

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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TERMS:

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MAY 24, 1861.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.—The proceedings of this august body were brought to a close on Saturday last, at 2 p. m. His Excellency the Governor General proceeded in State to the Chamber of the Legislative Council; and the members of the other House having been summoned, and a number of Bills assented to in the name of Her Majesty, the following speech was delivered by the Governor General:—

Honourable Gentleman of the Legislative Council: Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly:

It affords me much pleasure to find that you have completed the consideration of such measures as you deem necessary for the Province, and that I am thus able to close the fourth Session of this Parliament.

You have in some important particulars amended the Criminal Law, and facilitated the transaction of judicial business.

You have dealt with the several measures submitted to you, and you have bestowed a patient attention on the petitions and representations of Her Majesty's Subjects.

I may congratulate you on the prospects of Canada and the increase of her exports and imports. The ships now lying under your windows, in the River St. Lawrence, announce the opening of an abundant traffic, and I pray that Providence may bless our fields with another plentiful harvest.

Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly:

I thank you in Her Majesty's name for the Supplies which you have liberally granted for the Public Service. Care shall be taken to expend such money in accordance with your wishes.

Honourable Gentlemen and Gentlemen:

Her Most Gracious Majesty has suffered a deep domestic affliction, on which you, as Her loyal subjects, have expressed your condolence and sympathy. I have taken care to forward your Address to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

I believe that we may shortly expect the honor of a visit, of a private character, from His Royal Highness Prince Alfred, and I know that the presence of another member of the Royal Family of England will be a subject of congratulation.

I now release you from your labours, and prorogue the Parliament of Canada.

The Speaker of the Legislative Council then said: Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council and of the Legislative Assembly:

It is His Excellency the Governor General's will and pleasure, that this Provincial Parliament be prorogued until Thursday, the 31st day of June next, to be here held, and this Provincial Parliament is accordingly prorogued until Thursday, the 27th day of June next.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The prospects of the King of Italy are not bright. His Parliament is useless for all purposes of legislation, and Cavour has been compelled to rebuke it for its disgraceful conduct.—In Sicily there are symptoms of more than discontent with annexation, and the Garibaldian faction are agitating for a Republic, which was to have been proclaimed at Palermo on the 29th ult. Measures however were taken to suppress all popular demonstrations, but only to manifest themselves on a more favorable occasion. In the South of Italy a bloody though desultory warfare is still kept up betwixt the loyalist patriots and the Piedmontese mercenaries. We hear every day that the "reactionists" have been crushed in one district, and every day we also hear of their reappearance in some other quarter.

The Government of Victor Emmanuel seems determined to carry matters with a high hand in the conquered provinces; it has imprisoned the Archbishop of St. Andrea, arrested several of the chief landed proprietors, and threatens the Archbishop of Naples with a legal prosecution for having refused to allow public prayers in his Cathedral for the usurper. These measures may win for Victor Emmanuel from Protestants, the praise of being the champion of religious liberty; but they will not have much effect in mitigating the hatred entertained towards him and his usurped sway, by all true Neapolitan patriots, and Catholics.

The condition of Poland is the exact counterpart of that of the Kingdom of Naples; the policy of the Russian Czar towards the disaffected Poles, is the transcript of that of the *Re galantissimo* towards the conquered Neapolitans. The latter prescribes to the Prelates of the Catholic Church what prayers they shall recite, how and in what terms they shall approach the Throne of Grace, and upon their refusal to submit to his dictation, casts them into jail, and confiscates their property. In like manner, through his deputies, the Russian despot assumes the right to regulate the devotions of his Catholic Polish subjects, and by official proclamation directs what hymns shall be sung in their places of worship. In Poland, as in Naples, the Catholic laity and the Catholic Clergy set the edicts of Cæsar in things spiritual, at de-

france, and continue to pray, to sing, and to address Almighty God without the slightest respect for the injunctions or prohibitions of "Jack-in-office." In Poland, as in Naples, the Catholic Hierarchy are the virtual leaders of the patriotic party, the animating spirit which directs and controls the agitation for national independence, and they are therefore the first objects of the foreign despot's hatred. The most superficial observer of passing events cannot fail to notice the close family resemblance betwixt the policy pursued by the King of Sardinia, and that pursued by the Emperor of Russia, towards the Catholic Church and her Prelates; the student of history, who dives below the surface, and traces events to their origin, will find in that resemblance additional proof of the close connection, we may say blood-relationship, which subsists betwixt "Modern Liberalism" and "Cæsarism." As a specimen, we give side by side, two passages, both copied from the Foreign Correspondent of the London Times—the one with reference to the action of the Russian, the other with reference to the action of the Sardinian officials as toward the Catholic Church and her Prelates, in Poland and Naples respectively:—

POLAND.

