

The True Witness

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JULY 3, 1857.

The editor of the True Witness trusts that any errors in the present issue may be attributed to, and excused because of, his absence from town for a few days.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The Indian arrived at Quebec on Saturday last having made the trip from Liverpool in the short space of nine days and six hours; another proof of the superiority of the St. Lawrence route. The news brought out by her and the Niagara, is of very little public importance.

In the House of Lords, the Bill, in reference to Ministers' Money in Ireland, was, after a warm debate, ordered to be read a second time, by a majority of 101 to 96.

The Oaths' Bill is strongly opposed by the Catholic Members of Parliament, who very properly regard it as a practical re-enactment of an oath which, even by Protestants, is admitted to be grossly insulting, and one that no Catholic should be required to take.

The Corporation of Dublin have protested against the extinction of the Irish Viceroyalty.

In France the Government candidates are certain of re-election. It is rumoured that Napoleon will pay another visit to the Queen, and that the Empress is again in an interesting situation.

In Russia the Cholera is raging with great violence, and so also is the yellow fever in Montevideo.

FEARFUL STEAMBOAT DISASTER ON THE ST. LAWRENCE, ON FRIDAY, 26TH JUNE.

About six weeks ago, 300 persons took shipping from Scotland in the ship John McKenzie, which sailed from the Clyde, Glasgow, for Canada; and after a successful voyage across the Atlantic, arrived in the port of Quebec, where the anchors of the good ship which carried them through every danger so successfully were no sooner cast, than they were transferred to the steamer Montreal. To them the work of disembarkation is a labor of love; for they are impatient to arrive at their journey's end. Most, if not all of them, know that kind friends are waiting to bid them welcome, to what they looked forward to as the "land of promise;" and every minute they are detained, seems as if it were the length of an hour. Their suspense, however, is of short duration: the last bell is rung, and the Captain gives the word, "haul in the gangway;" and in one minute more the steamer is seen gliding through the tranquil waters of the river St. Lawrence, at the rate of ten or twelve knots an hour. Now all is joy and gladness; little incidents connected with the voyage are playfully discussed, and many a hearty wish expressed, that the friends they left behind them knew of their safe arrival. On, on, they go, wondering at the wild and romantic scenery which they see on every side of them. Now they pass Cape Rouge, just 12 miles from Quebec, when suddenly a cry of "fire" is raised.—In an instant, they rush to the spot from which it is seen to issue. Bucket after bucket of water is hastily thrown upon the devouring element; but all to no purpose—the vessel was built to burn. Despite of every human effort, the terrible blaze rises higher and higher, as if in mockery of all human power to check its devastating progress. Fore and aft, above and below, it continues to rage, until it has fully asserted its supremacy, and taken entire possession of the ill-fated steamer. All hope is gone. The merry laugh that was heard but a moment before, is turned into an agonising shriek. Fathers and mothers, made frantic by the piteous cries of their helpless children to save them, are rushing madly and wildly through the burning flames in search of the sweet cherubs, who, but a minute since, were nestling with fond curiosity upon their bosoms. But alas! their cries avail but little; for already many of these heartbroken and distracted parents are becoming powerless; the nearer they advance to the rescue, the more rapidly the fearful blaze curls around them. It is however the work of a moment; for the hands that were outstretched to protect the innocent little darlings drop down, either burned or paralysed by the terror of the attempts. But still there are a large number left whom the fiery element has not, as yet, been able to reach, and they, rather than become the victims of its unrelenting fury, prefer meeting with a watery grave. Determined that even the certainty of death shall not separate them, they cling to each other with devoted fondness, until they are forced to make the last fearful jump into the rolling deep; but now the struggle for life is short; nature is already exhausted, and hundreds sink within a stone's throw of the shore—never, never, to rise to life in this world again.

Such, reader, was the fate of at least 250, if not 300, of the passengers taken on board of the "fire-steamer" Montreal. And such also would have been the fate of the saved, were it not that fifty of them contrived to swim ashore, while the

rest we believe, 119 in number, were picked up by the Captain and crew of the Napoleon, who were fortunately near enough at the moment to render timely assistance.

