

THE TRUE WITNESS
AND
CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JAN. 6, 1854.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

That Lord Palmerston has resigned is announced as certain; why he has resigned is not so clear. Some assign as a reason, the misunderstandings betwixt the noble Lord and his colleagues, upon the Reform Bill, which, to use a D'Israeli form of expression, is said to be "looming in the future;" others again find in the Eastern question the solution of the riddle; perhaps both are right; and that Lord Palmerston is but too glad to escape the troublesome questions which, in a few weeks, will be addressed to Her Majesty's ministers in the House of Commons. But whatever the cause, this resignation bodes no good to the Aberdeen administration. Rats are popularly believed to flee instinctively from a falling house; and an old experienced rat like Palmerston will take good care to get out of a building when the roof threatens to come tumbling about his ears. A speedy break up may therefore not unreasonably be expected, though as yet it is impossible even to speculate as to the new Ministerial combinations, which the secession of Lord Palmerston from the Aberdeen cabinet would seem to prognosticate. It is at all events a remarkable fact, that though the noble Lord has been a member of almost every ministry during the lifetime of the present generation, none has long survived his secession.

The approaching Clonmel election has given rise to much angry discussion in the liberal Irish press. Though opposed to the line of policy advocated by the *Tablet* and *Freeman*, John O'Connell's election is looked upon as assured. There has been no increase in agrarian outrages during the past week; suddenly, and without any ostensible reason, they arose, and as rapidly do they seem to be dying away. By some they are attributed to Ribbonism; by others, and with more show of reason, to the old Orange enemies of Ireland, who are ever seeking to lead the people on to acts of lawless violence.

The discovery of another conspiracy at Paris would seem to indicate the precariousness of the Emperor's position. The agents of the Bourbon and Orleanist parties, subsidised by the gold of Russia, are endeavoring to find occupation for Louis Napoleon at home, and thus preventing him from taking an active and decided part in the Russo-Turkish difficulty. At Baden the contest between the Church and the State officials still continues, though to the advantage of the former. The sympathies of Catholic Europe are fully enlisted on the side of the venerable Archbishop of Freiburg; the justice of whose cause is so manifest as completely to silence the voice of his enemies. From all these contests the Church is sure always to come off victor, and stronger than ever.

The Eastern Question offers nothing new. The season presents insuperable obstacles to active military operations on a large scale; and the fighting seems to be confined to some trifling affairs of outposts. Meantime negotiations are being continued, but no great hopes are entertained of a pacific solution. Though exaggerated somewhat, the defeat of the Turkish fleet at Sinope, has been confirmed in all the important particulars.

By the *Canada*, we learn that it was expected that the combined Turkish, British, and French squadrons were to enter the Black Sea; destination supposed to be Sebastopol. The Czar having frequently declared that he would look upon such a movement of the fleets as equivalent to a declaration of war, the withdrawal of the Ministers of Russia from Paris and London is immediately expected. The effect of these warlike movements upon the London Money Market had been unfavorable, and Consols had still further declined.

PASTORAL OF HIS LORDSHIP THE BISHOP OF MONTREAL.

On Sunday last, at High Mass, was read in all the churches of this Diocese, a Pastoral from the Bishop of Montreal, upon a subject which has of late excited a deal of public attention: we allude to the "Table Turnings—Rappings"—and other pretended "Spiritual Manifestations"—of which we now hear such wonderful reports. The length of this document, and the limited space at our command, prevent us from giving entire this admirable and instructive letter; but we will endeavor to lay before our readers an analysis of its contents.

As to the causes of the phenomena of "Table Turning," His Lordship defines nothing; though he tells us plainly what they are *not*. These phenomena are *not* produced by the spirits of our deceased grandfathers, and grandmothers, aunts, uncles, or cousins; they are not manifestations of the presence of Washington, or Franklin—of the poet Shelly, or of the bard of Avon; and though His Lordship of course recognises that as there have been, so there may be again, diabolical spiritual manifestations, he also evidently recollects that no age of the world has been without its impostors, and its dupes.

The phenomena of "Table Turning" may be for aught we know to the contrary, and very probably are, due solely to natural agencies; to the operations

of some, as yet undiscovered, laws of nature; but which may, in time, and when more thoroughly investigated, be turned to some more useful purpose than playing tricks with our household furniture.

"Later, and when experience shall have taught us what are the true causes of the rotations and movements which our tables receive, from the contact and action of diverse physical agents, we may, without danger, make a good use of the benefits which it may then please God to confer upon us, through a more extended acquaintance with the natural laws."

