

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

We beg to remind our Correspondents that no letters will be taken out of the Post-Office, unless prepaid.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JUN 3.

NEWS OF THE WEEK

As both Danes and Germans have been by the diplomats of Europe bound over to keep the peace towards one another for the space of one month, which commenced on the 12th ult., we have nothing to record this week in the shape of "naval victories, bombardments" or other warlike achievements. In the meantime the diplomatists are masters of the situation; and though the task before them is no easy one, it is still hoped that they will be able so to adjust matters as to stave off a European war, though as yet they have done nothing to justify such expectations.

Of the domestic political news the most important items consist in the defeat of the Ministry in the House of Commons on Wednesday the 21th ult., by a majority of 56 upon the question of extending the franchise. Upon this occasion Mr. Gladstone delivered himself of a remarkable speech, in which he declared himself in favor of universal suffrage, and of giving an equal share in the Government of the country to every man not incapacitated by personal unfitness or misconduct. This is looked upon as rather strong, as almost too democratic for a Minister of the Crown, and a representative of the University of Oxford. From Ireland we regret to learn that the *Exodus* in spite of the favorable prospects for the harvest of 1864, proceeds with undiminished vigor. The *Weekly Register* mentions a fact, strongly suggestive of the feelings entertained by our excellent Queen towards Garibaldi, and those of her subjects who disgraced themselves by their abject adoration of the unclean *fétich*—that "it is worthy of remark that, in the list of persons specially invited to attend the Queen's Court on Wednesday, not a member of the Sutherland family is to be found."

Northern telegrams as usual report brilliant victories by Gen. Grant over the Confederates, and Gold under the influence of the exciting news rises at once to 94, thus showing what credit is placed in the report by sensitive brokers. We believe that the latter know more about the war, and are better judges of its prospects than "special correspondents" or telegram manipulators; and from these financial operations we are inclined to infer that in spite of their hard fighting and their superior numbers, the Northerners are still unable to make any permanent impression upon the Southerners.

PROCESSION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

Sunday last, the 29th ult., being the Sunday within the Octave of the Feast of *Corpus Christi* was distinguished by the customary solemn rites of our holy religion. At an early hour the pupils of the Christian Brothers' Schools, with flags and music, the schools of the Religious Sisterhoods, the different religious and National Societies, mustered in front of the Parish Church; from whose portals at about 9.45 A.M., the procession sallied forth, His Lordship the Bishop of Montreal bearing in his hands the precious Body of Our Lord beneath a magnificent dais, which was immediately followed by the St. Patrick's Society, the other Irish Societies, and the Irish Catholic congregation generally, forming altogether an imposing array.

In this order the Procession passed along by Craig Street, St. Lawrence and St. Catherine Streets, to St. Denis Street, where a handsome *Reposoir*, or altar, had been erected for the occasion, and from which a solemn Benediction was given to the kneeling thousands, prostrate in adoration of Our Lord really and truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

The Procession again moved along St. Denis Street, across which several elegant arches of evergreens had been erected, to Notre Dame street, along which it passed to the Parish Church, whilst from its towers the bells pealed forth their loudest and most triumphant notes. Here again Benediction was given, and with this, this solemn and imposing rite was brought to a conclusion.

The weather was all that could be desired. A pleasant breeze tempered the rays of the sun; the streets through which the Procession passed were dry and yet free from dust; and in spite of the thousands who formed part of the Procession, and of the immense crowds gathered to behold the spectacle, there was not from first to last any serious disturbance or confusion. For this we are indebted to the exertions of his Honor the Mayor, and the Police under his orders, and to the courtesy and good taste of our Protestant fellow-citizens.

The *Witness* in its notice of the Procession complains of violence offered to Protestants, and mentions an outrage upon some ladies, whose carriage was stopped, horses kicked, and coachman cruelly treated by an infuriate Popish mob, aided and abetted by the Police; who chased the unfor-

tunate man to his own home, and after abusing the inmates, dragged him out by force. Another account represents the coachman as the aggressor; as having with malice driven over several children in the Procession, and as having been arrested by the Police for this outrage on the spot. As the matter is to be made the subject of investigation in the Recorder's Court, we will not anticipate the action of that tribunal by attempting to decide betwixt these conflicting statements. In our next we will lay the facts, as elicited in Court, before our readers.

