

The True Witness

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1872.

ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR.

DECEMBER—1872. Friday, 6—Fast. St. Nicholas of Myra, B. C. Saturday, 7—St. Ambrose, B. C. D. Sunday, 8—Second in Advent. Monday, 9—Immaculate Conception. (Dec. 8.) Tuesday, 10—Of the Octave. Wednesday, 11—Fast. St. Lucy, V. M. Thursday, 12—Of the Octave.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The trouble in France is not yet at an end, indeed the latest tidings from that country are to the effect that "the situation is one of the gravest, and that a general feeling of uneasiness prevails." M. Thiers feels that his hold over the Assembly is weakening; and it is pretty clear that that body is becoming restive, and requires a stronger hand than that of the elderly M. Thiers to keep it in order.

The government of King Amadeus has again, so the telegrams report, won another conclusive victory over the Carlist insurgents. These are as usual annihilated, or as the Yankees have it, "chewed up;" but they have undergone this process so often, and with such little effect, that we may be pardoned for not attaching much importance to the reports of the recent victories.

The death of Mr. Horace Greeley following so close upon his defeat in the Presidential election, has naturally provoked much sympathy. The death of a wife to whom he was warmly attached, coming close upon the werry and excitement of his unsuccessful candidature, brought on an attack of fever from which he had not strength to rally.

His Grace the Archbishop of Quebec accompanied by the Very Reverend Rector of the Laval University, is on his way to Rome to obtain from the Holy and Apostolic See a settlement on certain questions of discipline, and matters of detail which have been for some time past warmly discussed. Catholics will wait with respectful patience the decision that Rome may pronounce, whatsoever it may be; and when it arrives will say with St. Augustin, "causa finita est," and humbly submit themselves to it.

PARIS, Dec. 2.—Two Cabinet Councils, each of long duration, were held yesterday.—After full deliberation upon the situation, M. Thiers finally agreed to remain in the Presidency if the ministers who tendered their resignations yesterday would withdraw them; and the latter consented to the proposal of the President.

It is reported that General Durot has been summoned to Versailles, to reply to reports accusing him of preparing his troops to act in a hostile attitude to the Government in case of a crisis, and of issuing circulars to the Gendarmerie in his district, ordering men to make enquiry into the political opinions of the inhabitants. The Debats says the fact that General Durot is in possession of an important command is not reassuring to those who fear a coup.

PROTESTANT SAINTS.—The tercentenary anniversary of the death of John Knox has, as might have been expected, provoked a great amount of amusing nonsense, not only from our contemporaries of the press, but from the Protestant pulpit, and from eloquent orators in public meetings assembled to celebrate the memory of the great Protestant Saint and Confessor. Of themselves these effusions are harmless enough, nor should we condescend to notice them, but for the marvellous contempt of truth which they indicate on the part of the

speakers; and the crass ignorance of the auditors who patiently accepted the stuff presented to them as God's truth. It is also not altogether useless to let Catholics see what manner of men they are whom Protestants revere as the best, the noblest, the saintliest and therefore the most Christlike amongst themselves; since the Christian saint is he who in his own person reproduces the most faithfully the image of the Great Master. Let us see then what of likeness to Christ, as depicted by the Evangelists, do we find reproduced in John Knox; and how far the eulogies of the Protestant press and Protestant pulpit pronounced on that worthy are justified by facts—facts given by Protestant historians. For this purpose we give below some extracts from the Witness, and from a long report in the Globe of the 27th of a great meeting held at Hamilton, to commemorate the anniversary of Knox's death; and then we will also reproduce some particulars of the said Saint's life and career, from the works of Protestant historians such as Hallam, and others.

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY. The Witness in its issue 25th ult., says on this head:—

"The cause of human freedom owes much to his influence. It is noticeable to say the least, that Knox's theology has been identified with the cause of civil freedom in Switzerland, Scotland, and New England."

Thus the Witness; but Hallam in his Constitutional History, c. 3, foot note, says:—

"Knox's famous intolerance is well known. 'One mass' he declared in preaching against Mary's private chapel at Holyrood House 'was more fearful unto him than if ten thousand armed enemies were landed in any part of the realm on purpose to suppress the whole religion.'—M'Crie's Life of Knox, vol. ii., p. 24. In a conversation with Maitland he asserted most explicitly the duty of putting idolaters (that is Catholics) 'to death.'—Ib., p. 120. Nothing can be more sanguinary than the Reformer's spirit in this remarkable interview. St. Dominic could not have surpassed him. It is strange to see men, professing all the while our modern creed of charity and toleration, extol these sanguinary spirits of the sixteenth century."