Never, never, before has such a terrible calamity befallen us, nor one which has excited more sincere sympathy, or more real sorrow. We need scarcely say, that everything which could mitigate the grief, or relieve the distress of the sufferers, has been carefully and promptly attended to. The living have been provided with every comfort, which the charity of our national Societies, and the well known benevolence of our private citizens, could suggest; whilst the bodies of the dead, so far recovered, have been deposited in their last resting place, with becoming solemnity. But, we must not stop here, for there is yet a great deal to be accomplished, before the public are satisfied, or the character of our noble river restored. No matter whether this terrible catastrophe was the result of gross ignorance, of malconstruction of the steamer Montreal, or criminal neglect on the part of the Captain who had the management of her, we must know the worst, and that speedily, if we wish to apply a remedy to prevent similar recurrences. Apologise for, or smooth over, the misfortune we dare not, for the issue at stake is too important to be lightly dealt with. In common however with our contemporaries, we will at the present stage of judicial proceedings, forbear from making any remarks calculated to prejudice the case of the accused, now upon their preliminary trial, before the Coroner's Jury.

Indeed at the present moment, there is excitement enough to justify a temperate course upon the part of every person, and as we feel it would but be adding "fuel to the flame," to say more upon the subject, at the present moment we will await the finding of the inquest, upon which all eyes are now turned, before we proceed to pronounce upon the guilt, or innocence of the parties implicated. Of one thing however the readers of the TRUE WITNESS may rest assured, that we will fearlessly do our duty in the premises, and not permit the subject (if we can prevent it) to die away, like any other nine-days' wonder. In this enquiry, the rich and the poor, are alike interested in using every means within their power, to avert such another calamity, and certainly with the fearful example now before us, we would be unworthy of the name of Christians, were we to stop short, before we have accomplished all that human science, can do or the ingenuity of man can devise to afford the utmost protection to the travellers, who, having a right to rely, upon our watchfulness over all our public conveyances, confidently commit their lives and properties to our safe keeping, and it is to be hoped in future we may be able to add, our unerring guardianship.

ENGLISH AND IRISH CRIME.

This is the heading of an article in the last number of the Dublin Review, in which the criminal statistics of England and Wales, for a series of years, are contrasted with the criminal statistics of Ireland for the same period of time; with the view of meeting the popular Protestant objections against the moral influence of Catholicity upon its professors; and of vindicating the people of Ireland from the calumnies, a hundred times refuted, but as oft reiterated against them, by the prejudiced, and conceited Anglo-Saxon. As the argument of the Reviewer, and the facts by him adduced in support thereof, are interesting to the Catholic in general, as well as to the Irish Catholic in particular, we think that our readers will feel obliged to us for reproducing, in substance, the article whose title we have given above.

It is evident however that any argument for, or against, the religion of any community, and based upon its criminal statistics, must be, but of little value, unless we take also into consideration the peculiar political and social position of that community; as these must always have an important effect in determining, not only the amount, but the particular direction of its crime.

In a Catholic country, for instance, under a Protestant Government, and governed with the view of imposing upon the great majority of its people, a form of religion upon which the latter look with unspeakable disgust, and of maintaining the political and social ascendancy of a Protestant minority, we may expect that a certain description of crimes—such as crimes against person, violent resistance to the execution of the laws, and all quasi-political offences generally—will be more rife, than in a Catholic country, under a Catholic Government; or, vice versa, in a Protestant community under a Protestant Government. And again, if that Protestant minority, to secure whose ascendancy is the object of the Protestant rulers of the Catholic country, be aliens in blood, and language, as well as in religion, to the Catholic majority, the chances that the passions of the oppressed majority will often find vent in deeds of bloody violence, are greatly increased; but, of course, it would not thence follow that their religion, either by its positive teachings, or by its inefficiency to suppress such crimes, should be held accountable for what is in fact the immediate, and indeed, inevitable consequence of the anomalous political and social condition to which its professors have been reduced by the unprincipled tyranny, and rapacity of their Protestant rulers. These self-evident facts, which Protestants almost invariably overlook, should however always be borne in mind, when contrasting "English and Irish Crime;" with the view of thence concluding to

the comparative effects of Catholicity and Protestantism upon the morality of their respective professors. Let us take a case in point.

