

THE TRUE WITNESS

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, SEPT. 18, 1857.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The Persia brings dates to the 5th inst. From the Continent of Europe there is little of interest to report. All was quiet in the political world; the long talked of interview betwixt the Emperors of France and Russia was expected to take place at Stuttgart on the 27th inst.

No important change in the posture of affairs in India is reported. The insurgents still hold position of Delhi, but have been repulsed at Agra and Cawnpore; and it is hoped that our troops will be able to maintain their position until the arrival of the great reinforcements now on their way to the East, will authorise them to resume the offensive. As these reinforcements cannot, however, be expected to arrive in any considerable numbers before the month of November, the British troops now in India will for a long time find themselves in a very critical situation, in many respects similar to that of the army before Sebastopol during the dreary winter of 1854. In Delhi itself there are collected from 15,000 to 20,000 revolted Sepoys, well supplied with arms and ammunition, and having in their possession guns of a calibre far superior to any that, as yet, we can oppose to them. Upon the whole, it is estimated that the insurgent force in Central India amounts to about 80,000 men, actually in arms against us.

To keep in check this formidable mass of opponents, flushed with temporary success, and stimulated to fury by the knowledge that for them there remain no hopes of pardon from the British Government, after the brutal outrages of which they have been guilty, we have scarce more than 10,000 men upon whom we can rely at the present moment; the armies of the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, not being at present available for service in Bengal, and being fully occupied in maintaining order in their respective districts. When however the reinforcements now on their way shall have arrived, the European troops will muster about 70,000 men; a force amply sufficient to inflict summary vengeance on the rebellious Sepoys, and to restore that prestige which late events have greatly shaken. The great difficulty of course will be for the handful of men at present engaged with the enemy to hold their position until relieved; and this difficulty is enhanced by the nature of the climate, and its deleterious influences upon the European constitution. "Already," says a letter from an Engineer officer before Delhi, dated the 12th of July last, "cholera is in the camp;" and there are but too many reasons to fear that this awful disease may prove a more formidable enemy than the Sepoys, or the treacherous Nena Sahib.

There is in short no disguising the fact, that India has to be reconquered, and the work of Clive to be done over again. Judging from the tone of the public press, the people of Great Britain seem fully equal to the emergency, and determined at all hazards, and at any price, to avenge their outraged countrywomen. Delhi, says the Times, should be razed to the ground; and not one stone should be left upon another, and its place must be made like unto that of Sodom and Gomorrah. So strong and so general is the feeling of indignation at the horrid barbarities inflicted upon delicate women and innocent children, that for the time the leaders of the "peace party" are mute, and dare not give utterance to their habitual maudlin cant; whilst on the Continent the sympathies of all classes are warmly expressed for the victims of Asiatic brutality. Powerful appeals, advocating a general subscription for the relief of the sufferers by the Indian insurrection, have appeared in the French journals, and a confident hope is expressed that the list will be headed by the names of the most illustrious personages in the Empire.

THE PROTESTANT ADULTERY BILL.

The "Divorce, or License-to-Commit-Adultery Bill," having now become the law of the land in England, and as it is most probable that, ere long, its provisions will be extended to all parts of the British dominions—Canada among the rest—it is well that our readers should be acquainted with the leading features of this infamous measure, which is destined to effect an important social revolution in the Empire.

Marriage has hitherto been treated, in theory at least, in England as the indissoluble union of one man with one woman: now for the first time since the conversion of its people to Christianity,

the law of the land ignores the plain teachings of Christ upon this important point, and asserts that man may put asunder those whom God hath joined together in holy matrimony. Thus the fundamental principle of the Bill is essentially anti-Christian, and thoroughly Protestant. It legalises adultery, holds out inducements to vice, and gives free scope to the indulgence of sexual impurity.

