

The True Witness.

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NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE past week has not been prolific of great events. The crisis however rapidly approaches, and the last blow against the independence of the Sovereign Pontiff will soon be dealt.

The Austrians are concentrating their forces in Venetia, and a conflict seems imminent. In France the noble hearted Bishop of Poitiers has been sentenced by the Council of State to be reprimanded for his late Mandement, but that Prelate is not one who is likely to be very much discouraged by the frowns of "Jack-in-Office."

The Bishop of Orleans—had no explanations to offer upon the subject. This instance of Protestant mendacity, and of Protestant gullibility, set all Paris laughing, and will, we suppose, be a warning to evangelical men not again to venture upon detailed reports of a Catholic Bishop's sermon, until they be fairly assured that the said sermon has actually been delivered.

The last accounts from the United States would seem to indicate the speedy outbreak of hostilities betwixt the contending parties.

REVIVALS AND THEIR FRUITS.—It is laid to our charge by Mr. McGee, that we have said:—

"That brothels and meeting houses are filled alike by the operation of the same cause."

In making this charge against us Mr. McGee was guilty, to use the mildest form of expression, of a wilful and deliberate falsehood, for he has carefully left out two most important words, which qualify the whole sentence, and affect its entire meaning.

"The revival mania has driven thousands to the one, and filled the other with blaspheming maniacs."—True Witness, Jan. 11th, 1860.

The words marked in Italics Mr. McGee has omitted; and had he been intent upon truth, rather than upon creating Protestant prejudices against a Catholic journalist, he would have contented himself with accusing us of having asserted:—

"That the same cause (the revival mania) which had filled the meeting-houses with blaspheming maniacs had filled the brothels."

Thus stated, the assertion of the TRUE WITNESS is literally true, and we are about to substantiate its truth by Protestant testimony. Our thesis is this—that the revival mania, has filled the meeting houses with blaspheming maniacs, and driven thousands to the vice of impurity; and the argument which we would thence deduce is this—that Protestants, seeing the disastrous results of religious excitement upon their own people, should be very careful not to expose Papists to similar noxious influences.

The intimate connection betwixt misdirected religious enthusiasm—and all religious enthusiasm or excitement outside of the Catholic Church, and therefore not subject to her control, must be

misdirected—and certain sins of impurity, has often been remarked by Protestant writers, as a curious but constant psychological phenomenon. This, the Protestant historian Robertson, treating of the sects which swarmed into existence at the first outbreak of the great apostasy of the XVI. century, recognises as striking characteristic of the Protestant Reformation, and its leaders:—

"As the excesses of enthusiasm have been observed in every age to lead to sensual gratifications, the same constitution that is susceptible of the former, being remarkably prone to the latter, he (Boccolini) instructed the prophets and teachers to harangue the people for several days concerning the lawfulness and even necessity of taking more wives than one, which they asserted to be one of the privileges granted by God to the Saints."

In colors almost as black as these in which Robertson has depicted the results of the misdirected enthusiasms of the anabaptists, has the modern Protestant journalist painted the consequences of the "revival mania." Nor is this to be wondered at, for like causes will still have like effects, and the excesses of misdirected religious enthusiasm lead in every age, and in every land, to bestiality, to sensual gratification, and to insanity.

We will begin with a sketch of a Protestant Revival in Jamaica, taken from a Protestant paper, and by us clipped from a late number of the Dublin Telegraph:—

THE REVIVALS IN JAMAICA.—The mass of the labouring population of the parishes of St. Elizabeth, Westmoreland, and St. James and other districts, rapidly went beside themselves with fanatic fervour. The grotesque action of the howling derisives of India was light in comparison; women were seen destroying furniture, clothes, throwing away their beads, and trinkets, even money, as the avowed wages of sin, in order to avert the impending wrath of Heaven.

The next witness whom we call into Court is the Dublin correspondent of the London Times, whose evidence upon the subject of the rapid and truly awful increase of insanity in the North of Ireland, and in the districts where the "revival mania" chiefly raged, is quite appalling, and will be found amongst our Irish items. This witness tells us that the increase of lunacy in the North of Ireland is exciting such general attention, that remonstrances have been addressed to the Belfast Grand Jury upon the want of sufficient accommodation for lunatics.

gails and workhouses as there are in the asylum. These hideous facts are all attested to by official and Protestant testimony, and we leave our readers to make their own comments upon them.