Had the Stuarts, for instance, been successful in their efforts to impose Episcopacy, with the peculiar doctrines and practices of the Anglican Church, upon the people of Scotland; if the great majority of the people of Scotland had, notwithstanding, remained firm in their attachment to the Presbyterian form of worship, and in consequence of that fidelity been deprived for many generations, of all political privileges, of all civil and religious liberty; if their religion had been proscribed, and their ministers banished from their manse; their kirks seized upon by a brutal soldiery in the name of an intrusive and obnoxious curate whom they were obliged to support, though his person and his office were alike loathsome to them; if their lands had been confiscated by the Southren Episcopal invader; and they themselves, the ancient nobles and hereditary proprietors of the soil, been reduced to the alternative of exile, or of becoming the mere tenants at will of the foreigners who had proscribed their Church, persecuted its ministers and despoiled them of their birthright; if for many generations Scotland had been governed by English Episcopals, and with the sole view of perpetuating English Episcopal ascendancy, we should have had in Scotland a faint transcript of what has been and still is, the political and social condition of the people of Ireland. No doubt also, from time to time, we should have been startled with tales of midnight violence, and brutal massacres; we should have been told of horrid conspiracies amongst the Presbyterians of Scotland against their Episcopalian lords and masters. Combinations against paying the curate his tithes, and the foreign landlord his rents, would have been of every day occurrence; murders would have been common; and the people, unable to obtain protection from the laws imposed upon them expressly for their degradation, would have been apt to have had recourse to the wild justice of revenge. Such we think every impartial person who has any knowledge of our common nature—every student of history, who remembers the tragic end of Archbishop Sharpe, and the countenance given to his slayers by the persecuted Covenanters—will admit would have been, without any impeachment upon the morality of the Presbyterian Church, the condition of Protestant Scotland. It is not therefore to be wondered at, if the actual political and social condition of the Catholic majority of Ireland, has produced the same results in that country which would have flowed from the success of the Stuarts to impose Episcopacy upon the Presbyterian majority of Scotland.

And then, the daily insults, harder to bear even than the positive injuries, which such an anomalous state of society necessarily engenders, must be taken into consideration. Let us suppose Episcopalianism rampant in Scotland, and the National kirk trampled under the hoofs of Claverhouse's dragoons; the hatred of the oppressed Presbyterians towards their oppressors may easily be imagined. But if to these we add—"Secret Societies," with their annual public processions in commemoration of the overthrow of Scotland's liberties, and the persecution of her clergy—banners—toasts and public harangues, in honor of "the pious and immortal memory" of—say the "bloody Dalziel" or the rapacious Lauderdale—and consigning the General Assembly to hell—together with the other devices wherewith the Orangemen annually celebrate the conquest of Ireland by the Dutch under the Prince of Orange—it needs no seer to assure us that insults such as these would have provoked revenge, often dark and bloody: and that secret organizations for the maintenance of Episcopalian ascendancy, would have been followed by secret organizations for its overthrow. For it is ever of the nature of wrong to beget wrong.

Now let us be just towards Ireland; remembering that all that we have supposed in the case of Scotland, has in the case of Ireland actually occurred; and thus remembering this, we shall be the more ready to attribute the deeds of blood which have often stained the pages of the history of the last named country, to their legitimate cause. That is not to any inherent depravity in the Irish national character, not to any defects in their religious system, or the teachings of their Church; but to the unjustifiable attempt of a foreign Protestant country to impose its laws and its religion upon its weaker neighbor. Knowing as we do the history of Ireland; its long protracted agony of persecution, and the cruel insolvency of its alien oppressors, we take up its criminal statistics with the natural expectation of finding recorded therein a far greater amount of crimes of violence, of assaults, murders, and conspiracies to kill, than falls to the lot of its more equitably governed neighbor. In this natural expectation, however, we are most agreeably disappointed.

The latest criminal statistics of the British Empire, as yet published, are for the year 1854; the population of England and Wales being according to the census of 1851, 17,922,768; and that of Ireland for the same year, 6,515,792. From these statistics it would appear that out of the former population one person in 782 was convicted of crime during the year 1854; and out of the other, one, in 928. It must also be borne in mind, that owing to the superior effi-

ciency of the Police in Ireland, undetected crimes, or crimes whose perpetrators manage to evade the vigilance of the law, are far more rare than in England and Wales, or indeed in any part of Her Majesty's dominions. Of Ireland we know the worst; of its wealthy neighbor, a great portion of the criminality remains undetected, unconvicted, unwhipped of justice, and till the great day of general retribution, unavenged. This premised, we will proceed to give a brief analysis of the sentences pronounced upon offenders in the two countries; from which we shall be able to arrive at a conclusion not only as to the numbers but the criminality, of the persons convicted.

During the year 1854 the following sentences were passed.

