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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DEC. 9, 1859.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE great event of the past week, great because of its bearings upon the future of the neighboring Republic, has been the hanging of John Brown by the State Government of Virginia for the Harper's Ferry insurrection. That, according to the laws of all civilized communities, John Brown was rightly executed there can be no doubt. He was taken in arms, convicted of treason, and suffered a traitor's death. But as to the prudence of hanging him, seeing that he has been thereby made a quasi martyr, opinions may and will vary. At all events his name will long be used in the North as a potent charm to conjure up dissatisfaction against the South; and the heart burnings, mutual jealousies, harsh words, and perhaps still harsher deeds, that will thence in all probability accrue, may tend to a severance of all political connection betwixt the Slave and Free States of the American Union.

From the Old World we have rumors of wars. The British and French press seem to take a pleasure in mutually exasperating one another; and though at the present moment it is not easy to indicate a casus belle betweet their respective governments, some pretence or another for war might no doubt be found at a moment's notice. If you want to heat a dog you can always find a stick.

Little change has occurred in the state of the Italian Question. We hear that the Pope is not only willing, but anxious to make all necessary reforms in the civil government of his States, but he does not wish to appear to the world as acting under compulsion. When we remember the zeal with which Pius IX, in the first years of his reign essayed to ameliorate the condition of his people, and the gross ingratitude with which he was repaid by the Italian Liberals, we cannot wonder that he should hesitate before again he commits himself to the tender mercies of those by whom he has been already betrayed and out-

WHAT LOWER CANADA HAS GAINED BY THE UNION .- The Quebec Mercury in an article, an extract from which we laid before our readers in last week's TRUE WITNESS, gave a rivid and correct description of the advantages, moral and material, which Lower Canada has derived from its political connection with its Protestant neighbor. The Mercury came to the conclusion that " all parties in Lower Canada should unite in making this one simple demand on the Upper Canadian vulture, disgorge the nine millions four hundred thousand, or dissolve the

There can be but one reason indeed, why the Catholics of Lower Canada should not agitate for that dissolution, pur et simple, and hail its arrival as an unmixed boon; and that reason is that dissolution would be deeply injurious to the interests of the Catholics in the Western section of the Province. If then we have any prudential scruples about dissolution, it is not for ourselves that we entertain them, but for our western coreligionists.

For what would be the fate of the latter, what the condition of their schools, colleges, religious and charitable institutions, were the nolicy of the Toronto Convention triumphant, and if the Repeal of the Legislative Union betwixt the two Canadas were un fait accompli? It is this consideration, and this alone, that prevents us from congratulating Lower Canada on the system of tactics lately adopted by its enemies; it is this consideration alone that makes us doubtful as to whether that system of tactics can be conscientiously adopted by the Catholics of this section of the Province.

There can be no doubt that the first, the chief, indeed the only sufferers by a repeal of the Legislative Union, would be the Catholics of Upper Canada; and so conscious of this are they them-Popery meeting; called by the leaders of the with the spirit in which it was summoned; and its "Resolutions"-as their movers and support- and can be so, to him only who utters them. ers themselves hesitate not to tell us franklywere conceived in the same essentially anti-Cathowould give its death blow to the Separate School System, and establish Protestant Ascendency on coreligionists. Against such treatment we feel as him a basis in Upper Canada as that on which it our duty and our right to protest. it has so long reposed in Ireland. In short the trymen in the United States.

a number of Catholics from all parts of the country to deliberate on the best means to be taken to ameliorate the condition of Irish Catholics in America. The tyranny to which they were exwhich a Protestant majority manifested for the were treated, whilst their children were decoyed. or torn from them to be brought up apostates to the religion for which their fathers had sufferedall these things, of public notoriety, moved the sympathies of the more fortunately situated Catholics of Canada; and prompted them to take cally, and socially degraded, because an unrepresented minority amongst an essentially Protestant and democratic community, governed strictly in accordance with the principles of the " Prothat section of the Province will be governed when the policy of "our natural allies" shall have been matured. The object indeed of the "Protestant Reformers," the openly avowed aim of all their policy, is to assimilate the social and political condition of U. Canada to that of the U. States, and thus to perpetuate in Upper Canada the great evil which it was the very object of the promoters and members of the Buffalo Convention to redress! And yet, marvel of marvels, there are men calling themselves Catholics; who claim to be treated as intelligent beings; who would assume, or at least try to assume, an air of injured innocence if their honesty were impeached; and who if we mistake not, were not altogether strangers to the Buffalo Convention-who are now doing their best to carry out the anti-Catholic policy of the " Protestant Reformers;" who take pleasant counsel together with George Brown of the Globe, and Mr. Climie of the Bowmanville Statesman, how to impose the yoke of "Protestant Ascendency" upon the necks of the Papists of Upper Canada, and how to reduce the "Romanists" of that section of the Province to the very position of abject subservience to a Protestant majority, from which it was the avowed object of the Buffalo Convention to rescue if possible, the Irish Catholics of the United

