

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE, PRINTED AND PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY... G. E. OLEBK, Editor.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 1868.

ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR. MARCH—1868.

Friday, 20.—The Five Wounds. Saturday, 21.—St. Benoit Ab. Sunday, 22.—Fifth Sunday in Lent. Monday, 23.—Of the Feria. Tuesday, 24.—Of the Feria. Wednesday, 25.—ANNUNCIATION OF B. V. M. (obl.) Thursday, 26.—Of the Feria.

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

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

The use of flesh meat is also by special indulgences allowed at the one repast on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays of every week from the first Sunday after Lent, to Palm Sunday.—On the first four days of Lent, as well as every day in Holy Week, the use of flesh meat is prohibited.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

Irish affairs will certainly command the attention of the British Parliament during the present session, to the exclusion almost of other topics. Motions and Resolutions have already been laid before the House of Commons, and lively debates have thereupon ensued. Unfortunately the only point on which there is any approach to unanimity is the existence of much disaffection in Ireland; but when the questions are raised, to what does this owe its origin? and what steps are best suited to allay it? there is the greatest discrepancy of opinion.

The trial of the President of the United States is fixed for the 23rd inst, and it is expected that his opponents will have got him out of the way in a few weeks from this date. After a recess of about eleven weeks, our Provincial Legislature met again at Ottawa on the 12th inst. Only two of the representatives from Nova Scotia, Messrs. Tupper and Stuart-Campbell, were present.

It is reported that H. R. H. the Prince of Wales will pay a visit to Ireland during the Easter holidays, and that at the same time a Royal Proclamation will appear according to a remedy to many of the political offenders in that country.

THE COMEDY OF CONVOCATION.—The British public has been treated to a third Scene of this very amusing performance, and this, by no means personages than the Government Archbishops and Bishops of the Established Church in Convocation assembled.

multis aliis. In all other respects, reading the report in the London Times of what occurred the other day in the Upper House of Convocation is just like reading a page or two of the very laughable work lately given anonymously to the world under the title which heads this article.

The farce was opened by the Bishop of London, who brought forward a motion to the effect, that, as all the Resolutions hitherto adopted by the Convocation of Canterbury and of York to put down Ritualism have been treated as so much buncombe by the inferior clergy, henceforward the "limits of ritual observance should not be left to the uncontrolled discretion of individual clergymen, and ought therefore to be defined by lawful authority."

A most sensible Resolution no doubt! but what is, and where is to be found the "lawful authority" in the Church of England competent to define "the limits of ritual observance?" The reader will perceive that this is the very question discussed in the Jerusalem Chamber by our friends Easy, Chasuble, Pompous & Co.

Everybody knows of course, that the only "lawful authority" competent to legislate for the Church of England in matters of doctrine or of discipline is the authority that created it—that is to say Parliament: that no other authority does or possibly can exist elsewhere; and yet there was an evident reluctance to name Parliament on the part of all the actors in the farce. The Archbishop of Canterbury who made the last speech felt himself in what the Yankees term "a bad fix." Neither he, nor his brethren knew what he and they were called on to do by the terms of their brother of London's Resolution.

But what if the Ritualistic Clergy should, as heretofore, laugh at the objections of Government Bishops, and poke fun at their statements? And this is just what will be the case we may be sure; for the Ritualists well know that their opponents dare not push matters against them to extremities, by applying for an Act of Parliament to put them and their practices down: and that there is no other "lawful authority" which has any power over them, or their offensive doings. Parliament might indeed force them to pull of their albs, their capes and chasubles, to abandon their intonations, to cease their genuflections, to renounce their censors and incense pots, to break their crucifixes, and to extinguish their candles; but they know, and the Archbishop of Canterbury knows, and all men of all parties in the Church know, that to invoke Parliament would be the death blow of the Establishment tend the very last act of the Comedy of Convocation.

But if Parliament be discarded, where is the "lawful authority" competent to define the limits of ritualism to be found? In the words of our old friend Dean Critical "can any of our reverend Anglican friends inform us what is the authority of the Church of England?"

Dr. Newman said a short time ago that the Anglican Prayer Book was but an Act of Parliament some three hundred years old.

ORDINATIONS.—At the Cathedral, St. Hyacinthe, on Sunday morning 14th March, the Rev. Messrs. Victor Chartier and Ferdinand Coderre, both of the Diocese of St. Hyacinthe, were raised to the Sacred order of the Priesthood by his Lordship Bishop Larocque.

The Constitution of the United States is said to "be on its trial." Of course it is, and it is so because it is a written constitution. All written constitutions are, and always must be on their trial.

