

The True Witness

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, SEPT. 18, 1863.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The British Government has not yet, apparently taken any active measures with reference to the iron-clads fitting out in the Mersey, and destined, according to public report, for the Confederate Navy. Several vessels of the same description, are still in the course of construction, or have been just completed, for the use of European Powers. One has lately sailed for Russia, according to the London Times; another for Denmark, and therefore the conclusion at which the public have somewhat hastily arrived, that the iron-clads in the Mersey are destined for the use of the Confederate Government, is by no means logical. The suspected vessels up to the time when the last steamer sailed, were lying side by side with French colors flying over them; and there can be no doubt, whatever their ulterior destination, that they have been built on French account. The French Consul has, it is also asserted, given the Collector of Customs ample explanations concerning them. Under these circumstances it does not appear that the British authorities have any power to prohibit their putting to sea, when completed. The steamers are described as most formidable vessels, clad with iron plates of 2 1/2 inches thickness; fitted with two of Captain Cole's cylindrical turrets made for two guns each, and carrying engines estimated at 350-horse power. The stem is so formed that each vessel may be used as a ram; and on the whole the Times says of them—"perhaps there are not two more formidable frigates afloat."

Neither by arms nor by diplomacy has any progress towards the solution of the Polish question been made since our last. The insurgents are represented as busily engaged in perfecting the organisation of their army, and the Russians are described as dispirited. The French papers publish the substance of the last French and Austrian Notes to the Prince Gortschakoff.—That from France reminds the Prince that Russia has engaged itself to bestow a distinct and constitutional government on Poland—that in making a reservation to approximate Polish to Russian institutions, Russia could only allude to the Provinces without the Kingdom of Poland proper—and that the European Powers have a direct and positive right to claim for Poland a faithful execution of the Treaties. The Austrian Note expresses great regret that Russia has not given a more satisfactory reply to the Notes of the Great Powers; insists that the interests of Europe demand an early fulfilment of the work of conciliation in Poland; denies the charge that foreign influences are the primary cause of the insurrection, and asserts that, had Russia fulfilled faithfully its political and religious engagements, Poland would be contented; and, in conclusion, declares Russia alone responsible for the present alarming state of affairs.—No answer has as yet been returned by Russia to the representations of the Western Powers.

The news from other parts of the Continent is of but little interest. The Confederate iron-of-war steamer Florida had put into Brest harbour in need of repairs for her engines. It is now said that Garibaldi's wound in the leg is almost healed, and that restored to health he is again about to resume his old career of filibuster, though with more discretion and reserve than was his wont. In evidence of his modified views, the Times correspondent asserts that he has lately refused his support to an armed movement in Venetia.

How far the boasts of the revolutionary party respecting the suppression of "brigandage" in the Kingdom of Naples are justified by facts, may be gathered from the provisions of the new law which the intrusive Piedmontese Government has just enacted; and which has just been promulgated in eleven out of sixteen provinces into which the Continental portion of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies is divided. By this revolutionary code, a reign of terror is established en permanence over the unhappy Neapolitans; and the Piedmontese Government is authorised to imprison and transport any persons suspected of complicity with the insurgent loyalists. Rome, by the latest accounts, was quiet, and the state of health of the Sovereign Pontiff was satisfactory.

The latest telegrams from the seat of war, inform us that General Lee is abandoning his lines on the Rappahannock, and it is added that one corps is falling back towards Richmond. It is supposed that the Southern General is sending reinforcements to Beauregard at Charleston. The attack on the latter has been vigorously continued during the week, and if we may believe the reports of the Northerners, with much success. Fort Moultrie had undergone serious injuries in consequence of the blowing up of one of its magazines; and it is announced that the enemy, being within shelling distance of Charleston, are about to recommence the bombardment of the city. The authorities at Washington, in reply to a question put to them by General Gilmore, have instructed him to reduce Charleston to ashes, if it will not surrender; and a full supply of incendiary shells has been sent to General Gilmore, in order to enable him at once to carry into execution the orders of the Yankee Bomba.