Let us now consider the man's sanctity, morality, and charity, his humility—all distinctively Christian virtues. By a Rev. Mr. Pierson of Detroit, one of the orators at the Tercentenary meeting above alluded to, we are told that he,—Knox,—

"was a man of unimpeached moral character. His sanctity was borne stainless to the grave. He was eminently a spiritual man. Look at his humility."

And to this purport spoke the rest of the assembly. Let us see what Buckle an eminent Protestant historian has to say on the same subject, Vol. ii., p. 176:—

"He was stern, unrelenting and frequently brutal; he was not only callous to human suffering, but he could turn it into a jest, and employ on the resources of his coarse though exuberant humor."

Here in a foot note, Buckle remarks that:—

"Even the editor of M'Crie's Life of Knox, Edinburgh, 1841, p. 35, notices 'the ill-timed merriment he displays in relating the foul deed' of Beaton's murder."

Buckle then enlightens us as to the man's MEANS AND MORALITY.

"He loved power so inordinately that, unable to brook the slightest opposition, he trampled on all who crossed his path, on stood even for a moment in the way of his ulterior designs."—Ib., pp. 176, 177.

HIS SANCTITY AND MORALITY.

"His first effort was a complete failure, and more than any one of his actions, has injured his reputation. This was the sanction which he gave to the cruel murder of Archbishop Beaton in 1546. He repaired to the castle of St. Andrews; he shut himself up with the assassins; he prepared to share their fate; and, in a work which he afterwards wrote, openly justified what they had done. For this nothing can excuse him."—Ib.

And in a foot note, Buckle, who is no indiscriminate enemy of Knox,—for he speaks elsewhere of the "real grandeur of the man and the noble fearlessness of his nature"—refers the reader to Laing's History of the Reformation for a confirmation of the truth of these allegations; which we leave it to our contemporaries to reconcile, as best they may, with their theories as to Knox's sanctity, or general resemblance to Christ: his morality, his charity, and his humility. Of the man's loyalty and patriotism we need only remark that he was allied with that band of renegade Scotsmen who, known as the "English Party," basely sacrificed to their hereditary enemies those rights, liberties, and that national independence which on many a hard fought battle field the Catholic Scots had nobly defended against England, from the glorious day of Bannockburn to the sad but still glorious day of Flodden. Let us pass to another, though kindred topic.

Closely connected with the name of Knox is that of George Wishart—another of your Protestant martyrs; according to many however, an accomplice of assassins, and a traitor to his native land. His cause was however taken up and dwelt upon by the Rev. Dr. Burns of this city on Sunday 24th ult., and his sermon is reported in the Montreal Witness of the next day. Let us try and gather from history who and what this Wishart was: whether he was a martyr, or a traitor: a saint or, in intent at least, an assassin.

George Wishart:—We must in justice premise that it has been attempted to throw doubts on the identity of this George Wishart,

"A man who is frequently 'brutal' may be styled an habitual brute, as he who is frequently drunk, may be called an habitual drunkard.

with that of the scoundrel whose career we are about to relate; but even the Protestant historian Froude admits that he can "see no reason to believe, however that the martyr of St. Andrews was so different from his Protestant countrymen as to have been unlikely to have been the messenger to Hertford, or to have sympathized cordially in the message."—Froude, vol. iv., p. 295 foot note. In other words, Froude admits that the use of the dagger, and a base subservience to the old enemy of their native land, were both so common amongst, so characteristic of the Protestants of Scotland in the XVI. century, that there is nothing unlikely in the identity of the Wishart who was hung at St. Andrews in 1546, with the Wishart who in 1544 was engaged in the following foul conspiracy:—

"In the middle of April a Scot named Wishart came down to the Borders to Hertford, with an offer from old Sir James Kirkaldy, Norman Leslie, the eldest son of the Earl of Rothes, and other gentlemen, to raise a force in Fife, if the King of England would supply the funds for it, to co-operate with His Majesty's invading army, to burn Arbroath, and other places belonging to the extreme party in the Church, to arrest and imprison the principal opponents of the English alliance, and either 'apprehend or slay' the cardinal himself."—Froude, Vol. iv., p. 295.