Prince Gortschakoff has addressed a letter to the Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs which he commences by saying that "it has come to his knowledge that certain Roman Catholic priests have mixed up politics with religious offices" and in which he proceeds to declare that "the Government would bring disgrace upon itself if it delayed to take the necessary measures prescribed by the law to put an end to the hatred thus systematically excited against it." He then bids the Minister call the attention of the bishops to the conduct of the clergy, warning them that "the civil and military Governors have received an order to arrest every ecclesiastic, without distinction of rank or dignity, who shall be guilty of the offence named, in order that he may be punished with all the rigour of which the laws admit."—Times Corr.

NAPLES.

The Archbishop of St. Andrea and three landed proprietors have been arrested. A letter addressed by the Director of Public Worship to the Archbishop of Naples has been published, in which he reproaches the Archbishop with having forbidden public prayers for King Victor Emmanuel, and warns him that if he persists in such a course he will be prosecuted according to law.

The similarity of language of the above edicts is more than a mere accidental coincidence. It is the result of that hatred which all tyrants entertain toward the Church; it is the expression of the antagonism which ever has, and ever must subsist betwixt Catholicity and despotism; it is but the modern version of the old injunction laid upon the first Pastors of the Church by her enemies, who, calling before them Peter and John, commanded them not to speak at all, or teach in the name of Jesus. The voice of Victor Emmanuel is but as that of Annas the Jewish High Priest, and the threats of the Russian official are but the echo of the menaces of the Sanhedrim. We know what effect these had; we may thence easily anticipate the result of the present persecution.

Prince Napoleon having prudently declined any personal explanations with the Duc D'Aumale, and the latter's famous pamphlet being unanswerable because of the truths it contained, the French Government has deemed it best to convict the publisher and printer of the offending work—which, with the accommodating tribunals existing under Imperial regime, was no difficult task. Accordingly M. Dumineray, the publisher of the pamphlet in question, has been sentenced to pay a fine of about \$1,000, and to one year's imprisonment, and M. Baux, the printer, to a fine of similar amount, with six months' imprisonment. This has not stopped the circulation of the work itself, which is read with greater avidity than ever. The condemned have appealed, and so strong is the popular feeling in their favor, that a mitigation of sentence is expected.

The British news is of little importance.—Great importance was attached to the outbreak of hostilities in the United States, and an increased naval force is about to be dispatched to the North American Station for the protection of British commerce. A proclamation was about to appear warning British subjects that if they interfere in any manner in the affairs of the United States their blood will be on their own heads, and that they need not look for any protection from the British Government upon the plea of being British subjects. In case of a blockade of the Southern Ports it is probable that the doctrines laid down by the Yankees themselves as to the rights of neutrals and the "Right of Search" will be applied by the European Powers; if so, any effectual blockade is out of the question, and Jonathan will find himself "hoist with his own petard."

There is really nothing new from the States. The belligerents are "just about going to begin," and have been "just about going to begin" for the last month. After all it is to be hoped that that North and South may yet agree to an amicable separation; after which President Lincoln and President Davis will sit down to liquor, and deadly weapons shall yield place to the peaceful brandy-cock-tail—a consummation most devoutly to be wished.

DIVORCE AND POLYGAMY.—The British Herald complains that we have spoken disrespectfully of divorce—qualifying it as old polygamy under a new name; and of having said that, it is the inevitable tendency of Protestant principles to set aside the Christian law of marriage, and to substitute in lieu thereof, the heastly system of divorce, which now obtains in almost every Protestant country upon earth.