The steamers *Hausa* and *Arabia* have arrived with late European dates. The Poles are said to have won an important victory at Janow; and Russia is increasing her active army by ordering up 48 regiments from the reserve. It is now reported that the Czar is willing to treat with the Western Powers, adopting as a basis for negotiations the granting to Poland a separate constitution. For this purpose he is sending an Ambassador to Paris.

The rumors of a speedy recognition of the Confederate States by France have been revived and acquire consistency from the appearance of a pamphlet, attributed to a semi-official source—entitled "*France, Mexico, and the Confederates.*" In this pamphlet, the interest that France has in recognising, and securing, the national independence of the Southern States is strongly insisted upon.

Lord Russell had replied to the memorialists in the affair of the steamer iron-clads building in the Mersey. He tells them that, before the government can legally interfere, it is necessary to prove that the vessels complained of have been equipped, and are destined, for a purpose hostile to the Northern States. The letter concludes as follows:—

"It is necessary for conviction in a public Court of Justice to have the evidence of a creditable witness. I was in hopes when I began to read your memorial that you would propose to furnish me with evidence to prove that the Steam Rams in question were intended to carry on hostilities against the Government and people of the United States; but you have made no proposal of the sort, and only tell me that you are informed that so and so, and it is believed that so and so. You must be aware, however that according to British law, prosecutions cannot be set on foot upon the ground of violation of the Foreign Enlistment Act without the affidavit of creditable witnesses as in other cases of misdemeanor and crime. Such likewise is the law in
 Yours, &c.,
 RUSSELL.

"A FREE CHURCH IN A FREE STATE."—We have never yet been able clearly to make out what it is that Protestants and Liberals mean by their favorite formula, "*a free Church in a free State.*" Perhaps the following paragraph, which we clip from the Montreal Herald may aid us in arriving at an understanding upon this subject:—

"The parti pretre has gone too far, and roused the one unchangeable Ecclasiastical sentiment of France—the resolve that the collective society called the State shall be above the sectional society called the Church. The Emperor deserves the thanks of all Europe for that outspoken reminder of a truth, too often forgotten even in Protestant lands.—Montreal Herald, 5th September.

From this we gather that the Liberal and Protestant idea of a "*free State*" is that of a State which arrogates to itself supremacy in the spiritual, as well as in the secular order; and its idea of a "*free Church*," that of a Church whose ministers are functionaries appointed by the civil magistrate for the performance of certain or specified spiritual duties. This is the "*idea*" which Henry VIII. of England, and Louis XIV. of France attempted to realize in their days: this too is the "*idea*" of Louis Napoleon and Victor Emmanuel.

It is by no means a Christian idea however, if we may accept as faithful exponents of that "*idea*" the Apostles, and first pastors of the Church. The latter, when an *avertissement* was served upon them by the Jewish Minister of Public Worship of their times, and when their preaching of Christ crucified, was denounced, and ordered to be suppressed, *comme abus*, by the Louis Napoleons and Baroches of Jerusalem, made answer "we ought to obey God rather than man. They, evidently, did not accept the doctrine as enunciated by both ancient or modern Liberals and persecutors—for the terms are synonymous—"that the collective society called the State shall be above the sectional society called the Church." The true Church, that is to say the "*sectional society*" founded by Christ Himself, has always held and taught the opposite doctrine, to wit: that the State or civil power has no rightful jurisdiction in matters spiritual or ecclesiastical. And this great truth, for truth it is, no matter by whom asserted, has been repeatedly insisted upon by Protestants as well as by Catholics; by men whom it is often the fashion of modern Liberals to admire, and hold up to admiration as the champions of civil and religious liberty—as well as by Romanists and Ul-

tra-montanes. Indeed, we may say that although the term "*Ultra-montane*" is used by all Protestant sects as a term of reproach against Catholics, the fundamental principles of Ultra-montanism have always been urged in their own behalf by all Protestant sects when persecuted by the Civil Power. The essential principle of Ultra-montanism is this: That the Church is an autonomy, or self governing society: that as she does not hold from the State, so the State has no legitimate control over her; and that the Civil Magistrate has no right to interfere with her doctrines, her discipline, or the appointment of her office-bearers. The Puritans of England, the Covenanters, and in more modern times the "*Free Kirk*" of Scotland, have openly professed these principles, and for so doing have been eulogised as the defenders of civil and religious liberty. Only Catholics are to be condemned for the enunciation of these principles: for in this, as in all else, Protestants have two sets of weights and measures, two standards, two different rules of right and wrong.