The machinery instituted by the Bill for securing these ends consists of a new Court, the "Court of Marriage and Divorce;" with a judge to whom an annual salary of £5,000 is secured. This Court is empowered to grant divorce, a *vinculo matrimonii*, to the male applicant, upon proof of the infidelity of the female with whom he had previously cohabited; and to the female, upon proof being adduced before it of the infidelity of the male, accompanied with incest, certain abominable crimes, or desertion. The males and females thus put asunder are at liberty to contract fresh sexual unions; but the clergy of the Church of England—who, as gentlemen still retaining some shreds and patches of Catholic Christianity, feel a natural repugnance to celebrate such impure unions with a blasphemous mockery of God's holy name—are not compelled to read over them the marriage service appointed by Act of Parliament to be used on such occasions. At the same time, any parochial clergyman who refuses to lend himself to the dirty work of celebrating concubinage with religious ceremonies, is bound to allow any other clergyman, with a tougher conscience and a stronger stomach, to do the job in his place, and to have the use of the parish church for that purpose. This clause was introduced as a concession to the demands of a large and influential body of the Anglican clergy—of whom, to their credit be it said, several thousands protested against being compelled to re-marry divorced persons, and thereby to give their sanction to polygamy and adultery. The Bishop of Oxford, one of the few Prelates of the Government church who has had the courage to stand up for the sanctity of Christian marriage, and the perpetual obligation of Christ's laws, is not satisfied with this concession to the conscientious scruples of his clerical brethren; and from his place in the House of Lords expressed himself as follows:—

"He had that very night received a letter from a clergyman holding an important position in this diocese, in which he said it had been asserted in the House of Commons that the clergy were satisfied with the so-called compromise of the Attorney-General, by which the control of the church and the service celebrated therein, were in effect taken out of the hands of the incumbent; and by which adulterers were to be enabled to hire any clergyman of the diocese to do that for them, which the incumbent of the parish refused to do; that he had the charge of a parish containing 50,000 souls, and that no earthly consideration would ever induce him to open his church to be desecrated by the celebration of the marriage service in such circumstances; that the clergyman of the two parishes adjoining his had made a similar declaration, and he added that no time had been given to enable the clergy to make their sentiments known on the subject. (Hear, hear.) He had an opportunity of making known their views upon this question. (Hear, hear.) He would rather that no immunity was given to the clergy than that these two clauses should stand as they now did. (Hear.) He implored their lordships to strike out the immunity to the clergy altogether, and leave them to act as their consciences would make them act, rather than give effect to a measure which would only introduce confusion and mischief. (Hear, hear.) He asked them to leave the marriage of divorced parties to be performed merely as a civil contract, which they had declared was as honorable as marriage in church, and strike out the whole of that clause which professed to confer a boon upon the clergy. (Hear, hear.) He begged their lordships to understand that it would not be the respectable clergy who would take advantage of this proposed amendment to go into the churches of their reluctant brethren. It was the wretched skulking man, the shame and reproach of the ministry, living away from his own parish and not daring to show his face where he was known, who would come into a brother's parish to sow discord among those who till then had lived in peace and harmony. (Hear, hear.) It was to give this license to any man whom the lowest sense of decency would not prevent from clutching the paltry fee which would fall to him, that they proposed to do away with all that was held sacred in reference to the solemnization of the marriage rite. (Hear, hear.) They would observe that the clause did not affect the bishop; and he avowed before their lordships that if he knew of one of these hired interlopers coming in the way he was here permitted to do, to enter a church, he would meet him at the door with an inhibition and suspend him from his office. (Cheers.) There was nothing in the clause to prevent him so doing. (Hear, hear.) Most earnestly did he beseech their lordships not to consent to this amendment; but if the votes of those who had heard the arguments were to be overborne by the contents of the proxybook, then Parliament would have created a new source of discord among the clergy of the established church."

Little reliance can of course be placed upon these bold threats; nor is there any reason to doubt that, as they have done before, so will the great majority of the Bishops and clergy of the Church of England do now; and submit patiently to any indignity that the State may please to put upon them. Upon fifty previous occasions—as during the Gorham controversy for instance—they were just, about, going, to do some great thing, till the critical moment arrived; and then, invariably, they found some convenient excuse for abandoning their principles, and retaining their preferments. So no doubt will it be in the case of their being called upon to pronounce God's blessing upon adultery and fornication.

The consequences of the pernicious measure, whose details we have given will be most fatal; and, as in all other countries where polygamy, or divorce, is tolerated, will produce a general contempt for chastity and the obligations of marriage. Under its operation, the men will swap their wives with one another, and the wives their

husbands, with as little difficulty, and as unconcernedly, as if they were horses, or horned cattle. Mr. and Mrs. Smith, for instance, next door neighbors of Mr. and Mrs. Jones, would be glad to make a mutual exchange of partners.—All that, under these circumstances, would have to be done, would be for Mrs. Jones to commit adultery with Mr. Smith, and for Mr. Smith to be guilty of the same crime with Mrs. Jones.—Mr. Jones and Mr. Smith would then apply to the newly erected Divorce Court for relief a *vinculo matrimonii*; and for a few shillings an accommodating clergyman of the Church of England would undertake to pronounce the blessing of God upon the union of Mrs. Smith with Mr. Jones, and of Mr. Jones with Mrs. Smith. In fact, there is nothing improbable in the hypothesis, that under the operation of the new Law, swapping wives will become a regular business, furnishing steady and lucrative occupation to a numerous body of marriage brokers, and go-betweeners of both sexes.