Our cotemporary favors us also with the very remarkable information that Our Saviour Himself admitted adultery to be a sufficient ground for divorce *a vinculo*; and that the Church of England holds to the same opinion, and recognises, "re-marriage" as lawful to the innocent party injured by adultery.—"But even if this, or either opinion, is, in the judgment of Roman Catholics, erroneous"—continues our cotemporary:—

"Still when they know the belief is sincerely entertained as justified by the Word of God, such outrageous language as that used by the editor of the True Witness cannot be too strongly condemned."

"*Pausa verba*, Master Herald, good words."

You jump to conclusions too hastily, and your condemnation of the TRUE WITNESS is as unjust, as as your exposition of the doctrines of the Church of England on the law of marriage is contrary to fact—Whether "Our Saviour" did, or did not, admit the lawfulness of divorce *a vinculo* under any circumstances, is a question we care not to discuss; for whilst we know with the assurance of faith that He never made such admission, we cannot chop Scripture with heretics, or dispute almost the meaning of words until we have the *ipsissima verba* before our eyes. The words attributed to Our Lord are not handed down to you in the language in which He uttered them; you have them only in the guise of a translation, made, you cannot say by whom, and of whose accuracy you have no voucher. We will not therefore waste time in disputing as to the meaning of those unknown words, which are reported very differently in the different translations of the Gospels which have been handed down to us.

The sense in which those words have been understood by the Church of England is certainly not that assigned to them by the Herald. In theory, that body has always retained the old Catholic doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage, and has always—to its credit be it said—denied the right of divorce *a vinculo* under any circumstances: but then the Church of England has—of all the sects—been the most inconsistent in its Protestantism, and therefore the most Christian. The Herald is guilty of gross injustice towards the Church of England in representing it as sanctioning divorce *a vinculo*; and we would recommend to him, before again dogmatizing upon the subject, to make himself a little better acquainted with the history and doctrines of Anglicanism. We admit and admire his zeal for divorce; but as yet he has been more successful in establishing his own ignorance of the Anglican theory of marriage, than in refuting the TRUE WITNESS.

Divorce at its best, is but the legalisation of concubinage, but it assumes its most repulsive form when restricted to cases of adultery. The daily experience of the English Divorce Court shows that to admit adultery as a valid ground for divorce *a vinculo*, is but to put a premium upon crime. If we must have divorce laws, then in the interests of morality, divorce should be accorded for any and every conceivable cause—for incompatibility of temper, or cold feet—except adultery. Of all legislation on the subject, that is the worst which actually holds out inducements to violate the laws of God, and which, practically, says to the ill-assorted and unhappy couple—"so long as you are content to live chastely, nothing can be done for your relief; and you shall be released, in so far as human law can release you, from the bonds which gall your necks."—To insist upon an act of adultery as a legal formality, or preliminary, without which release from the marriage yoke is impossible, is a certain means to encourage crime, as the article by us quoted from the London Times by implication admits. "Shrewd observers of the proceedings of the Divorce Court"—says that high authority—are well aware "that an application for the dissolution of one marriage is seldom made until another has been resolved on, and that Sir Cresswell Cresswell is not more the follower than the precursor of Hymen." In other words, the practical operation of the Divorce Court is this: A and B, tired of one another's company, and intent upon contracting new sexual unions, by mutual agreement go through the prescribed formality of adultery; and then being qualified, by application to the anti-Christian tribunal over which Sir Cresswell Cresswell presides as "the precursor of Hymen," they obtain a legal sanction to their predetermined re-espousals. In our opinion it would be better to grant the divorce at once, without insisting upon the formality of adultery.

Betwixt the Christian law of marriage, as stated by the Catholic Church, "one with one, and for ever," and the filthiest excesses of heathen polygamy, there is no middle ground logically tenable; and no community which has once abandoned the Catholic position has long been

able, to resist the further encroachments of passion upon the restraints which the divine law imposes upon human lusts. The polygamy of the Mormons is but the logical, and indeed inevitable consequence of Protestant tamperings with the divine law of marriage.