The difference betwixt written constitutions—such as that of the United States, and to a great extent that of this country—and unwritten constitutions, such as that of England—is as the difference betwixt our clothes and our skins. The latter grow with our growth, adapt themselves to our every change of posture, and are therefore always a good fit. But we outgrow our clothes, we become too tall, or too stout for them; and as these possess no power of self-adaptation, or self-renewal, such as our skins possess; as they cannot, in short, alter as they alteration find in the wearer, it necessarily follows that the good fit of to-day may be no fit at all to-morrow, and hence clothes, and written constitutions, are, and ever must be, constantly on their trial.

One thing too is certain. That the old political suit, or constitution which fitted the United States well enough in the days of their youth must now be exchanged for another. It is worn out, it is too tight in one place, too loose in another, and it is quite threadbare everywhere. It has also gone out of fashion, like the hair-powder, the ample wigs, and chain armour of our ancestors. Its day is past, and its proper place is the lumber-room, where the worn out rubbish of the household is deposited to moulder and rust away.

The idea, in fact, seems to be gaining ground amongst the latter, that the office of President is an encumbrance to be got rid of, an antiquated appendage, neither useful nor ornamental, and to be docked therefore, as pig-tails were docked.—Already petitions to that effect have been presented in the Senate; and the obvious tendency of the revolutionary movement in the United States is to obliterate the time honored line of demarcation betwixt Legislative and Executive functions; and to concentrate the latter in the hands of the Legislature, which will not only make the laws, but execute them by the hands of Committees of Salut Public and Surete Generale, to be chosen by itself, out of its own members, and periodically renewed. This is the political order to which democracy naturally does incline; and from such an order the transition to Caesarism, or the despotism of one man-power is easy, natural, almost inevitable.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

This great religious and National Festival of our Irish fellow-subjects was celebrated on Tuesday last, in this portion of their Majesty's dominions with all due honors. At an early hour, 8 a.m., according to the programme published in our last, and which we need not, therefore reproduce, the St. Patrick's Society and other religious and charitable organisations formed in front of the newly erected St. Patrick's Hall, from whence they marched in prescribed order to the St. Patrick's Church, where the religious rites were to be performed.

High Mass was sung by the Very Rev. P. Billaudel, V. G., of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, assisted by the Rev. Mr. Mehan, of Halifax, as Deacon, and the Rev. E. McKenna, of New York as Sub-deacon. The music selected for the occasion was that of Hayden's sixteenth Mass, which was excellently rendered by the efficient Choir of the Church, assisted by a full orchestra,

comprising several of the most distinguished musical amateurs of the city under the leadership of Professor Torrington. The Sopranos were headed by Miss Fallon, the Altos by Miss Martin, the Tenors and the Basses by M. M. Grant and Teulon respectively. M. A. Meilleur presided at the organ, and E. Woods, Esq., acted as conductor. During the offertory Mozart's magnificent "Splendete Te Deus" was most admirably sung with full orchestral accompaniment.

THE SERMON.

The Preacher of the Day was the Rev. Mr. Hogan of St. Sulpice, attached to the St. Ann's Church. After the first gospel, the Rev. gentleman mounted the pulpit and delivered the splendid address of which we have endeavoured to give an abstract below. Of course it is as impossible to do justice to the reverend gentleman's discourse in a brief report like ours, as it is in the columns of a journal to reproduce the effect which it brought upon the delighted audience; but we think that in its main features, our analysis will be found full and faithful.

"The land that was desolate and impassible shall be glad, and the wilderness shall rejoice and flourish like the lily."—Isaiah ch. 35. i.

These beautiful words of the Holy Ghost, spoken by Isaiah, were prophetic of the happiness and joy that nations were to be blessed with when brought to the knowledge of Christ, and induced to submit to the teachings and authority of his church. In assembling here to-day to celebrate our national feast, we come to thank God for the complete fulfilment of this prophecy in our regard, and to honor St. Patrick of whose instrumental God availed himself for the execution of his Providential designs. Ireland, like other nations was once, beloved brethren, a desolate and impassible land, a country under the sway of a horde of unfeeling and heartless Druids. It was a wilderness that produced nought but Paganism and its deplorable consequences: but which, thanks to heaven, has since rejoiced and flourished like the lily, by the resplendent brightness of her children's faith, and the never fading charms of their many virtues. If at present Ireland cannot boast of material greatness, we her children though at a far off distance, must only deplore her impoverished state, if national discontent has no other effect than to aggravate her distress, and render her condition less settled and less tolerable, we must only trust our merciful God whose designs we do not always comprehend, will in his own suitable time, yield to the cries of his faithful people and so dispose matters in their regard as will tend to their greater glory and happiness. Society, almost all over the world, is at present in an unhealthy and chronic state; a spirit of revolution, bred and fostered by impiety, has wasted and debased civilization to the very core. The Catholic Church, which was destined by God to bring gladness and rejoicings to nations, which before were desolate and as wilderness, has been singled out by these insidious enemies as the special object of most treacherous attacks.