This was the plot; from which the readers will see how vilely the Scots under the influence of Protestantism had degenerated since the days of their brave Catholic fathers when, shoulder to shoulder, Scotia's sons stood fearless of death, but determined never at any price to submit to Southern rule. Any how Henry did not care to assume the responsibility of open connivance, and Wishart returned to his employers with a message that, should their plot fail, Henry would give them an asylum in England. The plot, in the words of Froude, "for the moment fell through." In the following year Wishart accompanied by Knox went about the country preaching against Popery, but he was captured by the Earl of Bothwell who handed him over to the Cardinal Archbishop of St. Andrews to be dealt with by law for sedition and heresy. He was so tried and condemned to death. There was, it is asserted, reason to call in question the legality of the trial; and we may admit that it was indecorous on the part of the Cardinal, seeing that he himself was one of the intended victims of the plot above narrated, to take any part in the legal proceedings against one who was a personal enemy. But our object is not to justify the Cardinal, but to expose the falsifications, of which in speaking of Wishart's death our Dr. Burns, whether through ignorance or malice, we presume not to determine, was guilty in his sermon of the 24th ult. He to stimulate the sympathies of his audience for the criminal, thus described his last moments:

"In front of the Cardinal's Palace in St. Andrew's a lofty stake is placed. Wishart is led out with a rope round his neck, and iron chain girding his middle. As the powder bound about him explodes and he is wrapt in a sheet of flames he exclaims 'that flame hath scorched my body, yet hath it not daunted my spirit.'"—Witness, 25th ult.

Now the joke of it is that Wishart was put to death by hanging. His sentence was twofold:—That for the sedition proven against him, he should be hanged. That as a heretic his body should afterwards be consumed in the fire. This twofold sentence was carried out, and its execution is thus described by two historians. Dr. Lingard, Catholic, whom we quote first; and whose account is confirmed by Froude.

"He—Wishart—had the misfortune, however, to fall into the hands of Beaton, by whose order he was condemned and executed at St. Andrews, being hanged for sedition, and burnt for heresy."—Hist. of England, vol. 7, p. 12.

The same event is thus described by the Protestant Froude who in a foot note quotes Knox and Calderwood in support of his account. Wishart being led out to execution,— "he next spoke a few words to the people; and then 'last of all the hangman that was his tormenter sat upon his knees and said—Sir I pray you forgive me for I am not guilty of your death; to whom he answered—Come hither to me; and he kissed his cheek, and said—Lo here is a token that I forgive thee; do thy office. And then he was put upon a gibbet and hanged, and then burnt to powder.'"—

"Life for life," adds Froude. "If Wishart was an instrument of the conspiracy against Beaton, in the eyes of his friends he was still a martyr, and Beaton was a murderer."—Froude, iv., p. 433.

We leave it to Dr. Burns to vindicate the reputation of this plotter Wishart; and to reconcile his account of the man's execution, if he can, with that given by Dr. Lingard, and corroborated by Froude, who again gives as his authority Knox himself. Of Calderwood we say nothing for he was not a contemporary, and his accuracy as an historian is not rated high.

The question of the "Temporal Power" is about to be brought before the several Governments of Europe in a very singular and unexpected manner. Some years ago a Commission to decide upon the adoption of some common standard of measure for Europe, and to be composed of representatives from every European country, was formed; each Government naming a certain number of members, and the Sovereign Pontiff appointing as the representative of the States of the Church the celebrated Father Secchi. At one of the late meetings of the members of this Commission it was re-

solved to form a Permanent Committee, of which the Father Secchi was named as President. Out of this simple affair much complication has arisen.

For it is argued, seeing that the Sovereign Pontiff has had his dominions wrested from him by the Piedmontese Government, which latter has also annexed to itself the States of the Church, Father Secchi who was appointed by the Sovereign Pontiff in his capacity as one of the independent Sovereigns of Europe,—is no longer the representative of any European country. As the correspondent of the London Times puts it:—

"It is plain that, whether intentionally or not, they—the members of the Commission—have brought the Powers of Europe face to face with the issue about which no one of them cared to give an opinion. For what say the two Italian representatives?" the nominees of Victor Emmanuel. "If the members of the Commission are to represent States containing subjects, we protest against the presence of Pere Secchi who represents no State at all, or, at all events, one that contains no subjects—and so the question arises, is the Pope a temporal Sovereign in the ordinary acceptance of the term?"