Now we do not censure the Puritans, the Scotch Covenanters, and Free Kirk men for enunciating their high church principles, though we blame them for the manner in which they applied them. Formally these Protestant sectaries were right: they erred materially, in predicating their several conventicles, that which can be truly predicated of the Church alone. We can admire too the pluck with which the stera Ultra-montanes of Protestantism upheld their principles, and defied the utmost power of the State: and it does therefore seem to us most unjust, as well as most strange, that we, because we are Catholics, should be denounced for professing, and regulating our conduct by, the same church principles as those which were professed by the men whom modern Liberals eulogise as the founders of English civil and religious liberty. But it does seem to us most inconsistent that the French Emperor should be represented by the Liberal Montreal Herald as "*deserving the thanks of all Europe*" for having enunciated a certain principle with reference to the Catholic Church and her Pastors in France; and that the Stuarts who enunciated precisely the same principle with reference to the Puritans and the Protestant Kirk of Scotland, should by the same authority be branded as tyrants who richly deserved to be deposed from their seats, and fully earned the execration of all true friends of civil and religious liberty. For this inconsistency we can suggest only one explanation. It is this: That according to Protestant ethics, and political morality, tyranny is praiseworthy when exercised against the Catholic Church, and that it is lawful to use all means to suppress Popery.

What is it, in fact, that Louis Napoleon has done? what claim has he, by his conduct towards the Bishops of France, established on the gratitude of the civilised world? Appealed to at the late elections in France by numbers of the electors as to how they should act, several of the Bishops replied in a joint letter, setting forth in general terms what were the duties of citizens, and what the manner in which those duties should be performed. Neither directly nor indirectly did the French Prelates attempt to bias the minds of the electors in favor of, or against any, particular candidate, or candidates. They laid down certain general rules, based upon the Christian doctrine that every man, no matter what his rank or station, is bound to exercise his political privileges, not for his own private benefit, but conscientiously, and as bearing in mind that a strict account will one day be required of him for every act of his life. As simple citizens they would have had the natural right to have given such counsels; and we have yet to learn that a man loses any of his natural rights as against the State, by becoming a Bishop; or that he is less fitted to give good advice because he has received the unction of the Holy Ghost.

Any how this letter stirred up the bile of "*Jack-in-Office*," who forthwith wrote an impertinent answer on the subject, to which an admirable, very temperate, but it must be confessed somewhat stinging, rejoinder was given by the Archbishop of Tours. Smarting under the well merited flagellation that his impertinence had provoked, "*Jack*" appealed to the higher powers; and the result appeared in the form of a Decree signed by the Emperor, and countersigned by that anomalous "*Jack*" or functionary, a Minister of Public Worship.

This Decree we reproduced in our last. The Bishops of France are therein reminded that they must not presume to exercise the necessary functions of their office, without the permission of the civil magistrate; and that they have not even the legal right to meet and deliberate together, or adopt resolutions in common, without the express permission of the Government; finally the Archbishop of Tours is especially censured for wanting in due respect to "*Jack-in-Office.*" To all this parade of imperial despotism there is but one reply that can be made by the Church. "*It is better to obey God than man.*"

It is not however so much in reference to the Church in France, as to the Church in Canada, that

we notice this affair at length, together with the suggestive comments of the Montreal Herald. The latter, who is also an organ of the Clear-Grit party, and consequently an advocate of Representation by Population, deems that the conduct of Louis Napoleon in endeavoring to impose fetters upon the Church in France, in prohibiting her Pastors from meeting, deliberating and addressing the faithful in common, and in thus asserting the supremacy of the State over the Church in matters purely spiritual—is such as to call for the thanks of all Europe. It is therefore to be presumed that the political party in whose name the Herald speaks, would, if it had the power, impose upon the Catholic Church and her Prelates in Canada, the same fetters and the same restrictions, as those which Louis Napoleon is endeavoring to impose upon the Church in France. If the action of the French Emperor towards the Church is praiseworthy—and the Herald says that it is eminently praiseworthy—it should be extended to this country; and would be so extended, no doubt, were the Liberals, or Protestant Reform party, as politically powerful as they are malignant. It should be our object therefore, the object of all friends of civil and religious liberty, to oppose all measures calculated to increase the political power of our opponents—of those who by their applause of the persecutors of the Catholic Church in France, give conclusive evidence of their determination to persecute the Church in Canada, whenever it shall be in their power to do so.