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Anything more grossly inconsistent with their Catholic professions than the political conduct of our co-religionists who are parties to the " Clear Grit," or Protestant Reform alliance, it would be impossible to imagine. To quality their policy as simply suicidal would be to condemn it too mildly; for suicide generally implies a mental aberration, and in their case the sm is committed with premeditation, and a perfect knowledge of its inevitable results. There is no Catholic outside of the Lunatic Asylum silly enough to believe that a policy pursued by George Brown or by Mr. Climie can be advantageous to Popery; or that the interests of the Church-whatever may be the case with the personal interests of some of her members-will be promoted by men who take a pleasure in insulting her, and make no secret of their hostility towards her; not one who would not be at a loss for an answer were he called upon to indicate any possible benefit that could accrue to the cause of Catholicity in Upper Canada, from the realisation of the political programme traced out by the Convention. What of religious liberty the Catholics of Upper Canada enjoy, they owe to the interference of the other and Catholic section of any pretensions to discernment or candor, are the Province; and it is by the Legislative Union | certain indices of the feelings with which the Cathat they are sheltered from the hostility of the tholic Church regards slavery; and explain why overwhelming Protestant majority amongst whom | it is that, in the United States, as in Russia, and their lot is cast. Their policy then, whatever in all countries where her influence is weak, it is may be the policy of Lower Canada—is to "uphold the Constitution as it is." Repeal of the the slave, without incurring the horrors of a ser-Union, or Representation by Population, would be fatal to their best interests as Catholics; because it is only through Catholic Lower Canada that their voice can be heard, or that their political influence can make itself felt, in the Provincial Legislature.

This then is the result of our examination of the policy of Repeal of the Union. In so far as Lower Canada is concerned there is every reason why we Catholics should strenuously support every movement having that Repeal as its end. But inasmuch as Repeal, whether with or without Federation, would be deeply injurious to Catholic interests in Upper Canada; as it would leave our co-religionists of the West at the mercy of a political set to whom mercy, and justice to Papists, are unknown; and as it would inevitably entail the overthrow of Catholic separate schools and maugurate the era of "Protestant Ascendency," we cannot, as yet at all events, adopt Repeal of the Legislative Union as a plank of our political platform.

We have no objection to the Montreal Witselves, that no one amongst them has ever yet at- ness denouncing the Catholic Church as "that tempted to show, or had the impudence even to masterpiece of Satanic ingenuity,"-or to his insinuate, that any advantage to the interests of representing it as "compounded of idolatry, Catholicity in Upper Canada would, or by any superstition, deceit, and oppression." To possibility could, accrue from the adoption of the these little douceurs we are well accustomed; political programme laid down by the Toronto and if the utterance of them affords solace to Convention. The meeting was essentially a non- the bruised spirit of our cotemporary, he is heartily welcome to employ them. They do not anti-Catholic party to devise means for the re- hurt us: they cannot affect our status, as before pression of Catholic influence in the Legislature. God or man-for the former knows that they are All its debates were carried on in accordance false, and the other does not believe them to be true. If they are injurious to any one, they are,

But we have the right to complain, and it is our duty to remonstrate, when, not content with lic spirit; whilst it is not even attemped to be heaping abuse upon us, our Church, and our reconcealed that those Resolutions, if carried out, Ingion, the Moutreal Witness essays to make us responsible for the sayings and doings of its own

So when, as in its issue of the 3d inst., in an regime of the " Protestant Reformers" would article headed, " Irish Roman Catholic Ideas in a few years reproduce in this country all the of Liberty"—the Montreal Witness cites the the people of the Roman States; though, since worst features of British Protestant rule in Ire- well-known saying of Mr. Mitchell with refer- the Pope in his temporal capacity is fallible, we land; and the Irish Catholic minority of Upper ence to slavery in the United States, we feel it do not pretend that the Civil Government of the Canada would at once be degraded to the level our duty to remind the Witness that Mr. Mit- Pontifical States is perfect, or free from blemof their unhappy co-religionists and fellow-coun- chell is a Protestant, and not a Catholic; and ishes. Indeed, seeing how active for many years that, therefore, it is most dishonest to hold the have been the agents of revolution in every hole Our readers may remember how, some few Catholic Church responsible for the sayings and and corner of Italy, it would be strange indeed

