

From the Boston Pilot.

THE CONVENT QUESTION.

The unredressed wrongs of the Catholic citizens of Massachusetts has at last aroused their feelings, and the sympathies of the liberal and enlightened of all sects, to a movement which will ensure the triumph of justice and religious toleration in this State. The Catholic portion of our Commonwealth have for 8 years stood the silent observers of events in the hope that the storm of religious prejudice which imperiled their lives, and insolently trampled upon their rights, would be succeeded by a calm in which a sense of justice and humanity should repair and make satisfaction for their injuries. They had buried in their minds the recollection of the terrible outrage, that told them that in Massachusetts there was a formidable heaven of bigotry which endangered the commonest privileges of man; they endeavored, and successfully, to stifle the stinging feelings of indignation which such a deed was soon eminently calculated to stir up within the breasts of any class of people. They forgave the wrong in the hope that the law with its stern impartiality would be brought forth, and with its broad shield protect them in the enjoyment of their rights; they quelled the spirit of revenge which would have poured blood like water upon the soil of Massachusetts, and clung to the delusive hope that there was embodied in the Constitution and its Legislature, a principle of right which would be brought out in their defence. They never for a moment forgot that the lawless pillage of a mob was a convulsion in Society which at times threatens all classes who become obnoxious to them, until the plunder and devastation of the rabble was in some degree legalised and sanctioned by the Legislature. With unrivalled firmness and dignity, they bowed before the tornado that swept down their educational institution, and with calm and trusting hearts watched night after night by their altars to protect that last sacred retreat of the Christian from the brutal onslaught of the cowardly onscreeams who came flushed with impunity and success, from the smothering dwelling of innocence & helplessness. Under wrongs which would have mantled the cheek of a martyr, with one proud wish for revenge, they listened to the admonition of their Pastors, and nothing but a sigh escaped their indignant and swelling hearts.

But we have now a far more dogmatic and steady in their hostility, but who can be reached by the freeman's weapon of redress, the fearless INDEPENDENT BALLOT. We have before us a work which can be done with an open brow in the broad light of day, and with Union and Resolution, we may at last force the intolerant spirit that rears itself up between us and our rights, back into the dark recesses that gave it birth. We can put the burning shame-spot upon the brow of every man in this State, the hardness of whose prejudices emboldens him to come out in defence or palliation of that atrocious midnight work. We can with close ranks, and a steady eye upon the Legislative approvers and abettors of that appalling outrage,

drive from the councils of Massachusetts the men whose stultified consciences, and veteran bigotry have permitted the ruins of the Convent to stand a memorable monument of the injustice and intolerance of Massachusetts. With the host of friends which this long-delayed reparation has purchased for us in every section of the State, we may rival our original patience and forbearance by a triumphant effort to redeem the tarnished fame of the State: we who were the victims of the atrocity which raised us such a cloud of odium, may be the instruments of its dispersion, and once more place this old Commonwealth in her just rank in the republic. In the consummation of such a work, we best establish our right to have full and complete justice done, as it is the best proof of that the calmness and moderation which bore up against wrong, springs from the same spirit that can be energetic and determined, when a constitutional pathway is opened to redress. It will prove to our sister States whose execrations, have been poured out upon Massachusetts, for that deed, that the Catholics are not insensible to the audacious infringement of their rights, and that biding their time when the hour comes, they will make the BALLOT BOX speak trumpet-tongued of their strength and their resolutions to have justice.

Let it be understood that we have no intention of drawing off into a third party. We shall stand on a *third* ground between the two great divisions of party, and select our friends and denounce our foes in them both. Until this deeply important question is settled honorably and forever, we will repudiate all alliance to party. In both, we have stern, intendant bigots to encounter, and such men, whether Whig or Democrat, must be made to feel the strength and efficacy of a freeman's vote. We must mark them throughout the State with an infallible sign; and, with the great mass of intelligence and respectability of the State on our side, we can crush effectually their hopes of advancement, and deprive them of the power any longer to keep the honor of Massachusetts wrapped up in the memory of outraged women, and the pillage and robbery of defenceless children. We must extort from every candidate for office the confession of his sentiments with reference to this question; and if in favor, Whig or Democrat, bend our energies to his elevation to office; if opposed, Democrat or Whig, in the language of the Resolution of Thursday night; "make use of all honorable means to prevent his election to any office in this commonwealth." This is the position which we are at last obliged to fall back upon; we have seen three executive officers in the gubernatorial Chair of Massachusetts, who have never conceived this question of importance sufficient to induce a mention in their respective messages. Seven annual messages have been addressed and laid before the Legislature by John Davis and Edward Everett, without allusion to the ruins of Charlestown,—and Marcus Morton, fresh from the political triumph which we, in a great measure secured, has followed in the track of

his "illustrious predecessors," and kept profoundly silent upon the subject. Three Legislatures, under the ascendancy of both parties, have hurled it from their doors with indecent haste, and we would ask in all truth and sincerity, what have we to do now, but unite and choose the friends of religious rights and toleration from both ranks?