It has been objected, that the machinery of the Bill is somewhat cumbrous; especially in that it requires the perpetration of one act of adultery, or incest, before it sanctions another. There is a good deal of force in the objection; and we see that the Toronto Colonist, in anticipation of the passing of a Canadian Divorce Bill, condemns the above mentioned proviso as a blemish upon a measure "good in its principle," though possibly defective in some of its details. Our cotemporary would seem to recommend that persons anxious for a change of partners, should be allowed to indulge such a natural propensity, without being compelled to go through the somewhat tedious formalities of a previous adultery, whether with, or without incest, &c. At present, the law insists upon a *minimum* of immorality on the part of either the male or female as the condition of relief from an unpleasant marriage—"which results," as the Colonist observes, "in making people immoral, in order" to qualify themselves for the relief which they demand; and this our cotemporary contends "is a very pernicious application of an Act of Parliament."

The Canadian Divorce Bill which already we see looming in the future, and to which—judging from their antecedents—very few, if any, of our Catholic legislators, or office-holders, will oppose any very serious obstacles—will, no doubt, be so drawn up as to avoid this defect of the English Bill.

CAUSES OF THE MUTINY IN INDIA.

That this mutiny has not been caused by any ill treatment of the mutineers, on the part of the Government, is certain, as the soldiers of the revolted regiments were the petted and spoiled children of the service. That the insurrection is not, as yet, a national movement, is evident from the fact that it originated with the soldiers, and has been hitherto confined to them; the mass of the non-military population taking no part in it whatsoever. It would seem indeed that the Mahomedans, who are as much *aliens* in India as are the Christians, are the chief actors in the horrid atrocities perpetrated upon the latter; and that the mutiny, if successful, would but have the effect of giving the Hindoos a change of masters. It is therefore, as yet, impossible to assign any satisfactory reason for the sudden revolt of the Bengal army.

We have seen indeed many theories started; but the only one which seems to have any probability about it, is that which attributes it to the ill-judged efforts of the evangelical missionaries, and the consequent apprehensions of the troops that the Government entertained the design of converting them forcibly to Christianity. That this was one cause of the mutiny is now generally admitted by all persons acquainted with the history of recent events in the Indian Peninsula. Thus a correspondent of the London Times, writing over the signature of "Punjabee," says:

"The real causes of the mutiny of the Bengal army are undoubtedly these:—
"1. The missionaries who have been allowed to run over the country, giving the higher caste natives an idea that we want to make them Christians, by fair means or foul. A low caste native will be a Christian for 5s with the greatest pleasure; a high caste man, of course, will not at any price. So much for the good these people do; for the evil they have done, let the present state of things and the murders of hundreds of real Christians bear witness to. There are also, I am sorry to say, missionaries in red coats in India, as witness the exposure of Colonel Wheeler. Who can wonder at his regiment having been one of the first to mutiny?"

Very similar is the testimony given by a high Catholic authority—His Lordship the Bishop of Almira, Vicar Apostolic of Thibet and Hindostan. This illustrious Prelate, at a late public meeting, spoke as follows:—

"You might ask me why this great revolution in those parts of India where I have been so long? It is a long story, and it would not be agreeable or profitable in the telling. One thing I may mention—if our Government were Catholic, I would promise that, within twenty years, India would be wholly Christian (hear, hear). But it is impossible with Protestantism. The preaching in the streets brings Christianity into contempt. I have told this to the ministers themselves, and I warned them to dismiss such obnoxious practices. They have what are called 'catechists,' who in the morning preach the law of our Saviour, and who in the evening get drunk in the same places (hear, hear.) I advised them to be more careful of the Word of God. They give away Bibles and Testaments. I was once at home, and there came to me somebody they called a Methodist, or something like that (laughter.) He came to ask my permission to distribute tracts. I asked him if there was anything in them against the Catholic

Church, and he said, no. I then asked him to hand me the books, and there was nothing. Now, in that small village he distributed six or seven hundred books of different descriptions; only about fourteen or fifteen in the whole place could read. I asked a servant of mine, an intelligent man, to explain the matter. 'Ah,' said he, 'they take the books and sell them for waste paper, and they are very glad.' At home here you read reports that so many books are given to the natives, and that the natives are very anxious. Certainly they are—to get some money. They tell you, too, that the books are read, and that conversions take place, but they deceive the people of England in telling them such stories.—They are all, as my servant said to me, 'great lies.'"