It is the abuse then of "Table Turning" which the Bishop condemns, and not the mere "Turning" itself; and the abuse consists in this—that, by means of these "Table Turnings," superstitious, and therefore irreligious, persons seek to establish a communication with the spirit world, and to pry curiously into those secrets which God in His infinite wisdom and goodness has been pleased to keep concealed from mortal ken. To endeavor even to establish such a communication is rebellion against God; in the desire, even though unconsummated, to seek knowledge from the dead, lies the essence of the sins of witchcraft, necromancy, and the other abominations so severely denounced in the Sacred Scriptures. To attempt even, though unsuccessfully, to hold converse with the spirit world, through the medium of "Turning Tables," or any other medium whatsoever, is then the abuse which His Lordship denounces, and against which, in affectionate and most touching language, he warns all the Catholics of his diocese:—

"It is pretended that by means of this 'Table Turning,' spirits may be evoked, with whom conversation may be held, and from whom the secrets of the other world may be learned. This is what Religion condemns; this is what it is not lawful for you to do, or tolerate. Observe that the evocation of spirits is something real, as we shall show in another part of this letter. Still, do not fancy that we place any faith in the presence of spirits every time that one is pleased to evoke them by means of 'Table Turning;' for we are well convinced that there is much imposition therein. We would simply desire to point out that there is sin in the mere intention of putting oneself in communication with any spirits whatsoever, whether for the purpose of recalling the past, of knowing the present, or foretelling the future, and above all, of prying with human eye into the abyss of those secrets, which God alone can know; because to Himself alone has He reserved the knowledge thereof. Even should no manifestations ensue, as we believe is generally the case, the intention to evoke the spirits is, of itself, a crime, more or less serious according to the circumstances."

His Lordship points out what Spiritual communications alone are lawful to the Christian man, and after which he should never cease to labor. We should endeavor to maintain a communication with the Holy Spirit, with the Holy Angels, and with the Spirits of the Blessed in Heaven; not by means of "Table Turning," and such like ignoble jugglery, but by means of fervent prayers, and a lively faith. These are the means by which the Christian man may hold spiritual converse with the unseen world, and with which he should be content, without seeking after communications with the spirit of darkness, who, as a roaring lion, still goes about, seeking whom he may devour.

Finally, seeing how almost invariably the use, leads to the abuse, and how much excitement prevails on this subject of "Table Turning," His Lordship recommends *all*, to abstain *altogether* from such practices, even in sport; though he does not pronounce them absolutely sinful, but only dangerous, as liable to lead to abuse. As to the "Spiritual Rappings," and attempts to communicate by any means whatsoever with the spirits, His Lordship condemns them as superstitious and impious—spiritually dangerous, and intellectually degrading:—

"We must never forget that as true religion honors our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, so all vain observances, all superstitious practices, are a worship offered in honor of the devil; a sacrilegious, and revolting worship; yet one which, to the shame of this enlightened age, is offered to the spirit of darkness. For, Dearly Beloved, be not deceived: there is superstition and devil worship in many of the practices resorted to now-a-days—whether it be to obtain a speedy cure, to recover goods lost, or to predict the future, &c.—It is superstition to put faith in, or be guided in our actions, by our dreams; it is superstition to consult persons who, for the sake of gain, at the expense of their dupes, profess a knowledge of the secrets of the past, the present, and the future.

"Be on your guard then against all the craft of superstition and error; and for this purpose, attach yourself more firmly to those practices of which reason approves, and which religion has consecrated. In all things, to your labors unite prayer; and, in order to succeed in your enterprises, to prayer, add the use of those natural and human means which God has given to man."

And thus, if we be industrious and diligent in our calling, and faithful in invoking the blessing of God upon our labors, we may expect a success, which Fortune Tellers, Spirit Rappers, Mesmerists, Electro-Biologists, and all the host of quacks, and impostors which swarm now-a-days, might promise us in vain.

We do confidently trust that His Lordship's Pastoral may have the desired effect of putting a stop, amongst Catholics at least, to the degrading and superstitious practices, which it so eloquently and forcibly condemns. We shall probably return to the subject next week.

The Irishmen, charged with having created a riot at New York, on the 4th of July last, have been tried, and found guilty by a Yankee Protestant Jury, packed in a manner to do credit to the ingenuity of the Sheriff of Quebec; a gentleman who has rather distinguished himself of late in that line of business, and has besides managed to acquire a little unenviable notoriety for making affidavits, which the Court could not believe, and which, if justice were done in

this world of ours, to the rich knave, as well as to the poor, would have exposed certain well-paid government officials to the risks of a trial for hard swearing, as well, as for bribery and corruption. But this is a digression.