Let us but unite, and trample party distinctions in the dust, and next year the work may be done. It *must* it *will* be done. What are mere party differences, compared to the Legislative canonization of a principle which imperils our Altars and our own hearth-side? What point of State policy is there of more importance than a just and impartial protection of the freedom of conscience, and of person and property? What more, than security and immunity in the education of our children and the worship of our faith? Let these considerations sink deep into the hearts of the Catholics of this State, and on this ground let them meet and organize with their Protestant friends, and the transient distinctions of party will be consigned to the same oblivion which should be visited upon the men who have opposed this measure.

[We shall give the account of the Convent Question next week, to which the above is the Editor's preface.]

(From the Catholic Advocate.)

CHURCH PROPERTY.

We perceive from the Frankfort correspondent of the *Louisville Journal* that the Legislature of Kentucky has given characters to two churches (denominations not mentioned by the correspondent) into which is introduced the proviso that in case of division among the members of said churches, and withdrawal of a part, the church property shall belong to those who adhere most closely to the old faith of the society.

There are some things here worthy of observation.

First: there is in *said* proviso, an amusing comment upon the proverbial instability of Protestant Churches.

2dly. There is a manifested legislative preoccupation for those who remain steadfast to their traditional faith, and consequently a legislative reprobation of that much boasted "march of the human mind," which enables so many to make great discoveries in religion, and to introduce improvements, rendered necessary by the increased intelligence of the present wonderful age.

Now, is not this proceeding of the Legislature sufficient to excite the fears and apprehensions of all who hope for continual progression in religion, as well as in the arts and sciences? Here we have an indirect check upon the inventive genius of the members of said churches; an endeavor to keep them in *statu quo*, with a faith no better to-day, than it was yesterday, and allowing no hope of improvement for to-morrow. This is undoubtedly in direct opposition to the spirit of the present enlightened age, which encourages the human mind to aspire to the fullest and most perfect development of its mighty powers, and without exception throws open to its enterprise, every field of thought, and every mind of intellectual wealth, to be cultivated and explored. Why are the regi-

ons of Faith to be circumscribed by Legislative enactments? Why are men to be told "be contented with your forms and doctrines, for so sure as you attempt to improve, although a majority of you advocate the change, you lose your right to your church property, and the minority, adhering to the old faith, shall have the same to have and to hold for their own benefit?" Is not such a law most flagrantly at variance with the very essence of Protestantism? Is it not a virtual condemnation of all the glorious reformers who separated from the Catholic church? When *they* discovered *new things*; when their minds were enlightened by that intellectual meteor which shot up into the sky of Germany, and poured a flood of searching light upon "the mighty Babylon, revealing the horrors of its darkness, and the extent of its superstitions, to the astonished gaze of priest-ridden thousands;" when the shackles and fetters of church authority which had so long held the souls of men in bondage, were struck off by those heroes of the new Gospel; when men were all declared free to judge for themselves in matters of religion, "to search the scriptures," and to give full scope to their talents and ingenuity; in those glorious days, when Protestantism first appeared like a redeeming angel, to bless and cheer the human race—was it not a fundamental principle, carried into practice wherever it was possible, that the disciples of the new faith had a right to the church property, and could take it from those who obstinately adhere to the ancient faith? Look to those countries where the great reform was most triumphant; see how many cathedrals, chapels, oratories, abbeys, &c. &c., were taken from the Catholics. Read history, and see what spoils and plunder encouraged the new gossellers in their labour of love. Suppose such a law had been passed then, decreeing all the church property as of right belonging to those who adhered to the old faith, what would have been the melancholy result? Men would have had no inducement to improve their religion, they would have remained contented as they were, and at our day England would perhaps still acknowledge the authority of the Pope. Such a proviso introduced by the Legislature is then a virtual reprobation of the most vital principle of Protestantism. Let the alarm be sounded, let all rally to the rescue, who wish to see encouragement given to continual improvement in religion, as well as in the other departments of knowledge, and the concerns of mankind.

GUINEA AND SIERRA LEONE. — We again draw attention to the wants of this most interesting mission, as detailed in an advertisement inserted elsewhere. As we anticipated, Lord Stanley finds himself unable to give the Bishop of Constantia any hope of being provided for out of the local revenue or Parliamentary grant. His Lordship will be warmly recommended by the noble Secretary to the English Governors and Commandants upon the African coast. To the aims of European Catholics, however, he will have to look for his support. — *Tablet*.