Nor are the Mormons the only Protestant denomination who have, by a rigorous application of Protestant principles, arrived at the comfortable conclusion that polygamy is a domestic institution perfectly lawful to the Christian, and in harmony with the Word of God. In Scotland, it appears that this is a fundamental tenet of a Protestant sect, whose petition in behalf of the right of polygamy was read in the House of Commons during a debate on the Marriage Laws upon Wednesday the 17th ult. This document, important as showing the tendencies of Protestantism, and as an illustration of the "right of private judgment" upon the laws of God, was read by Mr. Lyon, and professed to come from "The Communicants of a sect of Protestant Dissenters in the Royal Burgh of Dundee." It was couched in the following terms:—

"That the sect whereof your petitioners are members believes that there is Scripture warrant for the continuance of the family institution as it existed in patriarchal and Jewish times—namely, the state in which the head of a family may have one or more wives. That your humble petitioners do not adopt such a principle from any other than the purest and most enlightened motives, and because they believe it to be in accordance with the Word of God; and, further, that your petitioners, so long as they are resident in this land, and subjects of the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, never will attempt contravention of its laws. That your petitioners would, nevertheless, respectfully state to your honourable House that they feel it to be a grievance that they should, by the laws of this well-governed realm, be debarred from exercising their rights of living in conformity to the dictates of their conscience; and that while not wishing to impose their views on others, they yet think that others should allow them to live in conformity with their own views, and not impose their views on them. That your petitioners would call the attention of your honourable House to the fact that the prayer of this petition is not without precedent in Her Majesty's dominions—that is to say, Her Majesty's colonies—for that the natives of India and other un-Christian subjects of Her Majesty, are permitted to have more wives than one. (Laughter.) That your petitioners regretted to observe that the Bill which your honourable House passed into a law in your last Session for the better regulation of the laws of divorce and matrimonial causes, did not contain any such provision as would meet the peculiar case of your petitioners." (Laughter.) They then went on to pray

"Your honourable House to pass a law to remove these wrongs, by providing that if a man, the husband of one wife, shall present himself before a magistrate, and solemnly swear that his conscience believes the lawfulness of the Divine institution of polygamy, and he therefore wishes to marry another wife or other wives, the magistrate shall be empowered to issue a licence for the celebration of such marriage, which shall be a legal marriage, according to the law of this country, and the issue thereof legitimate; your honourable House annexing to the said law such provisions as your honourable House, in your wisdom, shall think fit necessary to prevent its abuse. (Laughter.) That thereby your honourable House will right the wrongs of a considerable number of Her Majesty's subjects, and approach one step nearer to absolute perfection in legislation."—From Parliamentary Report—Times, 17th ult.

It will be seen that the prayer of the "Protestant Dissenters" of Dundee did not meet with a very respectful hearing from the House of Commons; though the conscientious, even if erroneous, private judgment of one Protestant sect in favor of polygamy is certainly as much entitled to the respect of its fellow-sectaries, as is the opinion of any other Protestant sect in favor of divorce, to the respect of Catholics. We know that both are alike condemned by the law of God, and incompatible with Christian civilisation; we know that one is the inevitable and logical precursor of the other; and we speak of both therefore in terms of unqualified condemnation, as we would speak of theft, fornication and all other kinds of mortal sin.

In this we are guilty of no disrespect to Protestants. We deem their marriages, as the unions of baptised persons, chaste, honorable and holy; and we raise therefore our humble voice against those who would degrade them to the level of mere concubinage.

CLERICAL INTERFERENCE IN POLITICS.—

We know not whether the inconsistency, or the cool impertinence of Protestants be the more worthy of our special wonderment. In one breath they deprecate all interference on the part of Priests with secular affairs; in the next, they declaim against the Catholic clergy for their non-interference, for not exerting their influence soon enough, or actively enough. They are like the poor wretch at the halberds, of whom the flogger complained that, "hit high, or hit low, there was no pleasing him."

For example, there has just taken place an election riot at St. John's Newfoundland, the origin of which is as yet obscure. The military were however called out, and after some trouble, and with some loss of life to the rioters, they succeeded in quelling the tumult. In the midst of the fray the Catholic clergy were to be seen rushing through the crowd, exhorting, commanding the people to disperse, and to retire to their homes; and in consequence of this "clerical interference," amongst the names of the persons shot by the troops, we find that of the Rev. Mr. O'Donnell, a Catholic Priest. A local journal, the Express, thus comments on the transaction:—"It is due to the Roman Catholic clergy to state that they went among the crowd, commanding and entreating them to disperse, and go home, without success."