On the 4th of July last, an Irish Society, called the "Society of the Ancient Order of Hibernians," celebrated the day by a public procession. Whilst thus peacefully and legally engaged, they were attacked by a body of Nativists and Yankee Orangemen, who commenced the fray by an attempt to break up the order of the procession, by driving a stage coach through its ranks. The Irish, who were naturally, and, it may be said, pardonably, irritated at such a wanton assault, pulled the driver off his box, but did not otherwise injure him. The Orangemen, Nativists, and other rowdy ruffians of the city, then rushed upon the procession, and commenced an indiscriminate assault upon the Irish, in which they were assisted by the police; a force, composed principally of Protestants, and as such, only too glad of an opportunity to pitch into the Popish Paddies. Of the latter, several were cruelly beaten, knocked down, and then, with wonderful impartiality, taken up, and committed to prison for rioting.

Their trial commenced on the 21st ult., before a Jury, from which the name of every Irishman, and Catholic, had been carefully erased. It was proved that the Irish had been insulted, abused, attacked, and severely handled by a ruffianly mob; and that the former had merely used force to repel force. It was however well known that the defendants were Irish, and Papists; and therefore the Jury had no hesitation in bringing in a verdict of "Guilty" against them; from which however, we are happy to learn that an appeal will be taken; and, in the opinion of many sound lawyers, this appeal will be sustained, so glaring was the partiality of the Jurors on the trial, and so manifestly contrary to the evidence adduced was their verdict.

GAVAZZI-ISM AT CINCINNATI.—Another attempt on the life of Mgr. Bedini, and most probably again at the instigation of Gavazzi, has been made by a large body of the Protestants of the United States. His Excellency had taken up his residence for a few days with the Archbishop of Cincinnati, and on one occasion had celebrated Mass in the Cathedral, a proceeding "most tolerable, and not to be endured" by the friends and champions of "civil and religious liberty." A violent conspiracy was consequently organized against the Nuncio; and about 500 scoundrels, members of a Protestant "Society of Freedom," marched in a body to the assault of the Archbishop's residence. The authorities of the City however were on their guard; and as the "Sons of Freedom," with shouts, yells, groans, and blasphemies, came forward to do battle for the Holy Protestant Faith, they were met by the Police, and after a short conflict, in which several were wounded, one mortally, they took to flight, leaving sixty of their number, prisoners in the hands of the Philistines.

This brutal and unprovoked outrage, upon a stranger, and an ecclesiastic, whose sacred character should have been a sufficient guarantee against all violence, and whose eminent rank has been rendered yet more illustrious by his many virtues—and above all, by his gentle, conciliatory and equitable administration of public affairs in his native land—which he carried to such an extreme, as actually to intercede for the life of the infamous cut-throat Ugo Bassi—this attack upon such a man, we say, reflects indelible disgrace upon the Protestants of the United States; who, by countenancing such fellows as Achilli, Gavazzi, and the blood-and-lust defiled wretches, whom the overthrow of Protestant demagogues on the Continent has driven to their shores—have encouraged them to proceed, from outrage to outrage, until they fancy that they can plot assassination, and carry into execution their nefarious schemes, with impunity. No doubt however that the respectable portion of the American Protestant public, are heartily ashamed of, and sincerely repudiate, the rascally conduct of their co-religionists. They should do more however; they should be active in discouraging, and in endeavoring to suppress, the "Know-nothing"—the "Orange"—and other infamous "Secret Societies" which, like a pestilence, are spreading over their native land, threatening her institutions, and from which these dastardly attempts at assassination are well known to emanate.

STATISTICS OF DRUNKENNESS.

A writer in the *London Times*, of the 9th ult., gives us some interesting statistics of drunkenness in the United Kingdom, from whence we glean the following details:—

The total consumption of ardent spirits in the United Kingdom amounts to 28,246,987 gallons, yielding a revenue of £8,587,399. Divided amongst the whole population, this would allow one gallon a year to every man, woman, and child, in the kingdom; but taking only the adult males, the proportions would be as follows. For every adult male in

England,	2 1/2 gallons.
Ireland,	3 1/2 "
Scotland,	11 "

Thus it seems that the Scotchman consumes annually, nearly five times as much ardent spirits as the Englishman—and more than three times as much as the Irishman. The difference betwixt the consumption of the Englishman and the Irishman may be accounted for by considering to what an extent beer enters into the consumption of the former.