It will thus be seen that out of this at first sight purely scientific question springs the still more important political question as to the Pope's temporal Power; and the several Countries of Europe that have named representatives to the Commission are thus against their will about to be forced to express themselves thereon. If they accept Father Secchi as one of the members of the Commission, they virtually acknowledge him who accredited him to be a Sovereign, and the country which he represents, an independent State, distinct from that which Victor Emmanuel's nominees represent. If on the other hand they accept the spoliation of the Pope as a fait accompli, and recognise Victor Emmanuel as legitimate sovereign of those States of the Church which Father Secchi represents, then they must refuse to recognise the right of the latter, though one of the most learned men in Europe, to take his place as a member of the Commission at all. Well may the writer in the Times speak of this as a "tiny spark which the Commission has flung into the European powder-magazine." The same writer thus under date, Oct. 30th, sums up the then actual state of affairs:—

"The two Italian members have withdrawn from the Commission altogether. That body gave up the dangerous idea of naming Pere Secchi President of the Permanent Commission, and named Count Ybancz, a Spaniard, but the Pere refused to retire, and the Italians have refused to sit with him, and have called upon the French Government to whom the idea of the Commission de Permanence and its composition was in the first instance due, to adopt their view of the Pope's temporal power, and the consequent incompetence of Pere Secchi, and to make an official announcement in the Journal Officiel to this effect. This the French Government, not prepared thus openly to give up the whole principle of the temporalities of the Pope, has refused to do. It is therefore likely that the Italian Government will appeal to the German Government to be supported in refusing to admit the competence of the Rev. Father. And it is more than probable that the German Government will not lose this opportunity of denying the temporal Sovereignty of a Monarch who does not shrink from forcing his spiritual Sovereignty upon the Emperor of Germany. In fact, we may expect that the Pope on the one side, and the Italian Government on the other, will considering the magnitude and importance of the principle at stake, canvass all the powers represented on the Commission in favour of their respective views; for the question cannot be left in its present undecided and unsatisfactory phase, and the Italian Government seems determined to maintain its resistance to the attitude assumed by the Papal nominee and to the pretensions which it implies, but which the French Government refuse at their bidding to ignore."

As the Montreal Witness often seeks to enlighten its readers as to the comparative morality of Catholic and Protestant communities, and delights in contrasting the purity of the latter, where the bible is over "open," with the moral and intellectual darkness of Papistical lands, and priest-ridden Ireland in particular—he will surely in his love of honesty and fair play, not forget to make mention of an item of information that appeared in the editorial columns of the Montreal Herald of a late date. It bears directly upon the question at issue, and indeed is perfectly conclusive. Lest it should have escaped however the notice of our evangelical friend, who is over on the watch for the mote in the eye of his Romish neighbor, we venture here again to call his attention to it; and the all-important evidence that it furnishes as to the superior morality of Protestant over Catholic communities.

The article to which we refer has for caption the words "A Social Evil;" its substance is this:—

That, at a late meeting of the "Evangelical Ministerial Association" at Cincinnati, the topic brought up for discussion was "the alarming prevalence of criminal abortion by respectable American women." We are further told, that the reverend and evangelical gentleman, who introduced the topic, as one well worthy of serious consideration, gave his testimony to the fearful prevalence in the U. States of this disgusting species of child-murder; adding "that to his knowledge there was not a single block in that city which did not contain women guilty of the odious crime"—adducing instances to prove his position. The matter, he insisted, should be taken up by the Protestant minister—especially because, "if something were not done to put a stop to the wholesale system of child-murder:—

"the government of the country would very soon pass into the hands of foreigners;" and what no doubt is in the estimation of the reverend gentleman and his evangelical brethren still worse—into the hands of Papists and of Romish Irishmen. This is the danger, this one reason why the wholesale destruction of their children by the mothers of the Protestant Israel should, if possible, be discountenanced by the evangelical pulpit, as unpatriotic and impolitic, if not as immoral.