The connection betwixt this increase of lunacy and revivalism, or the tendency of the "revival mania to fill the meeting-houses with blaspheming maniacs," was recognised at the very outbreak of the disease in Belfast. In September 1859, the Northern Whig, Protestant, announced the fact that already there had been lodged in the Belfast Asylum and County Gaol no less than twenty-two lunatics from Larne alone; at the same time, the Belfast Mercury, another Protestant journal, invoked the aid of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian sect, in order that "the awful blasphemy and folly now indulged in may be authoritatively put down;" and the same Protestant witness, describing the scenes that nightly occurred in the meeting-houses where these blaspheming maniacs assembled, employed language fully as strong as that which Mr. McGee condemns in the TRUE WITNESS:—

SCENES AT A PROTESTANT REVIVAL.—"To such audacity has the blasphemy ascended that girls have been, and are being, exhibited in Belfast and elsewhere, who pretend they have been miraculously tattooed on their bosoms."—Belfast Mercury.

The Northern Whig, also Protestant, mentions similar, and still more beastly instances of the blasphemy and indecency of the raging maniacs with whom, during the "revival mania," the meeting-houses were filled. Women "took the revivals" and displayed their naked bodies to the admiring worshippers, covered over with "biblical truths," and the sacred name of Christ; young men were similarly affected; and the result of these filthy exhibitions may be easily imagined, but, for decency's sake, we will not attempt to describe them.

We next call Archdeacon Stopford into Court, and examine him as to the moral effects of the Belfast Revivals; and this Protestant clergyman and dignitary of the Anglican church, more than confirms every word of the TRUE WITNESS.—His evidence will be found at length in our issue of the 30th September, 1859, and his language, in speaking of the interior of a Presbyterian "meeting-house" at revival time, was simply this:—

"This was the most frightful scene I have witnessed in life. . . . No such scene would be permitted in any Bedlam upon earth."

Here we must pause, but we trust that every candid person will admit that, upon Protestant testimony, we have established our first proposition, viz., that the revival mania has filled the meeting-houses with blaspheming maniacs; we will now pass on to our second proposition—that it has also greatly increased the vice of impurity, or in other words, that it has sent thousands to the brothels.

Remembering that impurity has in all ages been the invariable consequence of all misdirected religious enthusiasm—that at the revival meetings, young women in hysterics, or "who had lost their strength," as the cant phrase is, were carried off in the arms of young men, and that scenes like the following, described by a dignitary of the Anglican church, Archdeacon Stopford, were of constant occurrence—

"this girl was about fifteen years of age, or, perhaps, a year or two older. She was seated on a form, reclining in the arms of a coarse young man about twenty years of age; he was no relation of hers, being ignorant of her name and residence. . . . In this small room and gathered closely around her, were eight or ten young women, some of whom, perhaps all, had lately been hysterical, and two or three young men (not related to her) of whom one at least had been lately hysterical too—no elderly woman was there, nor any elderly man."

Remembering, we say, that this was a common revival scene, and that the effects of "being stricken" were so notoriously to render the victim an easy prey to seduction as to have tempted Protestant Ministers to avail themselves of the opportunity to accomplish the ruin of the young female lambs of their flocks, from whence legal proceedings have ensued—remembering these things, all established by Protestant testimony, we need not be surprised at the following statements of the Protestant Northern Whig, with respect to the effects of the "revival" excitement in Ireland:—

"In May commenced the revivals, spreading and widening, and overrunning the country with their infectious violence up till the present time; and now let us see how far they have been promotive of peace, social well-being, and a healthy tone of morality. In the four months from May to August 1859, the number of prisoners brought before the magistrates of Belfast amounted to 3,457; whilst in the same four months of this year (1859) the number of parties, male and female, sentenced to punishment for being drunk and disorderly ran up to the goodly sum total of 2,929—being an increase of no fewer than 492 offenders against God and man in the months during which the "religious manifestations" were in full swing! Is not this a most suggestive fact? Night after night are our places of worship filled with young men and women, prebowed, thimbered at, frightened out of their senses by threats of eternal condemnation, and lurid visions of a place of torment; and night after night is our police office filled, as a sort of compensatory retribution, and crowded with 'drunk and disorderly' inmates."

The same Protestant authority thus continues his hideous details:—

"The numbers are weekly increasing; and yet we are told that Belfast is becoming a very Eden of innocence—a temple wherein morality, and goodness, and household amenities are enthroned and

honored. But we see no proof of these things—we firmly believe none can be found. We have shown, by unquestionable returns, that the Sabbath Day is now more desecrated than it has been for years—that drunkenness and uncleanness of every description are on the increase; that immorality of a revolting nature is to be seen nightly in our streets. We believe that the same may be said of crime throughout the country—not merely in some of its rural districts, but in the very localities where these, Revivals first sprung up, and are now culminating into the most absurd extravagances, and the most melancholy delusions."

