

A DAY IN BEDLAM.

The day was the twelfth of July, of course—a day on which certain mortals have deemed it their duty to do and say things which have a tendency to drive certain other mortals mad. They are all Irishmen, and all in a way proud of the "Green Isle," but among them there are differences of faith; and they fight over them, holding that blood is not half so thick as water, and that it is of more importance to wrangle over the past than to have a prosperous peace in the present and a confident hope of the future.

The scene of all the mad manoeuvres I am going to describe was, of course, the city of Montreal; for nowhere else, in all the world, is there such bigoted devildom baptized by the name of "religious feeling,"—nowhere else are there such examples of "Christian communities" being mutually exclusive—nowhere else are there such instances of men, in the sacred name of piety and principle, insisting on stirring up evil passions which lead to strife and bloodshed, for ends that have no practical use in them.

THE INMATES OF BEDLAM.

First must be reckoned the Orangemen—some of them good, respectable members of society, who say Orangeism is not here what it is in the Old Country—is not meant to stir up ill-feeling, or promote discord,—but is a good and useful institution, working well for Protestantism; some of them indifferent, having joined the order they scarce know why, and never taking an active part in its affairs; and some of them bad, having no purpose of good, but only of mischief. Notably the Orange Young Britons—mere boys, who can neither reflect nor reason; who could hardly distinguish between the written creeds of the two opposing religious bodies, but who have got hold of the tail end of an idea, and think they have the right to walk through a menagerie of wild beasts with raw meat in their hands—the right to flaunt it in the eyes and before the noses of tigers—and all for the purpose of demonstrating before all mankind that they are not afraid of the tigers, but that man can vindicate his manhood when "protected" by iron bars and keepers. That is to say, they have the right to forget the rights of all others; the right to excite and offend a large portion of their fellow-countrymen; the right to paralyse trade, send peace-loving citizens out of the city, make it necessary to call in the military, at a cost to the city of from fifty to a hundred thousand dollars, and otherwise hold the city up to the shame and contempt of the civilized world. For opponents they have Irishmen—as wild as Irishmen can be. They hate Orangeism with anger that is deep and furious. They have ceased to reason about it—have refused to treat it with a wholesome contempt—but have lashed themselves into a passion over the very thought of it. They trouble themselves little about matters of religion—for the priests have no control over them; and still less do they concern themselves about politics—they are bound to hate Orangeism—there it begins and there it ends. On the twelfth these currents of electricity were flashing through the streets of Montreal; defiance, hate—anger outlawed—anger made legal—anger drunk—anger mad—anger delirious and thirsting for blood. Was ever Bedlam in more dangerous mood? All felt the peril—stores were closed, and those who had valuables on sale armed themselves to meet an emergency—banks were well guarded—in truth, Bedlam was a dry tinder waiting for a spark to set it all in a blaze—which spark the Mayor tried hard to strike.

THE LAWS OF BEDLAM.

But there was law even in Bedlam on the twelfth of July. It had been for long time held that a body of men called by any name, wearing any colours, commemorating any event in the past, might walk in peaceful procession through the streets; in truth, that a man might walk through a menagerie of wild beasts with raw meat in his hands if he would, and that it was the duty of the keeper to see that no harm came of it. But the keeper was on the side of the tigers, and said to the man: "You must not carry out your purpose—if you do—well—you shall not." A law was found which the keeper's, that is the Mayor's friends told him bore upon the question,—a law which was made to suppress certain disloyal Societies after the Rebellion in 1837. The legal opinion given was perhaps as startling as legal opinion ever was or can be; for it is plain, to most of the laity at least, that if the Act, 10th chap. C. S. of L. C., applies to the Orangemen, so might it also to the Jesuits. What a mercy if it should be found that the opinion is sound in law; for we shall have done with Orangeism and Jesuitry. But on that opinion the Mayor issued a proclamation which seemed to make for peace—for it was against all gatherings in crowds. The Mayor felt himself quite equal to the occasion, and declared in effect that he would protect everybody and arrest everybody, and generally do things on a grand scale. The Mayor made it evident from the beginning that he was first of all a Catholic, and as such opposed to Orangeism—then, that he had some clever schemers at his elbow who were supplying his own unfortunate lack of brains—and then, that he needed no one to help him to play the part of a demagogue. The Orangemen were

allowed to assemble in their Hall to the tune of some two or three hundred, and they were caught like a rat in a trap. They could only come into the street two and two—and there was the Mayor with his Special Constables ready, and more than willing, to cudgel any man who wore the yellow into better manners.

