

The True Witness. AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE, PRINTED AND PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JAN. 8, 1869.

ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR. JANUARY—1869. Friday, 5—Of the Octave. Saturday, 6—Of the Octave.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The Conference for discussing the threatening Eastern Question, and for effecting if possible an amicable settlement of the differences between Greece and Turkey will, it is said, be held in a few days at Paris...

There has been more fighting in Spain, and the revolutionists, have, so we learn from telegram, defeated the rebels at Malaga.

The London Tablet publishes some interesting details with respect to the General Council to be held this year.

There are in the Catholic Church 12 Patriarchates, 177 Archbishoprics, and 905 Bishops, 1,094 in all.

THE SEMINARY AND THE POOR.—We see that urgent appeals are being constantly made in favor of the Catholic poor of our city.

The above is a fair specimen of the manner in which the Witness without committing himself by any direct statements, contrives to insinuate that the Seminary of St. Sulpice disregards the interests of the poor...

might inhabit the island. The object for which the Institution in question was founded, and upon which it is legally authorized to expend its income, are set forth at length in the Ordinance of 1840...

In this document, clause II. "The rights and titles of the members of the said Seminary" to the property by them claimed 'are confirmed,'—we quote the words of the Ordinance; which then goes on to determine how and to what extent the said Ecclesiastics shall have, and hold the said property...

From this it is plain that the Seminary of St Sulpice in Montreal to-day have precisely the same right over their property, as had the Seminary of St. Sulpice of Paris on the 18th September 1759; and may apply the proceeds thereof to the same purposes as did the said Seminary, or as the Seminary of St Sulpice at Montreal, were at liberty to apply their revenues to, in the middle of the last century.

It will thus be seen that the Ordinance is both permissive, and restrictive. It permits the Seminary of St. Sulpice of Montreal to apply its revenues to any one, or to all, of the purposes to which, before the 18th of September, 1759, the Seminary of St. Sulpice at Paris could apply its revenues; and also to other special purposes carefully enumerated.

Now in so far as the Seminary of Montreal is concerned, we may observe that the general support of the indigent in the island of Montreal, is not one of the objects enumerated. Two classes of indigent, ("Orphans") and ("poor invalids"), are particularized, as legitimate objects of the Seminary's care; not that it is bound by the Ordinance to support even these—only it is thereby permitted to do so, if it so sees fit.

Still when properly called upon to give an account of their stewardship, the Seminary have no cause to shrink from the ordeal. But the 14th clause of the Ordinance, authorises only the Governor, or person administering in the name of the Queen, the Government of the Province, to call for such an account; and as we are not aware that Her Majesty has delegated any portion of her authority to the editor of the Witness, we do not expect that the St. Sulpicians will pay much attention to his demand.

Will the Witness, in justice to those whom he has misrepresented, lay before his readers, a statement of the objects to which the Sulpicians are at liberty to devote their revenues, and which we have quoted from the Ordinance of 1840. We pause for a reply.

CONVENTS ver. WORKHOUSES.—Whether after all, even in a material point of view, society is a gainer by the confiscation of ecclesiastical property, and the breaking up of convents and Catholic charitable asylums, may be seriously doubted, even by the most zealous Protestant who cheers on the Piedmontese and Spanish governments in their hellish work of robbery, and evictions.

for three centuries the experiment has been tried of substituting the agency of the State for that of the Church, in the relief of the poor, and where that experiment has been tried under the most favorable circumstances, it has not evinced the success, as to encourage us to be very sanguine as to the results of similar experiments elsewhere.

From this time some amateur "casual," or some prying newspaper correspondent brings more prominently than usual before the notice of the public some glaring case of neglect and in difference on the part of workhouse guardians; and for a moment there is a cry of indignation and commiseration.

This Farabum Workhouse is a fair type of the average English workhouse, and its system is a fair specimen of the actual working of English Protestant Poor Laws. It is not by any means the worst of its class in the country.

kind of morality obtains in a Protestant Workhouse:— "The next morning when he came again to put his horse up"—(the ward and the stables it will be remembered are all in one)—"he found those persons still in their 'hutches,' and they told him they were waiting while their clothes were dried. He believed they had lain in their wet clothes all night, for the men were huddled up in the straw with a rug, and the girl who had her clothes on was sitting on the edge of the sloping platform on which the men were lying."

In reply to a question put to him, this witness added that he had not complained either to the officials of the Workhouse, or to the Poor Law Board, "for it was equally useless to do so."

And as if the state of these wards was not of itself sufficient to repel the sick and, to keep them far away from this Protestant Asylum, their treatment by the authorities was harsh and brutal. Take, for instance, the case of an epileptic patient, who was set to work to clean out one of the cess-pools.

Witness saw an epileptic inmate who was taken out of the cess-pool, into which he had tumbled when set to work, as it was said, by the late master, to ladle out manure. Witness was not sent for to attend the patient, but saw him on making the usual rounds.

It is important to keep this admission in mind, for it is tantamount to admitting that the exposed abuses of Farnham are the abuses, not of a particular set of guardians unmindful of their duty—but the abuses of the Protestant Poor Law system itself, radical, and inseparable from that system.