The London Times gives much good advice, gratis, to Canada. That advice may be unpalatable; but like many other unpalatable things it may be very wholesome, and well suited for our case. Here is what the great London journal says:—

"If the Canadians are really afraid of the aggression of the Federals, and really anxious to avoid its consequences, they must prepare to defend themselves. The connection between themselves and this country will be as close as they choose to make it. There is no need of the appointment of an English Prince to strengthen it. So long as they are thoroughly and heartily desirous to remain a part of our empire, so long we shall be desirous to keep them. If they should ever change their minds and wish to be independent, they need have no fear of our repeating the useless and bloody experiments of our ancestors with the United States, and of the Federal with the Confederate States. We shall let them go, with regret, indeed, but without resistance. So long, however, as they are thoroughly minded to hold by us they may be sure that we shall do our duty by them, and that in the event of any such danger as they now contemplate our assistance would never be nominal in the sense in which Mr. McGee uses the word. We should do our best for them, but at the same time our assistance would be nominal in this sense—that it would be quite impossible for us to defend them. Their own common sense make this evident to them. They know the forces which the Northern States have been employing in the subjugation of the South, and they can judge for themselves how comparatively small would be the number of troops which England could spare to meet such vast hosts. To take no other consideration, the very fact which has led to these remarks ought to be sufficient. Rouse's Point, which the Federal Government is now said to be garrisoning, is only 45 miles from Montreal; and it is absurd to suppose that England, at the distance of 3,000 miles, can defend Canada from a Power the outworks of which are within 45 miles of the Canadian capital. If they are content to rely upon this country for its aid, it is inevitable, from the nature of the case, that the Canadians should be disappointed.

On the contrary, if they depend on themselves they have nothing to despair of. In former wars they have always successfully repelled invasion. They are now stronger than ever. They have much more to defend, and they know better than before what would be their fate if conquered. They might, as we have said, rely upon all the assistance we could give them. Our fleet could blockade the American ports. Our own power would be sufficient to distract the attention of the Federal forces. Our trained and seasoned troops would form a steady nucleus for their militia or less disciplined regiments. They would have all the experience and skill of our Generals, and all the advantages which ready supplies of the best artillery and munitions of war could give them. Still, the real work of defence must be done by themselves. They must be prepared with a sufficient army or trained militia to oppose any invading force of the Federals. The supply of men, the actual fighting on land, the real struggle of hand-to-hand resistance to the invaders must be done by themselves.

It must also, we should think, be evident to themselves, that they ought at once to set about the necessary preparations. They can no longer presume on the peaceful character of their neighbor, or on the unwarlike nature of his institutions. The Federal States are now an aggressive Power, both by policy and practice. It is their avowed object to extend the empire of the Union by force, and they have shown in the course of the present war that they are prepared to sacrifice blood, money, and honour in the gratification of this passion. A war, too, of three years, which has increased in intensity every month, has developed both military habits and military institutions among them. As soon as they have any pause from their deadly struggle with the South they will find themselves in the possession of tremendous instruments of warfare which they will be unwilling, and perhaps unable, to discard. Their Constitution is being rapidly moulded into a form which will make them in practice the greatest military despotism in the world. With such a neighbor the Canadians cannot afford to delay the necessary measures for self protection. We do not, however, urge them to take these measures from any fear of immediate attack, but simply because they have no right to assume that they will be unmolested by such a neighbor and because they ought to respect themselves too much to be willing to exist upon his forbearance. If they appreciate the privileges they enjoy as members of the British Empire, they ought to be ready to discharge the duties which every Englishman is always eager to fulfil. If they prize their freedom, they ought to prepare to undertake the first duty of freemen—self-defence."