Such conduct must, one will naturally expect,

have provoked the gratitude of the public; and the respectful homage of the press. Not a bit of it; the Protestant journals had occasion therein to reproach the Clergy with their non-interference in matters secular, and to hold them up to the public as morally responsible for the riots:—

"Thus we have another instance of what has been frequently observed, that when men become excited, and resort to deeds of violence, those who at the commencement might have restrained them, lose all control over them."—16.

We have witnessed violent political riots in Montreal; we have seen Her Majesty's representative outraged, and the Parliament Houses burnt down by a Protestant mob; but we are not aware that any Protestant clergymen of any denomination exposed themselves to personal danger, or to the chances of a stray musket ball, in their efforts to restrain the rioters; but we have never heard that any Catholic journalists had the impertinence to insinuate that, to the apathy of the Protestant clergy, the brutal and disgraceful political riots of 1849 were in any manner attributable.

We are told also that the Governor of Newfoundland, Sir Alexander Bannerman, has had the bad taste and the bad manners to address a letter, couched in the spirit of the above given extract from the Express, to the Bishop of Newfoundland, reproaching His Lordship and the Clergy for not having used their influence at the right time. We can scarcely bring ourselves to believe that a gentleman could so far forget what was due to himself, to his office, and to the sacred character of the illustrious and amiable Prelate and the reverend clergymen whom he addressed, as to write to them in the following terms, which we find quoted in the Montreal Herald of the 22nd instant, from the Boston Transcript:—

"From my experience here, I have invariably seen the influence of your clergy predominant at the height of a storm, when men's passions were strongly excited—but I have never seen that influence used at the beginning of that storm, when it might prove so very beneficial to the peace of society."

Analyse this reproach, and to what does it amount? That the influence of the Catholic Clergy is most vigorously exerted then, when it is most needed, and when its exercise, is accompanied with no small amount of personal risk, as in the case of the Rev. Mr. O'Donnell shot by the troops whilst exercising his influence over the rioters of St. John's. What would the Governor have? Our Newfoundland Dogberry, we suppose, would only have the influence of the Clergy "appear when there is no need of such vanity." This we take to be the meaning of the complaint that it is only apparent when the storm rages, and is kept in reserve for seasons of emergency; and yet it might have suggested itself to the Newfoundland Solon to have inquired whether, in quiet times, the influence of the Catholic Clergy might not be exercised over their flocks in a manner of which Protestants cannot take cognisance.

It might be asked to—what right have Protestants to expect that the Catholic Clergy shall attempt to exercise any influence at all over their people? They are not stipendiaries of the State; from the Civil Magistrate they receive nothing; and to him they owe nothing but what every other citizen equally owes. Why then should special services be exacted from them? And yet, we say it fearlessly, throughout the British Empire, always and everywhere is the influence of that Clergy actively at work in the cause of order and authority. It is so exercised in Canada; it is so exercised in Ireland—as witness the complaints of John Mitchell; and it is so exercised in Newfoundland; and if it be not always successful, if the exhortations of the Priest are sometimes disregarded, and his pacific counsels are despised by those to whom they are addressed, it is because Protestants have been only too successful in decrying priestly interference, and in creating prejudices against ecclesiastical influence. They have done their utmost to diminish the influence of the "Rome" Clergy; they are incessant in their denunciations of the interference of Priests and Bishops with politics, even when spiritual interests are directly affected by the acts of the legislator; and yet, in times of trouble and riot, when Protestant Ministers prudently—small blame to them—keep close within doors, and out of harm's way, whilst the Catholic priest regardless of death or mutilation rushes forth amidst the combatants armed only with his crucifix, and in the name of the God of peace bids the tumult cease, the only thanks the latter receives for his gratuitous services to the State and to the Civil Magistrate are a sneering paragraph in a Protestant journal, and an insolent letter from a Protestant Colonial Governor! Surely there is no inconsistency like Protestant inconsistency, no impudence like unto Protestant impudence!

A Protestant cotemporary takes the Toronto Freeman to task for its language with reference to the Blessed Virgin, and invokes the censure of the Bishop and clergy of Toronto upon the offending journal for its absurdity and impiety. We should not presume to interfere in the matter, believing the Freeman to be fully competent to deal with its Protestant assailant, yet it not that our attention had been especially