One of the most important witnesses examined was one of the officials of the workhouse, Dr. Powell, the medical officer of the establishment. Of the "tramp wards," or places wherein wandering poor are accommodated for the night this witness spoke as follows.

"On the question of the confessedly shameful tramp wards described as 'rabbit hutches,' the witness said the wards were the sheds stated, with straw for the wretched tramps to lie upon, and he was told by the porter that the men tramps had no food when admitted 'however weary or faint,' and the women were only allowed a piece of bread when they had children with them."

Into these vile hovels the wretched paupers are thrust for the night and locked up, with no one to look after them, or to see whether they were alive or dead. Thus the same witness Dr. Powell continued:—"He knew of the case of a woman being locked up at night in one of these 'wards,' and when the wards were unlocked in the morning, she was found to be in labor, a condition it was said she had been in for four hours. He wrote a letter to the guardians in July last respecting this case, but the same plan was still pursued with respect to the tramps of locking them up."

Another witness, also a workhouse official, Mr. John Boulter, also testified to the condition of these wards which Protestant Poor Laws provide for the relief of the destitute poor. These wards—he said—and the stables were all together "only the stables were better than the tramp wards."

that arises, and must arise, under our actual social system, of which the direct and constant action is to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few, to make the rich richer, and the poor poorer; as we see exemplified in England, where in spite of the much vaunted material prosperity, pauperism is on the increase, having as we learn from some late monthly returns of the Poor Law Board attained to the fearful amount of 872,620 for the month of September 1866, being an "increase as compared with September 1865 of 37,615 or 45 per cent."

The hardest blows to the Anglican sect are those dealt to it by its friends, by its zealous, but imprudent champions. Catholics indeed have since its origin in the sixteenth century repeatedly argued against it, that it was nothing more than a State-created society; which in the State had its origin and its being; which, should the State withhold its helping hand, would at once collapse, and return to its original nothingness, even as would the material creation, but for the hand of God the Creator sustaining it.

And now Anglicans not only admit this to be strictly true, but urge it as their primary argument against the menaced disestablishment of their sect in Ireland. Disestablishment, using the word to denote the repeal of all Statutes, or laws about things ecclesiastical heretofore enacted by the State, would be unjust toward Anglicanism in Ireland—so it is urged—because it would not put them on a footing of equality with their Catholic fellow subjects, but would leave them in a very inferior position.

So argues a writer to the London Times, who over the signature of Bonamy Price thus pleads the cause of Anglicanism in Ireland:— It seems to me that disestablishment, in the only sense which the word bears, namely, a repeal of all laws made about the Church by the State, a disconnection of the State from the Protestant Episcopalians as well as its severance from the Roman Catholics, is a remedy which goes beyond the disease for what is the disease? That a Protestant Church is imposed on a Catholic population; that funds which belong to Catholics have been given by the State to Protestants; that this act was carried out by a coercing force, and that its continuance is a perpetual memorial of that outrage. These are the things which the country has resolved to remove. But is it necessary for the accomplishment of this end that the residuum of Protestants should be totally disorganized, and their Church, their association, completely swept away? When the Reformation disestablished the Roman Catholics it did not disorganize them; it did not leave them a mass of broken-up and shattered individuals, for the very plain reason that their Church, their relations with one another as members of a society, were constructed not by the State, but by themselves.

The bitterest enemy of Anglicanism could not have pronounced against it, a stronger condemnation. Were it by a repeal of existing laws to be placed on a footing of perfect legal equality with the Catholic Church, it would at once be "as a rope of sand;" whilst the other would remain, as it has remained in spite of three centuries of legal persecution, "a compact and united society."

For why could not Anglicans, even when disestablished, do what Catholics have done? Catholics in Ireland have not only had no aid from the State, but have had to struggle against laws enacted expressly to crush, and disorganize them; to deprive them of all church officers, such as priests and Bishops (officers essential to their organization) and to make the celebration of their worship an impossibility: and yet in spite of these laws, they are, as they have ever been a "compact and united society."

These children—the victims of horrid skin disease, as we have shown—are under the care of one pauper woman, who is provided with a wooden pail with an iron handle across, and one piece of calico about one yard square, for the washing and drying of these 13 children. In the woman's day-room (the room for women with young children) on a brick-floor likewise a most unhealthy room, there are three children, two of whom are on the medical report, for whom there is also provided a wooden pail for washing them in; but no article whatever for drying them in, and the mothers of these children are, as they themselves say, obliged to dry them in their aprons or old rags they can obtain, and in their soiled clothes."

But enough of this. From Protestant sources we see what the Protestant Poor Law system, under the most favorable circumstances, is; and what its results upon the condition of the poor. Any one in Montreal, or indeed in any Catholic country—can on any day of the week convince himself by personal inspection what is the nature of the relief afforded in the Convent, and by the Sister of Charity, and thus draw his conclusions as to the respective merits of the two systems—State Relief, and Catholic Charity. Of these two systems we must have either one or the other; and if we abolish the convent as in England, we must need, for there is no other alternative, accept the Workhouse of which Farnham is a fair average specimen. We do not of course pretend that, even the Convent, that even Catholic Charity can meet every case of pauperism

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