Table with columns for England and Wales, and Ireland, listing various sentences like Death, Transportation, Imprisonment, Whipped, fined, and discharged, and Sentence respited.

Total, 23,047 for England and Wales, 7,051 for Ireland.

From the above table carefully compiled from official documents, it plainly appears, that in respect to their respective populations—England not only enjoys the honor, such as it is, of furnishing by far the greater number of criminals, but that the offences of the Protestant country are of a far more serious character. This is strongly brought out by the Dublin Reviewer from whose article we shall lay some more extracts before our readers in a future number.

EXETER HALL.

We learn from our English exchanges, that a new light has dawned upon the "Law Established Church;" and that Protestant Bishops and Ministers have all at once discovered what the rest of the world knew long before, that in evangelical London, and other large cities in England and Ireland, the great mass of the people of Protestant birth never enter a Protestant Church; and for this amongst other good reasons, that they are too luxurious, and are only visited by those who go there, not for religion's sake; but because it is desirable to be seen in such places, where the most elegant taste, and latest fashion, can be displayed to the greatest possible advantage. To remedy this evil, Exeter Hall has been engaged by a company of associated Evangelisers, and other large hearted laymen, under the sanction of the Bishop of London. The engagement is confined to twelve Sundays, and as many sermons, which, it is hoped, will be amply sufficient to dethrone his satanic Majesty, and to regenerate the Protestants, whose hearts and souls are corrupted by long years of sinning and neglect. But as we have not the same faith in the efficacy of the twelve sermons, we are still inclined to think that the Protestant poor, who have been so long abandoned and so unconsciously expelled from their churches, to make way for the titled Aristocrat, the man of gold, and the lady of fashion, will not be so readily turned aside from guilty pursuits, or so easily made to respect the commandments of God, whom, thousands of them have never yet been taught to know. We observe, however, that notwithstanding the miraculous success, which it is pompously announced will follow the delivery of the twelve sermons, the High Church party are terribly indignant at this new Exeter Hall movement, which they regard as a prostitution of Episcopal dignity, and one highly offensive to churchmen; so much so indeed, that it was deemed expedient, to discuss the subject in the House of Lords, and by explanation to try and calm the excitement which it had occasioned. The discussion elicited the following remarks from the speakers who debated the question:—

Viscount Duncannon said seeing the right rev. prelate who presided over the diocese of London in his place, he wished to put a question to him of which he had given him notice. Paragraphs had appeared in the public papers to the effect that Sunday evening discourses were in the course of delivery at Exeter-hall, and were to be continued, in which two right reverend prelates and other dignitaries have announced their intention to take part; and in some of these paragraphs it was stated that the proceedings were very offensive to many churchmen, and regarded by them as the introduction of Spurgeonism into the church. He was not aware that Exeter hall had ever been consecrated, or even licensed for the performance of divine worship. The whole thing was certainly new and singular.

The Bishop of London said he did not know whether he should be in order in answering such a question—(cheers)—but he was quite prepared to give all the explanation that he could. There could be no doubt that such a meeting as the noble lord referred to did take place in Exeter-hall last Sunday evening, and that it was intended that such meetings should be continued for several Sundays. (The Bishop of London) would add, that not only did he consider such meetings legal, but he also considered them in the highest degree expedient. (Hear hear). He believed there were hundreds and thousands of persons in this metropolis who had not entered a place of worship for many years—(hear hear)—he believed that some persons of this class were brought to the meetings to which the noble lord had alluded, and he did heartily hope and trust that they did not go there without receiving benefit. (Hear hear).

Lord Kinnaird said, although the question put to the right reverend prelate was an unusual one, he was not sorry it had been put, as it had elicited such an expression of opinion with regard to the meetings in question as their lordships had just heard. (Hear hear). There were thousands in the metropolis and indeed in almost every large town in the country, who never entered the house of God from year's end to year's end. To his mind it appeared a subject for rejoicing to the members of the Established Church

that these meetings in Exeter hall have been commenced. As men of inferiority in dress do not like attending, well filled and luxurious Churches. After some further explanations, the subject dropped within doors; but outside it is fiercely denounced. The John Bull (High Church and Tory paper) thus gives vent to his indignation in an article entitled "Episcopal Spurgeonism":—

"We did not imagine," it says, "that the day would come when we should pity Mr. Spurgeon. But we live in strange times, and strange things come to pass every day. We are sorry, unaffectedly sorry, for the religious lion of the Surrey Gardens, whom, as the Court Circular every now and then informs us, noble earls and magnificent duchesses go to hear, when their Sunday hours hang heavy on their hands and they feel the want of something more plain than those humdrum affairs, simple prayers and sermons. Mr. Spurgeon has made his reputation; he has been a successful man; why should a rival concern be got up to cut him out? Above all, why should the attempt to eclipse him be made in so unfair a manner, by a joint-stock company of religious lions? It was not by shams of this kind that the religious condition of our working population is to be improved; and most sincerely do we regret that members of the Episcopate should mix themselves up with such disorderly and mischievous proceedings."