Yet lest the Witness should accuse us of shirking the question of slavery, or as ashamed of avowing our sentiments thereupon, we will admit that it is true that few, if any, Catholics posed in the United States; the utter disregard in the United States are to be found amongst the ranks of the Abolitionists; and this, not so rights of a Catholic minority; the scorn, indigni- much because of any ill will on their part towards ties, and brute violence with which Irish Papists | the end which the latter profess to have in view, as because they detest the means which the Abolitionists avow themselves ready to employ to attain their ends; because, as Catholics, they utterly repudiate as false, the arguments with which the said Abolitionists defend their cause.

But, though holding themselves aloof from the counsel together to see if there were no means of Abolitionists, and repudiating their logic, the helping their afflicted brethren-afflicted politi- Catholics of the United States are guilty of no inconsistency, or dereliction of principle; for it is not a dogma of their Church that it is a sin, or malum per se, to hold or own a slave. The laws of right and wrong are universal, immutestant Reformers" of Upper Canada; and as table; and as in the early days of Christianity, as we may see from the Epistle of St. Paul to Philemon, slave-holding did not necessarily exclude from Church-membership, and as no one could be admitted to Church-membership who was habitually a violator of the moral law-so we conclude that there was then, and that there is, therefore, now also, nothing esentially evil, or morally wrong in merely holding or owning a slave. This is but a derangement, the symptom of an abnormal condition, of the labor market; an infraction, not of the moral code, but of those laws which the political economist tells us should regulate the terms of the contract betwixt the buyer and the seller of labor. In Catholic countries, where slave and master kneel at the same altar, slavery is nothing more than this.

But, in that slavery in Non-Catholic communities by the immense and irresponsible power it places in the hands of the slave owner, is often the instrument of crime; inasmuch as the slave in a Protestant country has no protection against the master's lust or cruelty; and that the "family" with all its sanctities cannot exist amongst a slave population, there, where amongst the owners of the slaves the precepts of the Catholic Church with regard to the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage are treated with contemptwe can readily believe that the slave system of the Southern States is the source of innumerable evils. But these evils are accidents of, not essential to, the system; and the logical error of the Abolitionists is that they do not distinguish betweet what is essential, and what merely acci-

In practice their errors are still more serious; for they preach, if they do not themselves set an example of, the duty of insurrection, and armed resistance. These are weapons which the conscientious Catholic cannot avail himself of. Not by such weapons, not by such allies, was European society of the Middle Ages purged of the taint of slavery. For this great deliverance from what at one time threatened to become a great social evil, Europe is indebted to the Catholic Church alone-and when we say Catholic Church we mean, of course, the Papal Church. The countries wherein the influence of the Papacy was weak or unfelt, retained longer than others-some as Russia have retained to the present day-the system from whence those communities which were most docile to, and most under the control of, the Holy See, were at an early period, and entirely delivered. These facts, recognised by all Protestant historians with so difficult a thing to ameliorate the condition of vile war, and threatening the entire social fabric. There is but one weapon that has been found etfective to procure the emancipation of the slave, and that weapon is not to be found outside of the armory of the Church. The action of the British Legislature in emancipating the slaves in the West Indies may be cited as an exception to this rule; but it must be remembered that it is very easy to be generous at the expense of others; and that the people of Great Britain emancipated, not their own slaves, but those of their neighbors, and if we may be pardoned the solecism-of their very remote neighbors to boot.

No argument therefore against the consistency of Irish Catholics can be found in the fact that whilst insisting upon their own rights, they are not be found amongst the ranks of the "Abolitionists;" for this proceeds not from any good will towards slavery, but from their aversion to the principles of the "Abolitionists," and the means which the latter advocate to carry out their policy. The other taunt of our cotemporary may also be easily dealt with. He says :-

" With strange inconsistency these clamorers for liberty and nationality (Irish Catholics) are ready to fly to aid the Pope to keep his subjects in the most abject condition of any people in Europe. 'Give us liberty!' is the cry of Irish Romanists—a moment after they are ready to perpetuate the slavery of the African race, or to wage war against their co-religionists in Italy."

To this silly tirade are added some equally sagacious remarks respecting M. About's very witty, but more mendacious than witty, work on the Roman States, to which the Witness appeals in support of the thesis that the condition of the people of the Roman States "is the most abject of any people in Europe." But in this our cotemporary does but betray his gross ignorance of, or disregard for, the laws of evidence. The very question at issue is, whether M. About's statements with regard to the Roman States are true or false; and the Witness has no right to sic, on Sunday. In short, it is evidently the deassume their truth until that—the point at issue -has been decided in the affirmative.

