such too would be the treatment that French Canadians would experience, were it their misfortune to form a portion of the great republic.

Some of our Rouges journals, in their blind hatred of British connection—a hatred inspired by the fact that the British Government does not persecute the Catholic Church in Canada—are ever insisting upon the great advantages that would accrue to their countrymen from annexation; they will not, we fear, point out to them and insist upon one of these advantages, as experienced by the French Creoles of New Orleans, to wit—that the teaching of their mother tongue would very soon be prohibited in Canadian common schools, and that their new masters would subject them to the process in differently called Americanization, or "improving off the face of the earth."

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CHOLERA AT JERUSALEM.—In a letter in the London Times giving an account of the ravages of Cholera at Jerusalem where the disease has been very fatal, we find a high meed of praise awarded to the French Sisters of Charity. Everybody almost had fled: the sick were left to die unattended, and only the French Consuls of all the many foreign officials remained within the walls.

"Some noble acts of courage and devotion may, however, be mentioned: The Patriarch Monsignor Valergo, who returned to Jerusalem the moment he heard the cholera had broken out, has opened a new hospital where the sick Christians are received and attended to by the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition, nearly all French women. One of the Franciscan Fathers has a knowledge of medicine. This priest who is a very old man displays the most indefatigable zeal, but most of the cases under his hands have proved unsuccessful, three-fourths of the number of the patients being carried off rapidly within three to four hours."

The Sisters of St. Joseph certainly distribute no tracts, and effect no sales of Bibles; nevertheless they seem in their way to display something of the spirit of Christ, which is indeed strange, seeing that unless our evangelical friends are most audacious liars and slanderers, the said Sisters, because Papists, are actually living "without God and without hope in the world." We quote the very words of our French Canadian Swaddlers, and they surely are "men of God" who cannot lie!

THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.—An evangelical contemporary begins a paragraph concerning these islands, whose native population is now nearly extinct from unmentionable disease, itself the product of licentiousness—in the following strain:—

"In these Islands, where the Gospel and Christian civilisation have been steadily and most successfully advancing since the first landing of Missionaries there in 1819, it is now proposed to discontinue the use of the native tongue."

The Protestant writer has strangely omitted one thing, one little word, in his announcement of a fact which is simply due to the extermination, or dying out of the native race—"rotten like sheep," as another Protestant writer described them some years ago. Whatever may have been the progress of Protestant Gospel, and of Protestant civilisation in the Sandwich Islands since the Protestant missionaries first landed there in 1819, the progress of syphilis has been far more steady, far more rapid, and triumphant as the statistics of the islands show; and to it is due the disuse of the native language, since by it the aborigines have been swept off from the face of the earth.

THE GOSPEL OF PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE.

—A French correspondent of the Evangelical Christendom under the caption "Rationalism in the Pulpit and the Bible in the Cottage" tells us what have been the results of Protestantism in France. Nor is the case he gives, by him cited by any means an exceptional one; for he adds, when speaking of the French Protestant clergy "ex uno disce omnes"—The informant who is a colporteur or bible pedlar thus deposes:—

"A man from whom I inquired if he needed a Bible, replied to me, 'I have had one for a long while, and if you want it, I will let you have it cheap.' I asked to see it, inquiring when he had brought it, why he wished to part with it. He replied that the last time he was at Church, the pastor had taken his text from the Book of Joshua, and had proved that a miracle recorded there was false, and the conclusion of his argument was that the other miracles of the Bible were false also. When I heard that from the mouth of a pastor, I believed him; he is sent to be our teacher, and would you have me believe a book that is full of such fables? My old father used often to say that it was the Word of God, and even before breathing his last, he attempted to read to me a verse which is written on the fly-leaf of the book. See, here it is, the 16th verse of the 31st of John. I desired him to read the verse, and, after having done so twice, he replied, 'I understand from this that he who does not believe that God has sent Jesus Christ to save us will be lost, but I do not believe there is any hell. Reason does not admit of such an idea.' 'Oh,' exclaimed the poor wife, 'what sorrow my husband causes me! He believes nothing! What will our children become under such influence?' 'You will not force me to believe what I cannot believe,' said the man, and in reply to some solemn words of mine, he bade me begone, and not try to frighten him with old wives' fables."

Such is a specimen of the results of the new teaching by men sent to lead others into the way of life and truth. Ex uno disce omnes.

DAY OF THANKSGIVING.—We find it stated in the Franco-Canadian that on Sunday, 19th ulto., a Pastoral from His Lordship the Bishop of St. Hyacinthe was published enjoining the faithful of the Diocese to return special thanks to God for the many spiritual and temporal mercies which He has granted to them, and especially in the late abundant harvest. Thursday, the 21st inst. is the day appointed when throughout the Diocese there will be sung in all the churches and chapels a solemn High Mass with the above intentions.

M. Cauchon has been elected Mayor of Quebec by a unanimous vote.