And again, as in confirmation of this theory a proclamation issued by the rebel chiefs at Delhi, and addressed "to all Hindoos and Mussulmans," commences its enumeration of grievances by a declaration that it is a notorious fact that the "English have entertained the evil designs—first to destroy the religion of the whole Hindostani army—and then to make the people Christians by compulsion." Such testimony, coming from so many quarters, would seem to indicate that there is some modicum of truth in the statement that, to religious excitement may in some measure be attributed the mutinous spirit of the native army.

Yet, after making every possible allowance for the effects of proselytism upon the minds of the native troops, it is not easy to account for the fiendish rancor with which they seem animated against not only their officers, but every European. The atrocities recounted in the columns of the press have no parallel in modern history; and even the cruelties of the Orangemen of '98 have been surpassed by the deliberate wanton brutality of the Bengal Sepoys.

That there should not be the semblance even, of any connection between the Church and the State, is a principle which, however repugnant to Christianity, is embodied in our Canadian Statute Book, and openly proclaimed as a self-evident truth by our Canadian statesmen.

That the observance of the first day of the week in particular, as a day of total abstinence from servile work, is a purely ecclesiastical arrangement, is universally admitted by all Christians. No one pretends that it can be proved from Scripture that Christ Himself appointed the observance of that particular day as a day of rest; neither will any sane person venture to assert that reason teaches us to devote that particular day in an especial manner to the worship and service of God. There is in fact no authority, save that of the Church, that can be cited as a reason for Sunday observances, or the sanctification of the first day of the week.

But a State which has not "even the semblance of any connection with the Church," cannot consistently take cognisance of the latter's authority, or impose civil penalties for the breach of ecclesiastical discipline. Such a State, if it legislate at all upon Sunday, or any other religious, observances, cannot appeal to the Church; but must assert its own autonomy in the religious order, its independent jurisdiction in matters spiritual, and its right, and consequently its competency, to settle the faith and to prescribe the religious duties of all its subjects.

As an appropriate commentary upon these self-evident propositions, we subjoin the following report of a case lately adjudicated in Upper Canada, and reported in the Galt Reformer of the 25th ult:—

"The Sabbath desecration case to which we have previously alluded, was tried at New Hope on Wednesday last. The magistrates sitting upon the case were James Cowan, James Phin, and George Clements, Esquires, Waterloo; Morris C. Lutz, Esq., Galt; and Isaac Euchaean, Esq., Dumfries. The information charged Jacob Hespeler, Esq., of Preston, with raking and drawing in his hay on the Sabbath, having about twenty men engaged in the fields for that purpose.

"Mr. Hespeler appeared, but did not pretend to deny the charge. He pleaded, in justification, that the law allowed the performance of labor on the Lord's Day when a work of necessity, and claimed that in hauling in his hay he was engaged in a work of that kind. This plea was not considered valid by the magistrates, who inflicted a fine of £10 and costs. Mr. Hespeler insisted that he had not broken the law, and intends, we learn, to appeal from the decision of the magistrates at the next County Court."

The facts of the case are these. Owing to the long continued heavy rains, Mr. Hespeler had been obliged to leave his crops out in the field, to their great injury. On Friday and Saturday, fine weather set in, which enabled him to dry his hay; but as on Sunday there was again appearance of rain, and as his crops would have been destroyed if again exposed to the weather, Mr. Hespeler availed himself of the favorable, but solitary opportunity that presented itself on Sunday, to draw in and save his hay. For so doing, he has been heavily fined; but, as he has appealed against the decision of the New Hope Dogberrys, there is still reason to hope that the iniquitous judgment may be reversed.

But by what right does the civil magistrate, in a State which has not even the semblance of any connection with the Christian Church, and which therefore cannot arrogate to itself the title of Christian, pretend to punish the infraction of a purely ecclesiastical law?—what is the meaning of the words "civil and religious liberty" in a country where such tyranny is patiently put up with?—and where is the interference of the civil magistrate with the religious observances of the citizen to cease?