No matter how these words of advice and warning may be received in Canada there is truth, and much truth in them. Indeed we doubt if there are in the Province ten persons arrived at the age of discretion, who do not look upon war as inevitable; who do not believe firmly that at the first opportunity the Northern

States will direct their arms against Canada.—Upon this point there is little or no difference of opinion betwixt contending parties, or political factions in this Province; the only matter in dispute is, how, and with what weapons, shall Canada prepare to meet the inevitable contest, and to repel the threatened invasion?

The Times indeed, points to "*former wars*;" but it forgets that, since 1812, the relative positions of Canada and the United States have greatly altered. In the last war Canada opposed, and opposed successfully, her militia to the militia of her invader; but in case of a war in 1864, Canada would have to meet in the field not mere raw militia men, but disciplined and veteran troops, trained in real service, and accustomed to the shock of battle. Now every body knows that against regular troops, militia at their best, would be as worthless as would be a pasteboard helmet to turn the edge of the descending sabre. Militia against militia will do very well; but militia against veteran soldiers would be as unequal, as was poor Mrs Partington's mop against the invading billows of the angry Atlantic.

It is absurd therefore to argue from 1812 to 1864—from the "*successfully repelled invasion*," of the former epoch, to a similar issue of an invasion by the Americans at the present day. If Canada is to be defended at all, it must be defended by regular or trained troops, by men accustomed to act together, accustomed to obey, and led by trusted and competent officers, who have made war their study. When the people of the Provinces shall have shown themselves willing to make the pecuniary sacrifices necessary for enrolling, and keeping on foot such a body of regular, well disciplined troops, then, but not till then, can they expect that the Imperial Government will make any very strenuous exertions to maintain a political connection of very doubtful utility to the people of Great Britain, and of which the advantages appertain almost exclusively to Canada.

THE CONSCRIPTION IN THE NORTHERN STATES.—Many of the Northern journals are complaining that, in so far as furnishing men for the army is concerned, the Conscription "*is a farce.*" These are the words of the Newbury Port Herald; which, in illustration of the practical working of the draft in Boston, gives us the subjoined figures:—

In the (4th) Boston district, out of 1,137 who were drafted, 937 were exempted upon examination, as physically unfit for service; 70 paid the fee of \$300; substitutes were offered by 108; and the whole number passed as fit for duty was not one in a hundred of the number drafted. Commenting upon these figures the Newbury Port Herald complains:—

"Thus less than one in a hundred of the original conscripts go into the army. One of two things is true: there is either much perjury, or we are the most sickly people that ever had existence. If it be true that the young men from 20 to 45 are so diseased and debilitated as is reported, what is to be the physical condition of the next generation, of which these are to be the fathers? This is a more fearful thought than even the rebellion itself."—Newbury Port Herald.

We do not altogether reject the hypothesis of "*much perjury*;" but the other alternative, suggested by the Northern journal from which we quote, contains, we think, the better explanation of the startling fact that less than one per cent. of the drafted go into the army. We believe that the precocious immorality, and the premature excesses of the youth of the Northern States, fostered and developed as that precocious immorality is, and those excesses are, by the Yankee system of Common Schools, have much debilitated, have much impaired the physique of the present generation; and that the consequences of the vices to which we allude will tell yet more deplorably upon their descendants. In a word, we look upon the physical degeneracy of the Protestant Yankee population, of which the Newbury Port Herald complains, and which the rejection of such numbers of young conscripts as unfit for military service, signals—as the direct consequence of their moral degeneracy.

This fact has already been pointed out, and its cause insisted upon by the Boston Pilot; so we trust that we shall not expose ourselves to the unfriendly strictures of our American contemporaries for merely repeating their own words, and their own arguments. The journal above alluded to, mentioned a short time ago the fact that the "*native stock*" of New England was rapidly diminishing; and that, even in 1861, the numbers of children born in Massachusetts of Irish and other European parents, exceeded those of children born of American parents. This striking change in the relative proportions of the two races, this dying out of the old Puritan stock, the Boston Pilot attributed, and we believe truly, to the influence of "*four vices.*" The subject is of too delicate a nature to be dwelt upon by us; but we believe that to the same "*four vices*" hinted at by the Boston Pilot, must be attributed the sickness and general debility mourned over by the Newbury Port Herald, and indicated by the results, or rather non-results of the conscription in New England.