Here again is the evidence of the Nervy Examiner as to the moral effects of Revivalism:—"Belfast, judging from its many houses of worship, ought to be one of the most moral towns of Ireland, but from the revelations about the Menagerie and other dens of crime and infamy which flourish there, it is clearly the reverse; and only helps to confirm the sneer of the infidel about the church being near whilst God is far away."

Another Protestant witness, a correspondent of the Northern Whig, writes as follows from Carrickfergus:—"I state from my own knowledge, there are fourteen young women here at present who were victims to the 'Revival movement,' to whom the results have been in the worst form that calamity can happen to an unmarried female."

But we dare not longer trespass on the patience of our readers. We have shown, and by Protestant testimony, that the effects of the revival mania have been to produce scenes in the "meeting house" which would not be "permitted in any Bedlam upon earth;" to increase immorality of the most revolting nature, and to swell the numbers of illegitimate births. Had we not therefore the right to say of it, in connection with the "meeting-houses" and the Belfast "brothels," that it had filled the one with "blaspheming maniacs," and had "driven thousands to the other?" The truth may be unpalatable, perhaps to Mr. McGee's new found friends; but that is no reason why the TRUE WITNESS should hesitate to publish it, or to employ it as an argument against the designs of the "Souperers" upon the faith of the Papists of Ireland and Lower Canada. Yes—we repeat it deliberately—the result of Protestant religious excitement has been to fill the "meeting-houses with blaspheming maniacs, and to drive thousands to the brothels;" therefore do we earnestly, and on good grounds, protest against subjecting Papists to the same morally corrupting, and intellectually degrading process; and to enforce our argument, we point to the overflowing lunatic asylums of Belfast, to the worse than Bedlam extravagances of the Protestant "meeting houses," and to the "uncleanness of every description, and to the immorality of a revolting nature," which Protestants themselves assure us, have flowed from the Ulster "Revivals."

We have said, in fact, nothing but what has been said before us on the same subject, by Protestant journalists, by Protestant clergymen, by the highest dignitaries of the Anglican establishment,—and yet for this have we been taken to task by one who knows that he is unable to impugn the truth of our premises, or to contest the soundness of our conclusions. A professed Catholic appeals to Protestant prejudice against a Catholic journalist whom his calumniator cannot in any single instance convict of the slightest error, either in his facts, or in his reasonings—with what objects we leave it to an intelligent and impartial Catholic public to determine.—Begging of our Catholic readers to lay aside for the moment all political or national predilections, which can but distort the vision, obscure the intellect, and pervert the judgment, we call upon them to show wherein the TRUE WITNESS has failed in his duty as a Catholic journalist, for adducing as an argument against "Souperism," or Protestant proselytism, the disastrous moral results of Protestant "Revivals;" and if the TRUE WITNESS has said nothing but what is strictly true, and has availed himself of none but valid and legitimate arguments against the moral dangers of "Souperism"—what, we ask, should Catholics think of him who, to curry favor with the enemies of their faith, with the incessant and unscrupulous slanders of their Church, their Clergy, and their Sisters of Charity, appeals to Protestant prejudice against the Catholic journalist, whose only fault is that he speaks the truth boldly, and that he makes no secret of his contempt for all time-servers, place-beggars and office-hunters?

SWINDLING MADE LEGAL.—A measure for legalising swindling, and for enabling unscrupulous debtors to cheat their creditors with the sanction of law, is, it would appear, about to be submitted to the Legislature, and for the especial benefit of the people of Upper Canada, from whose Creed the article "I believe in paying my debts" has apparently been expunged. We are well pleased to see that a powerful, and logical writer in the Montreal Gazette takes up his parable against the contemplated legislative iniquity.

Too great, far too great, facilities already exist in both sections of the Province, for legal swindling; and in both sections of the Province, and amongst men of all denominations, thousands are to be found greedily availing themselves of these facilities for robbing and cheating their creditors. We say robbing—because we can see no moral difference betwixt the burglar or pick-pocket, and him who withholds the payment of debts which he is able to pay, or who wilfully

contracts debts which he knows he has not the means of paying. There is many a man who pretends to hold his head high in society, and who would deem himself grossly wronged if branded as a cheat, who is, after all, no better than the vilest knave in the Provincial Penitentiary; and it is perhaps partly to the facilities which the law already gives for withholding the payment of debts, that the defective moral sense which tolerates the fraudulent bankrupt, and the scoundrel who laughs at the remonstrances of his creditors, is owing. To be troubled with "duress" is not looked upon as it should be, as a disgrace of the deepest dye; and the fellow already over head and ears in debt, who pays nobody, who avails himself of every legal artifice to withhold from his creditors their due, and who goes about daily contracting fresh debts which he never intends to pay, is not, as he should be, scouted from society as morally on a par with the meanest of thieves, but is actually tolerated, and respected if he has but a good address, and a good coat on his back. The law sends the poor wretch who steals a morsel of bread to stay the cries of a starving child to the Penitentiary; but the black-hearted scoundrel who ruins tradesmen, and by means of credit, defrauds every body, escapes altogether unwhipt of justice.