With as much of right, and with as good show

of reason, might the civil magistrate pretend to prohibit all labor on Tuesdays—to compel attendance upon the ministrations of the conventicle—or to enforce the profession of the "five points" of Calvinism—as thus, of his mere authority, *proprio motu*, impose fines and penalties for the neglect of Sunday observances. For instance—though we know not to what denomination Mr. Hespeler belongs—it is not impossible that he is a Seventh Day Baptist; a sect which observes Saturday, or the Sabbath day—*Dies Sabbati*—instead of Sunday, or the Lord's Day, as the day of rest. Now, we contend that, as the moral or natural law is silent upon the subject, and as the State, unconnected with the Church, cannot be in any sense entitled to our respect as an expounder of revelation, every man has the right, as against the State, to choose for himself what day to observe as his Sabbath day; and that he is responsible to no man for the manner in which he exercises that choice, so long as he does so in such a manner as not to infringe upon the equal rights of his neighbors. We deny, in short, to the State, or civil magistrate, all spiritual jurisdiction whatsoever; and while we assert his duty to enforce the moral law, we will never acknowledge his right to legislate for us in the spiritual, or religious order.

THE BIBLE WITHOUT NOTE OR COMMENT.—We clip the following paragraph from the Churchman (Protestant):—

"Certain American missionaries in the Sandwich Islands, we observe, have been presenting the King with a beautiful Bible from the American Bible Society, in accepting which His Majesty is reported to have made an exceedingly appropriate and expressive reply. This would be a very gratifying circumstance, had we any assurance that they went along with it, or would accompany it in its use, any such note and comment as that Catholic and Apostolic Church has authorized, which is 'the witness and keeper of Holy Writ,' as well as 'the pillar and ground of the truth.' If, on the contrary, the King of the Sandwich Islands has been left to be his own teacher, or to receive his teaching from those heterogeneous, and it may be heretical as well as schismatical bodies at whose hands he has received the Holy Scriptures, it may turn out to be a very strange religion indeed, which it may result in fixing on his mind, and leading him to propagate among his still semi-barbarous people."

If ever Lord Castlereagh's famous figure of speech, about a "man's turning his back upon himself" was appropriate, it surely is so in the case of our poor dear Protestant friends. If there be one boast which they are never weary of repeating in our Popish ears, it is, that "the Bible, the Bible alone, without note or comment, is the religion of Protestants;" and still the infallible receipt of the "Soupers" for making a Protestant, is to stick the Bible into the hands of a Romanist, and leave the latter to read and judge for himself. After a few days or weeks' simmering, as the case may be, the result will be a Protestant of a very choice brand indeed.

The Churchman is however quite right in supposing that King Hoky Poky, or whatever his name may be, will most likely make a strange religious jumble if left to himself with his newly acquired Bible. We can fancy his dingy Majesty poring over the history of Jacob and Esau; and wondering, no doubt, how it came to pass that God loved the former, and hated the latter, till perhaps he arrives at the conclusion that falsehood is a meritorious act, and defrauding one's brother a signal title to God's favor.—Yes; more singular than the most marvellous moral phenomenon that the world has yet witnessed, would be the spectacle of a religion formed from the Bible alone, without note or comment.

But where, and what is "that Catholic and Apostolic Church" which has authority to interpret the Bible, and is the "ground and pillar of truth"? Such a body—if such a body there be—must hold its authority from God, and must by Him have been made competent to perform the task which He has imposed upon it. It must therefore be infallible and indefectible; for a fallible interpreter—a commentator upon Holy Writ not exempt from the possibility of error—and—a "pillar of truth" which itself was liable to fall—would be gifts which an all-wise and all-powerful God would scarce bestow upon His creatures, and for which indeed the latter would have but little reason to return thanks, or to feel grateful.

If therefore there be such a body as that to which the Churchman refers us—and if God has given to man all that is necessary for salvation, such a duly qualified interpreter there no doubt is—that body must be, and must always have been, infallible, and can never have fallen into the slightest doctrinal error. It cannot therefore be the body known in History as the Church of England; a body which certainly is not coeval with Christianity, seeing that it had no distinctive existence till the XVI. century; and which once formed an integral part of that body which all Protestants profess to look upon as the "Mother of all abominations."

What then must the poor king of the Sandwich Islands do? The American Missionaries—Methodists most probably—give him a book, and tell him that its perusal will make him wise unto salvation. "Hold," cries the Churchman, "that book may be the death of you, unless along with it you use such note and comment as that Catholic and Apostolic Church has autho-