Thus speaketh honest John Bull of the Exeter Hall services; and never, in the course of his life, did he utter a plainer truth. For, most assuredly, it is not by such "shams," that the thousands of Protestants who have been permitted to live all their life time in the darkest ignorance, will be restored to Christian civilization.

No, no, Gentlemen, of the Establishment, you must, if you are serious, adopt a different course. For instance, let the pride which has frightened the humble artisan of Protestant birth from your church door's be made less obnoxious. Let him feel that he is of divine creation; and that although he should appear clad in the garb of poverty, he will not be ignominiously thrust aside, lest his presence should be offensive to the olefactory nerves of your Lords, Earls, and Duchesses. Try to imitate the example of the Catholic Priest: hurry to his bed side, and let not a fear of carrying away infection in your coat tails, deter you from approaching near enough to convince him of your doubtful presence. In one word, show by good deeds, instead of senseless declamation, your anxiety to withdraw the victims of your shocking neglect, from the degradation into which you have plunged them. Abandon the Exeter Hall platform for a visit to the London garrets and cellars—the abodes of poverty, of vice, and immorality. Recall your army of Souters and lying Missionaries; and in place of expending £40,000 a year, in a vain attempt to reduce the Catholics of Ireland, proverbial for their attachment to the old faith, to the same low standard, as the Protestants of the English Metropolis and elsewhere, let them have the advantage of your spare cash, your tracts, and, above all, the soup, which you may rest assured, will not only be the most acceptable, but the most beneficial of the two. The Catholics of Ireland, as you well know, neither require your money, your advice, or your mutton broth. Remember, too, the prophetic warning of your friend, John Bull, who informs you that it is not by Exeter Hall "shams" the religious condition of the Protestant working population can be improved. Harken to the voice of the House of Lords, who have proclaimed to the world that there are thousands of Protestants who never enter any of your churches. If therefore experience has led you to believe that well made soup is a valuable agent in promoting the Protestant religion, in God's name let your own neglected thousands have a benefit, and a belly-full at once.

LIFE OF THE RT. REV. EDWARD MAGINN, Coadjutor Bishop of Derry.—With selections from his Correspondence, by Thomas D'Arcy M'Gee. New York, P. O'Shea. For sale by D. & J. Sadleir, Montreal.

This is another and a very interesting chapter in the ecclesiastical History of Ireland from the pen of Mr. M'Gee, and as containing the memoirs of a good and zealous priest, may be read with profit by Catholics of all origins. It is urged as a reproach against the Clergy of Ireland that they interfere too much in politics; and Protestants who point with pride to the facts indelibly recorded in the pages of history, that the Bishops of the Church of England were the prime agents in the Revolution that expelled the Stuart Dynasty from the British Isles, and that the Protestant ministers of Scotland were the authors of those sanguinary Civil Wars.

"When pulpit drum ecclesiastic Was beat with fist instead of a stick,"

pretend to be scandalised at the peaceable and strictly legal means used by the Catholic Clergy of Ireland to ameliorate the political and social condition of their long oppressed and down trodden brethren. It is true, quite true, that the Clergy of Ireland do interfere in politics; and considering that they are the natural leaders of the people, blood of their blood, bone of their bone, fellow-sufferers under a common tyranny, it is right and natural that they should so interfere. Where politics interfere with the ministers of religion, it is the right and the duty of the minister of religion to interfere with politics: it is their high privilege, as the Ministers of Him, who on earth, hesitated not to reproach the rulers of the Jewish nation for their contempt of God's law, to rebuke the oppressors of their people, and to stand between the heartless persecutor and his victim.

We are therefore neither grieved nor surprised at the active part taken by the late Dr. McGinn in many of the politico-social questions of his day; and we do not feel that the Catholic is bound to offer any apology for such interference on the part of a Catholic ecclesiastic, with mat-