Thus, by implication, it is confessed by the evangelicals themselves—not merely asserted by Papists—that the crime of child-murder is so fearfully prevalent amongst native United States women, that there is imminent danger that the original Protestant stock will soon be exhausted; and that the government of the country will necessarily pass into the hands of "foreigners," who do not destroy their children, and whose numbers are therefore rapidly increasing.

Now who are these "foreigners?" considered from a religious stand-point. They are Papists, Irish and German Papists for the most part; just as the "respectable American women," who habitually murder their children are, for the most part, Protestants. The facts cannot be denied, nor are they now advanced for the first time. For many years the rapid increase of the Irish Catholic population in the North Eastern States of the Union, and the decrease of the Protestant population by feticide, has been remarked, and commented upon by medical men. Dr. Allen, of Lowell, Mass., years ago pointed out the fact, and attributed it to its true cause: the greater morality of the Irish Catholic "foreigners;" and now we see with what rapidity the depopulating process is moving westwards, so that it is hard to say whether, in heathen China, or in the Protestant United States, the crime of child-murder the more extensively prevails.

"Of course"—so the Montreal Herald concludes its article on this subject, which of course the truth-loving Witness will reproduce—"Of course, the audience were much scandalised, but the aversion manifested by the reverend assembly to having such a subject forced upon their notice, was not more decided than will be the astonishment and disgust of the outer world at it."

Disgust if you will; but no one who has any knowledge of the moral condition of the United States, or who has read what for years Protestant medical men have been publicly saying on the subject, can be "astonished" at the hideous revelations as to the prevalence of child-murder in the United States made at the "Evangelical Ministerial Association."

A METHODIST CAMP-MEETING.—DISGUSTING SPECTACLE.—The N. Y. Sun, a Protestant paper, had a reporter at the Camp Meeting of the Methodists, near Dover, N.J.; in a long letter to his employers he describes the scene that presented itself to him. We make some extracts.

The site was a beautiful grove on a hill side near the verge of the Norris and Sussex turnpike road. On this hill the tents were pitched in a circular form, and there was a stand or platform whence the ministers addressed the people. In the tents prayer meetings were held:

"And yet the tent scenes were as nothing when compared with the grand prayer season before the pulpit, at the close of the preaching services. Here an open spot is reserved. The sinners are bid go forward and be prayed for, and as many of the disciples as can, crowd around and pray for the candidates. A dozen clergymen in the little pulpit shout and stamp, and lean over the railing, and jump high above the platform. The disciples round the air with their groaning and lamentations. The women scream and shriek, and brandish their arms in the deepest agitation of repentance, until utterly exhausted they sink to the earth.

"Now, see here stranger," said a bluff old farmer to the reporter, "if you and I and a dozen or a hundred of our neighbors were to get off by ourselves and make that noise for fun, they'd send the police for us in a jiffy, and hurry us to the mad-house and lock us up, wouldn't they?"

A description of the scene is impossible. Imagine two hundred men and women crowded closely, and shouting and shrieking with all their power, jumping up and down upon each other, and over each other, twisting face, feature, limbs and bodies in every conceivable shape, and you have a grand season of prayer among the Free Methodists.

In front of the stand or preaching platform whence the ministers made their harangues, the scene was still more disgusting:—

"The people were holding prayer meetings in the various prayer tents. In one of those were heard powerful shouts, groanings, shrieks and agonizing. Getting nearer, a view of the scene disclosed men and women lying thickly together on the ground. Many of them were stiff and helpless. Their features were set as in death. Their hands clutched firmly whatever was within grasping reach. Those who showed any signs of life were giving forth agonizing shouts and groans. The reporter remembered that these persons were also called shouting Methodists. He learned that nowhere in the country are they as loud as near Dover. The women were even more noisy than their brethren and showed far greater proficiency in their gymnastic exercises. They threw up their arms. While their features were expressive of frantic terror or delight, kissed each other, and again resumed emotional devotions. Wordly women, who out of curiosity visited the camp, were seen to shrink away from the prayer-tents, and many small children were frightened and begged to be taken away from the ground."

It is not to be wondered at if these frantic orgies are followed by the most filthy licentiousness.

Remittances in our next.