HOW THE LAW WAS CARRIED OUT.

The proclamation was to the effect that no crowds would be allowed to gather "in the streets or elsewhere in the city,"—"elsewhere" being made to mean the Orange Hall, evidently, for many peaceful citizens were, by the police, forbidden entrance to the hall. But the rowdies of the city knew their man, and were sure that the Mayor would not be hard upon his friends. Nor was he. From early morning angry crowds began to gather in the streets, some threatening death to the Orangemen if they should attempt to walk, and others threatening war upon the whole Protestant community in general. For hours not an effort was made to disperse the mobs. The Mayor professed to be sublimely ignorant that any crowd had gathered; when told the fact, lifted up his eyes, and said, "That is in defiance of my proclamation." But the Mayor knew well enough that a mad mob had gathered, and he wanted them there, and did not want to disperse them; they suited his purpose of intimidating the Orangemen; else why did he mount the steps to the Orange Hall, and tell them if they would go "individually" to church—without a procession, without regalia of any kind—he would at once disperse the mob? The Mayor was not only allowing an illegal gathering in the streets, but was using that to coerce the Orangemen.

But the Special Constables were the feature that attracted most attention in the whole affair. They were five hundred in all, and were taken from the lowest and worst ranks of the citizens. Some were Irish Catholic Union men, who yet swore roundly that they did not belong to a secret society; they say a few were Orangemen; and it is certain that some of them not long ago were unwilling servants of the State, dressing and eating at the public expense. But they were Special Constables, and made much of the office. As a band of Volunteers was passing, a Special struck one of them over the head with his baton; he was arrested, and at once dismissed by the civil authorities.

The Specials were stationed in front of the Orange Hall—not to keep the peace, but to break it. They understood that no Orangeman should be allowed on the streets wearing regalia, and if any should attempt to break that peculiar law, their duty was, not to restrain the mob from acts of violence, and not to arrest the offending wearers of yellow, but to beat those same with their batons until they gave up the yellow, or life. A youth was foolish enough to leave the hall and walk out into the street with his rosette on, and he was set upon at once and clubbed—by the mob? oh no! by the Special Constables, and this under the eyes of the Mayor. They didn't arrest him—made no effort at that—only smashed him in a general and indiscriminating way.

An attempt was made to clear the crowd on St. James Street: the Specials came on, led by Mr. McNamee, a Magistrate. Some of the Specials were drunk—one of them struck an unoffending citizen—he was seized by the regular police and marched to Mr. McNamee, who put him to work on the other side of the street. He repeated the offence, striking another citizen—was seized again and brought to Mr. McNamee, who sent him to the lock-up, of course? Oh, no—only home, or off into the crowd to do the same kind of work—less the Special. And so it went on—a demonstration that the Mayor, with a lawless mob at his back, was ruling the city. But for the presence of the military there would have been wild riot and murder. The Mayor tried to ignore the military,—sneered at their presence. When addressing the crowd, declared that he had not brought them; but all who watched the proceedings of the day must be sure that to the soldiers we owe our safety. The Orangemen were intimidated by the mob, and the mob was kept under by the soldiers. As for the Mayor, every action of his was marked by intolerance and knavery. All that he understood of the situation was that he was Mayor, and that for those others—well, as he said in his address to the mob: they might keep the peace "by remaining at home, which is the birth-right of every citizen." The Orangemen were prevented from walking by sheer brute force. They were shut up in the hall and threatened—not with arrest—not with legal proceedings—but with maltreatment at the hands of a mob, led by the Mayor and his rascally Specials. That is how the law was kept in Bedlam on the twelfth.

THE SITUATION NOW.

The trouble is begun but not ended. The Mayor succeeded in making it a question of Catholic against Protestant—for everything was done in the interest of one and in defiance of the other. The meeting of the Magistrates—the Mayor's proclamation—the class of men sworn in as special constables—the mob, and the use the Mayor made of them, all declared, in a way not to be mistaken, that the majority had entered upon a war against the minority. It is