To satisfy you that our Church is of divine institution, and consequently beyond the control of worldly power and human malice, let us contrast the obstacles that stand in the way of her establishment with the means employed to surmount them; and in the natural powerlessness of these means, no unprejudiced or unbiased mind can for an instant refuse acknowledging the author of her being, or that she is stamped with the seal of the Divinity.

The Rev. Gentleman then developed the opposition the Christian religion met with from the intellectual state of the human mind. At no period of the world's history was society so enlightened. The coming of Christ was preceded by the residence on earth of persons possessing the most surpassing talents of which human nature may feel proud. These men whose brilliant talents are even yet objects of our admiration, filled the world with their renown. Science and letters were cultivated to the highest degree. Philosophy held the place of honor; opinions were thoroughly discussed all coveted the honor of being regarded as philosophers. Emperors would fain complete their dignities with the laurels of the schools. Men concentrated their in all self-love, employed all their talents and eloquence in its honor, and its defence. But the coming of Jesus Christ announced the time when this vain philosophical enthusiasm should disappear, when a new Philosophy, for such was the name some of the early Fathers gave to the true religion, should be introduced to teach human reason its veritable functions, to mark its limits, subject it to faith and rectify and purify it by its divine moral code. What means were to be employed to effect this change? Where could our Lord find persons qualified to operate such a universal revolution, select co-operators in this great mission? It was from the shores of the sea, and the mists of commerce. He selected twelve men, some devoid of education, all entirely ignorant of the simplest rudiments of science. Such were the agents selected to work the wondrous change in the intellect of man. At Christ's command these brave soldiers of the cross entered with a courage and intrepidity which, to mere human thought almost appears audacious into the midst of their work. They do not confine their apostolic visits to villages, to those spots where they would meet with poor and ignorant people as themselves, but they enter boldly the centres of talent and learning. At Rome at Athens, at Corinth, Ephesus, and Antioch, they boldly defy the most powerful and best practiced geniuses, and what has been the result of this strange and apparently unequal species of conflict, of a conflict between simplicity and the most subtle disquisitions, between ignorance and the most profound erudition, between rudeness and the most highly polished and brilliant eloquence. The result has proved to be what nothing but the unlimited power of God could effect—namely, that Philosophy defended by hosts of the most learned, supported by all that the human mind could furnish and devise in the way of means and resources, has been completely vanquished, and the Catholic doctrine, preached by twelve poor illiterate fishermen, have gained possession of its stronghold, reformed and purified society, govern and regulate the minds of men by the transcendent charms of their divine spirit. The causes of this success can be found in no principle of human action, but are mentioned by St. Paul 1 Cor. 1 ch. 27, 28 verses.

The next obstacle which offered itself to the establishment of the Church had its existence in the state of prevailing religions. The preacher then exposed the varied forms of idolatrous worship, the utterly false ideas of the divinity then existing in the world, and the attachment of peoples to their superstitious rites. This false worship was bound in with the then one government of the world, the Roman emperors controlling religious worship, the priesthood as it were officers of the state, the destinies of the Empire and of Rome esteemed to depend on the preservation of this idolatrous worship. Such was the moral and religious atmosphere of society at the period at which our holy religion was introduced. In the bosom of, in the very heart of this pagan religion, so solidly established, and so universally revered was announced the existence of a new and different religion, entirely different from all these others which successively incorporated themselves with the older forms of idolatry. A Religion to all external appearances unusual, a worship incompatible with all the ancient forms, whose object was a God the avowed enemy of all the divinities. This new religion could not be made to bend to expediences or consent to compromises; its fixed principle was that the votaries of the ancient errors should admit that all they had hitherto believed were but fables, that all they had hitherto revered were but mental illusions, and all they had adored were demora. It demanded that they should banish from their hearts the religious principles which they imbibed at the mother's breast, that they should abjure at her shrines the dogmas that came down to them from a very long succession of ancestors: that they should modify the ambitious pretensions of their governments, and oblige their sovereigns to seek no more the support which the pomp of religious ceremonies afforded to their authority.—The Apostles called upon the inhabitants of the various nations which they entered to pull down and trample on whatever had been hitherto the objects of their respect, and this without promising to replace them with anything that could naturally fill the void in their corrupt feelings. Instead of the divinities that public imagination multiplied and embellished in accordance with its own taste, they present for public adoration a man born of a most despised people, whose life, passed in humiliations and poverty, was terminated in accordance with the sentence of a Roman President, amidst the most infamous species of sufferings, sufferings such as Rome would inflict on no other than a slave. For the enchanting fictions which charmed and elevated the spirits of the Pagans, the Apostles substituted mysteries which were enjoined to be believed, forbidden to be examined, impossible to be penetrated. What latent force did these dogmas possess, that could make men feel obliged to sacrifice to them every thing which for centuries they were accustomed to revere and cherish! However, Paganism, which so long wielded an active power not only in the spiritual, but also in the material government of the civilized world, has disappeared, and the Catholic religion reigns in its stead. The idols of old are reduced to dust, and the doctrines of the crucified man triumph in every heart, and are revered around every altar.