We believe in no religion which does not inculcate as a primary duty the obligation of paying one's debts, and of contracting no debts without a reasonable prospect of being able to pay them; and for this reason, and regarding the proposed Bankrupt Law not from a "business" but from a religious stand point, we fear that it will but increase an evil already too prevalent amongst us. The question is however, a very difficult one; for the problem to be solved is this—How to give every indulgence to the honest but unfortunate debtor, but at the same time to prevent the dishonest from taking advantage of the law to defraud his creditors. To fulfil both these requirements is, we admit, no easy matter for the legislator; and it is because it is so, that we would evoke in his aid, and as a powerful auxiliary to law, a vigorous and healthy moral sentiment against the dishonest debtor—who if the principles of Christianity were carried into "business" would be treated by society as the forger, the pickpocket, and the house breaker are dealt with.

We rejoice therefore to see the subject taken up, and treated in a proper spirit by our Protestant cotemporaries; and we congratulate the Montreal Gazette in particular, upon the good logic, and sound ethics of its correspondent Anti-Gambler.—In Canada it is not a law for the benefit of debtors that is wanted, but a stringent law for the severe and degrading punishment of fraudulent debtors—and we call every man a "fraudulent debtor" who does not give up the last penny he has in the world to his creditors, or who avails himself of any legal process to evade the equitable claims of the latter. The fraudulent debtor should be punished as a criminal; and the more degrading the punishment inflicted upon him, the better would it suit the meanness of his offence.

It is to be feared indeed, that unless some such steps be taken, "repudiation"—to use a favorite Yankee term for swindling—will ere long be a practice essentially Canadian; and therefore, so far from yielding to the clamors of the knaves who cheat their creditors, by relaxing the laws in behalf of debtors, we should endeavor to augment the rigor of our code, by extending the benefit of the Penitentiary and the whipping post to the class for whose especial benefit, the proposed Bankruptcy Law is designed. God forbid that we should seem to bear hard upon the poorest man, willing, struggling, but unable to pay his debts! but for the class so graphically described in the subjoined, by the Gazette's correspondent, we have no pity, and to them the law should show no mercy:—

There are several classes requiring a Bankrupt Law. First, an immense number of individuals who in years past have managed to lose, squander, or eat up all the property advanced to them by creditors, and who are willing to pay into court as much money as will defray the law expenses, provided they can obtain a full discharge. Doubtless these people are to be commiserated. The bread-crust and silks of better days have grown thread-bare and rusty; but if, for their better appearance in society a release from debts they can never pay, be necessary, might not a special Act be passed, exempting from debt all the broken-down aristocrats specially named therein, without opening a door of privilege to plebeians? Or, since this class will, like the Grand Trunk, ever require "further relief," might it not save trouble to enact that they shall be entitled to walk clear of debt, every fifth or tenth year.

Second, is another class of debtors, who, having secreted property for a long time, imagine it no longer belongs to their creditors; and who see clearly that forms of a Bankrupt Law will discharge them from debt, and enable them thereafter to enjoy this property openly.

Third, are those who look on the fine things to be got through debt, as a cunning rat sees toasted cheese through the door of a trap. It is easy to get in, but not so easy to get out; and, therefore, the temptation is avoided. A Bankrupt Law is an open door at the other end of the trap. Where one exists nobody need fear "embarrassments." He may buy everything that anybody has to sell, at any price, on any terms, and play out the game of "heads I win, tails you lose." If after a short race real creditors will not put him into the Bankrupt Court, fictitious creditors will, and carry him through. He will buy all his assets and outstanding debts for trifle, obtain his discharge; and being thus made rich, not be fraud, but by operation of law becomes greatly "respectable" in proportion to the greatness of the rascality.

"If we had only another Hogarth to paint the 'progress,' no Bankrupt Law could stand a week's remount after the pictures were distributed. First might be 'He seeks for credit.' Second 'He obtains it.' Third 'He sets up a carriage.' Fourth 'His family in church.' Fifth 'He gives a ball.' Sixth 'He speculates in stocks and produce.' Seventh 'He goes into the Bankrupt Court.' Eighth 'He comes out of the Bankrupt Court.' Ninth 'His splendid mansion, and magnificent accessories.'—Cor. Montreal Gazette