We meet our cotemporary therefore with the simple denial of the "abject condition" of tie of smoke." led to the assembling at Buffalo of a contemner of her authority, as is Mr. Mitchell. amongst the subjects of the Roman Government; State, proprio motu, that imposes these restric- century.

which however at its worst will contrast most favorably with the Government of Catholic Ireland by Protestant Great Britain.

But it is not to prevent the adoption of necessary reforms: it is not to perpetuate the abuses which may exist in the civil Government of the Roman States, that the Catholics of Ireland offer their sympathy, and if needs be, the aid of their stout arms and brave hearts, to the head of their Church; but because, as Catholics, it is their duty to assert, and if needs be to defend with their lives, the independence of their Church of society every man must be either sovereign or subject; and it is simply to prevent the Pope from becoming virtually the subject, either of the French Emperor, or of the Italian revolutionists, that the Catholics of Ireland offer him their assistance. Is not this reasonable? Are not British Catholics reproached with giving but a divided allegiance to their temporal Sovereign because of their spiritual allegiance to the Holy See? With how much more force would not this unjust reproach be urged against them by Protestants, were the Pope himself subject to a Foreign Power?—and therefore is it that Catholies throughout the world, but in the British dominions especially, are so deeply interested in maintaining the Pope in the position of an independent Sovereign.

Blue Laws.—Let no man think that we have outgrown the absurdities of the past, or that we have the right to laugh at the follies of the " Praise-God-Barebones" of former days. The breed of Barebones is certainly not extinct in Canada; neither are our modern County Solons one whit more enlightened than were the notorious framers of the Blue Laws of Connecticut. Indeed we doubt it the latter ever devised anything so absurd as the "By-Law" which is published in the Montreal Witness of the 23rd ult., as enacted by the Municipality of the County of Simcoe, C.W.," to make provision for the Preservation of the Public Morals." As a specimen however, of Protestant Sumptuary Legislation, and of the respect which Protestants entertain for the "right of private judgment" in matters pertaining to religion, it is seriously worthy of the attention of the Catholic community, in spite of its absurdities.

The Act 22d Vic., c. 99, gives to the Councils of the several Counties, Cities and Towns in Upper Canada, authority to enact By-Laws for enforcing Sabbath observances; for regulating the traffic in intoxicating liquors; for preventing vice and horse-racing; for suppressing tippling houses, houses of ill-fame, and places of amusement; and for preventing indecency and restraining vagrants. To some of these extraordinary powers, if exercised with sound discretion, no man would dream of offering any objection; but when we call to mind the stuff of which the Municipal Councils of Upper Canada are in great part composed, and consequently the exercise their powers with discretion, we cannot scenity. but entertain serious misgivings as to the policy greatly that their ill-judged, precipitate, and arbitrary enactments will but tend to make the Sunday contemptible and odious, and bring the due observance of the Lord's Day into disrepute.-

Thus the Puritans of England, with their arbitrary and ridiculous Sumptuary Laws, were but the logical precursors of the general infidelity and licentiousness of the Restoration. Penal sumptuary laws may make hypocrites, and must bring religion into disrepute by making it odious; but they cannot make men pious, or promote the cause of true morality. Even should those laws be obeyed for a season, a reaction must come, sooner or later; and the longer it is deferred the more terrible, the more "thorough" will that re-

look upon the "By-Laws" published in the Montreal Witness; and of which, no doubt, that journal, and the narrow-minded clique which it represents, heartily approve, and hold up as an example to be imitated. We on the contrary feel confident that the said Laws most remain a dead letter; and can therefore have no other effect than that of bringing human, as well as divine legislation into disrepute. Our readers however shall judge for themselves what amount of discretion has been exhibited by the Simcoe

blasphemy, and obscenity, all sale and purchases of goods of every description on Sunday-but marbles or ball, to dance or to play profane musign of their framers, to give us in lieu of the Christian Sunday, its loathsome caricature, the Puritan Sabbath, with all its gloom and low debauchery.

is "profane?" and who is to be judge of the with a miserable varnish of "Blue Laws." sanctity or the profanity of a piece of music play-YEARS ago, a movement which resulted in a "bot- opinions of one who is an alien to her fold, and if there were not discontent and disorganisation ed on Sunday? If we are told that it is the but just recovering from its Protestantism of last

tions, and prohibits things so innocent as balls and marbles, we contend that the State is exceeding its just limits, and that beyond those limits we are not bound to obey it. If we are told that the State is but the organ of Christian society or the Church, we reply that, by its own act, the State has renounced all connection, all semblance even of connection, with the Church, and can have therefore no shadow of a pretence to speak in the name of the latter. In neither case can and its Sovereign Pontifi. In the present order the State, constituted as it is in Upper Canada have any claim to our respect or obedience when legislating on the subject of Sunday observances.