The perverted intellect, and the deeply rooted attachment to the false religions effected the most corruptive influence on the heart of man. The heart seduced the intellect, the intellect reciprocally aggravated the depravity of the heart. Man defied his passions. Having adored what he practiced, he scrupled not to practice what he adored. Rome, the mistress of the world, exhibited the example of every crime appropriating to herself, with the treasures of conquered nations, their gods and their vices.—Decency forbids the description of the depths of licentiousness into which men plunged. The oppressed poor were the victims of the rich; a system of luxury, the details of which would appear incredible even in the present century, ostentatiously insulted public misery; ambition elevated to the dignity of a virtue, ambition regarded as a nobleness of soul, having long disturbed the republic, finally overthrew it, and incessantly menaced the throne which itself had erected. Having pictured the effects produced on society by unbridled and unrestrained influence of human passions, giving an idea of the immorality of the Roman people at the time of the introduction of true religion in the Empire, the reverend gentleman said: As Jonas, centuries before, approached the walls of Nineveh with the view of inducing its inhabitants to be converted to the Lord, did St. Peter and St. Paul direct their steps to Rome to battle with human passions—to brave the tempests and storms that their undertaking would arouse against themselves, and bring its inhabitants to submit to the teaching of the Gospel. They came to substitute the rigors of mortification for the luxurious enjoyments that then prevailed; to establish the spirit of abnegation instead of the insatiable projects of ambition; to pull down and trample on the pretensions of pride, and make humility the noblest trait of the character; to destroy the rage of human vengeance by the charming virtue of Christian charity, and to extinguish the fire of voluptuousness with the bitter tears of repentance. The Apostles proposed to themselves changing completely the ideas of the Roman people, tearing from the heart of man what had hitherto been its every desire, and engraving in its stead the love of these things which had been the object of its contempt. What hopes could there be entertained of the success of this project—of a project so difficult in itself, and, to the eye of human prudence, so manifestly perilous. Judging from human conjectures the views of worldlings, one could expect nothing for these bold champions of the Catholic Church except disappointment and death; but as it was God and not the spirit of the world that set them, they realized all their expectations, they trampled on idolatry, changed the convictions of the people, taught them a new law, and a new morality, and Rome, once the proud Pagan Rome, they made the centre and mistress of Christianity.—The yoke that Rome, as conqueror, imposed on nations in the days of her Paganism is broken; liberty grew up with Christianity; the despotism ever consequent on the existence of almost universal empire disappeared with other abuses, and it is to the fostering and cherishing care of the Catholic Church that we are indebted for the altered and improved state of society. The Chair of the Pontiffs replaces the throne of the Caesars; Rome, once the model and propagator of every species of corruption, has become the expounder of evangelical precepts the mother and guardian of decency, morality, and virtue. The numberless calumnies uttered against the Catholic religion were named by the preacher, as another obstacle, as well as the eight persecutions, the spite of vengeance actuating which, and the horrible torments inflicted, were dwelt on for some time. Full three hundred years passed away before Christian blood dry on the instruments of torture, and if occasionally the system of persecution was relaxed, it was only that the gathering storm would rage with increased vigor and violence. How could the Church, in despite of the continual persecution which assailed her, increase and become fortified?—The pillars that supported the edifice were destroyed, and yet the edifice itself only became more solid.—In society, it is admitted, that the capture and death of a chief leads to the breaking up and destruction of a party; but in the case of the Church, they only contributed to her strength and consolidation. The establishment of the religion of Christ demanded the incessant labors of the Apostles, and their deaths were the seal of its security and prosperity. The Christians met martyrdom that their blood might become the seed from which new Christians would rise. The more Christians were put to death by so much the more did the Catholic religion take root, spread, and grow. Here the learned gentleman cited some quotations from the early Christian writers regarding the increase of Christianity, showing that, notwithstanding all these persecutions, the