The same writer adds—"that drunkenness prevails in Scotland, not only amongst men, but also amongst women, and young persons;" he adds also the following very melancholy facts:—

"A very interesting fact has lately been brought to my knowledge. In Scotland there is an association for the suppression of drunkenness, consisting of some

of the ablest as well as most energetic clergymen and laymen, who have been doing everything in their power for some years to put a stop to this evil, which in many places is destroying not only the mental, but ever the physical capacities of our northern brethren; but their total want of success has at length led the greater part of the society to the conviction that there must be some other substitute than tea and coffee, &c.; and at this moment it is under deliberation whether they will not urge upon Government a reduction of the duty on wine, in order, that it may again become, as it formerly was, the general beverage of the country, and knowing that where wine is accessible to all, drunkenness is exceedingly rare."

SNUBBING THE POSSEYTES.—The strange infatuation of these unhappy men, which still compels them, though the hirelings of a Government establishment, to ape the practices of Catholicity, exposes them to many a severe rebuff. The following, which we copy from the *Record*, is one of the latest:—

"Many of our readers know the amusing story of the Archbishop of Dublin, who cleverly cut short the preparations for a surpliced procession, accompanied by intonation, and all the other mummery of Puseyism, by going in his own private carriage, with his chaplain, to view a new church, and, after satisfying himself that all was right, intimating, to the mortification of the Romanizing Incumbent in attendance, that he might consider the church to be properly set apart, by Episcopal authority for Divine worship."

We think that the same system might be pursued with great success in the consecration of Non-Catholic bishops, and clergymen. Much time would be saved; our laughter would not be provoked by the ridiculous spectacle of a lot of Protestant laymen, playing at Catholicity, and calling themselves, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; and lastly, our religious feelings would not be shocked by the disgusting sight of those same sham ecclesiastics blasphemously pretending to confer the Holy Ghost; whilst, at the very moment they are thus taking the name of God in vain, they well know—and every body knows that they know—that they have no more power to confer any spiritual gifts, than has the cab-driver looking out for his fare on the nearest cab-stand. How much better would it not be, if Dr. Whately for the future, instead of going through the blasphemous farce of a sham ordination, were to content himself with a private inspection of the candidates for Holy Orders; and, having satisfied himself that they were tall and proper young men, inspired with a lively hatred to the Catholic Church, were to pronounce them properly set apart by Parliamentary authority for divine worship as "Established by Law."

We have received a letter from a "Subscriber," complaining of our incredulity in the matter of "Table Turning," and the accompanying "Spiritual Manifestations;" to which we would answer by referring our correspondent to the Bishop's Pastoral. As to the phenomena, we professed no scepticism; and having read Professor Faraday's explanation, we can see no mystery whatever in the "Table Turning" movements, though we do not attribute them to electric fluids, galvanic juices, or bottled essence of Mesmerism; in fact, we have yet to learn—"What is an electric fluid?" The phenomena arrange themselves naturally into two classes: the objective, and the purely subjective. The first may easily be accounted for on the hypothesis of an unconscious muscular action on the part of the operator; the second involve some curious psychological problems, upon the discussion of which we have not at present time to enter; but in neither do we as yet see the necessity of admitting any supernatural agency. That when a lot of men hold their hands on a table it can be made to move, is very certain, and not at all wonderful; for the explanation is to be found in the fact, that the hands always move before the table does, and in the same direction. The only wonder is, that instead of attributing the motion to its evident cause—the muscular action of the operator—men should have sought for the explanation of such a simple phenomenon, in the presence of spirits, or electric fluids. When our correspondent shall have clearly defined what kind of a fluid, an electric fluid is, we shall be more disposed to admit his hypothesis, and ready to discuss its *modus operandi*.

A writer in the *Transcript* asks, with much show of reason, why it is that an inquest has not been held on the bones which were discovered in the house of the man Alexander, lately arrested on the suspicion of having murdered his wife? Three medical gentlemen, of high standing in their profession—one Professor of Midwifery in the French Canadian School of Medicine—of the others, one the Professor, and the other Demonstrator, of Anatomy in the same School—swore most positively that the bones and teeth produced before the Police Court were human bones, and teeth. Coupling this—with the marks of blood visible on the walls of Alexander's house, in spite of evident efforts to conceal them by scraping—with the bloody rags, and other suspicious circumstances—it does seem that there is enough to authorize a closer examination into this mysterious case. We have not heard that as yet any medical men have given an opinion contrary to that of Drs. Trestler, Bibaud and Regnier. It therefore remains on evidence that the bones of a human being were found in Alexander's house; on the walls of which also there were marks of blood still visible, in spite of the attempts to scrape them off. In justice to the medical gentlemen examined at the Police Court, and in justice to the country, this matter should be further investigated.

We learn from the *New York Freeman* that His Grace the Archbishop of New York has been obliged, by the state of his health, to spend a few months in Cuba; whither he started on Friday last, accompanied by several other ecclesiastics of the diocese.