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And what is "profane music?" by what rule are men to judge betweet what music is prohibited and what is to be tolerated on Sundays ?-Where is the line between sacred, and "profane music" to be drawn? and is the County of Simcoe Municipality a body qualified for the task of drawing such a line?

The attempt to impose restrictions upon innocent amusements on Sundays is not only absurd. but it is most tyrannical. That no man should be allowed to annoy, or disturb the devotious of his neighbors on Sunday by his noisy sports. we freely admit; but why should the Catholic. who can see no moral wrong in ball or marbles, whose religion does not teach him to look upon innocent amusements or good music as more offensive to God upon Sunday, than upon Monday or Tuesday, provided that they be not allowed to encroach upon the hours due to divine worship-why should the Catholic be compelled to submit himself to the fantastic and grovelling superstitions of his Non-Catholic neighbors?__ If the latter choose to make of Sunday the nearest approach to a hell upon earth that their feeble intelligences permit, why should the Papist, who in the Sunday recognises God's kind gift to His hard-working creatures-why should the Papist we say, be asked to bow down before the foul Moloch which Protestantism worships? We know-who does not know?-how many thousands of little children in Protestant communities are trained up to hate such a religion as that which once a week imposes upon them the curse of a Puritan Sabbath. Why then should we in Canada strive to add to the numbers of those unhappy little ones ?---why should we persist in rendering by a pernicious system of Puritanical legislation, odious in their eyes that holy law which, if they knew it in its integrity, they would love?-why thus should we insist upon dimming the all glorious truth of Revelation that "God is love," and not a capricious tyrant who takes delight in the sufferings of His creatures? In vain do we deplore the growth of infidelity, whilst that infidelity is but the Protest of the human heart, and the human intellect, against the degrading superstitions of Puritanism, which slight chances there are, that their members will classes ball and marbles with blasphemy, and ob-

We are not arguing, be it remembered, against or justice of authorising those Bodies to legis- the duty of the State to prohibit all amusements, late upon such a subject as the due observance however innocent in themselves, which necessarily of Sunday, or the Christian Sabhath. We fear interfere with or obstruct the devotions of those who decline joining therein. Neither are we contending for the general propriety of devoting any considerable portion of Sunday or other Holy days appointed by the Church, to worldly amusements of any kind. Could we altogether give ourselves up throughout the day to the wo ship of God, the contemplation of His Majesty, and to devout meditation, it would be well that we should do so; and if there be any who have the gift so to do, it is no doubt their duty to avail themselves of their high privilege. But all men, but the great majority of the human race, are not so constituted; and it is not only unjust, but it is impolitic to deprive these of all secutar recreations on Sunday, and to force them, almost, into excess, dissipation and sensual indulgences, It is in this light, and with these anticipations | by rigorously closing on them all portals opening which the records of the past confirm, that we to rational and innocent amusements. We are often told to contrast a Continental and Catholic Sunday, with a Scotch or Yankee Protestant Sabbath. We accept the challenge willingly, and as to a considerable extent a test of the comparative morality of Catholic and Protestant Society. The first seeks the light, and all its faults are patent to the most casual observer .-At the first glance we see always the worst of a Catholic society; but upon closer examination we find that it is invariably better than it appears to be. . With Protestant society it is the very Solons in their laws for the better observance of reverse. It is as the sepulchre, often whitened, and fair to look at without, but within full of dead By these laws are prohibited, not only all men's bones and all uncleanness. Even when we have penetrated into its inmost recesses it still always appears to the eye far better than it actually it is declared unlawful to fish or shoot, to play at is; dive we down never so deep into the depths of its corruption, still deeper depths remain untold, which plummet line can never sound; explore we never so closely its fetid abysses, abysses yet more fetid still mock our closest researches. Its choicest courts are as the courts seen in a vision by the son of Buz, whereon were But it may be asked-by what right, or by depicted every creeping thing, and every abomiwhose authority do these Simcoe Municipals do nable beast, Ezechiel, viii. 10; and in vain does these things? It may well be asked—what music | Protestantism strive to hide these abominations

*This holds true even of France, though France is