FEAST OF "CORPUS CHRISTI" AT TORONTO.

—We regret that at Toronto this solemn festival was signalled by a serious riot, and an attempt on the part of the Protestant population to prevent the rites of the Church being celebrated, not in public, but in the garden of the Cathedral, and the private property of the Church. In consequence of the threats of the Protestants and a message from the Mayor, His Lordship the Bishop of Toronto, for the sake of peace waived his legal right to a public Procession, a right guaranteed to the Church in Canada by solemn treaty; and announced his intention to confine it to the Church and his own garden. In the afternoon about 5 p.m. the Procession took place, when the Protestant mob outside, as we learn from the *Toronto Globe*, attempted to force an entrance through the "gate next the Cathedral, on Bond street." The Catholics inside attempted to defend their own property from this brutal intrusion—and a fight ensued. "The panic became general," we still quote from the *Globe*—and a fearful scene of confusion took place amongst the little girls of the schools, who ran for shelter in every direction. Fortunately no lives were lost, but the *Globe* congratulates its readers—that "the interruption" by those Protestant rowdies—"had the effect of shortening the proceedings." We will give further particulars of this brutal riot in our next; but in the meantime commend the above to the notice of the *Witness* as a specimen of the religious liberty that obtains in Upper Canada.

Through the columns of the *Globe*, Mr. Geo. Brown is loudly felicitating the Clear Grits or Protestant Reformers of Upper Canada, upon the success of his motion, to which we alluded in our last. Here are some of the congratulatory expressions in which the *Globe* indulges, towards Lower Canada, which already it looks upon as an easy prey, because deserted, or rather betrayed, by its own representatives, by those who should be its defenders. Be it remembered that, in the course of the debate Mr. Brown, speaking in the name of his friends, and of all the Protestant Reform party of Upper Canada, declared, over and over again, that "Representation by Population" was the only remedy, or "Constitutional Reform," which would in any manner tend to satisfy the people of the Western Province:—

With four-fifths of Upper Canada all but unanimous, and with the remaining well divided in our favour—with many Lower Canadians admitting the necessity of considering the difficulty under which Upper Canada suffers—the friends of constitutional reform have the best prospect before them.—Eight Lower Canadians, by their votes for Mr. Brown's motion, committed themselves to a consideration of the question of Constitutional Reform, while several of the absentees, we are informed, were prepared to take same course. We have, therefore, a decided majority of the whole House committed to an admission of the evils growing out of our present constitutional system, and to an earnest and calm inquiry as to the best remedy. So much we have never had before. Only let the members of the Committee of all shades of opinion address themselves seriously and honestly to the task set before them, and we shall have strong hopes that further progress will be speedily made. The friends of Constitutional Reform have now a vantage ground that they never enjoyed before.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION.—It is no unimportant matter that the Canadian Parliament has at length voted that the constitutional difficulties of the country shall be considered. For years the need of constitutional reform has been urged upon the attention of the Legislature. Repeatedly has an overwhelming majority of the Representatives of Upper Canada voted in favor of a fair solution of the difficulties. But never till now has the majority of the whole House sanctioned a proposal for the earnest consideration of the whole question. An important step has thus been taken. A committee appointed by Parliament, and containing many of the oldest and most prominent members of Parliament, is now to meet for the serious consideration of the difficulties which have rendered the good government of the country well nigh an impossible task. All sections and all opinions are represented in that committee, and if its members can be got to set earnestly about the work entrusted to them, we may certainly hope that their deliberations will tend to a good result. The present position of political affairs is calculated to convince the most inveterate opponent of constitutional reform, that something must be done. The antagonism between the two sections arising mainly, if not wholly, out of the injustice of our representation—is fatal to the satisfactory working of our system of government. Crisis succeeds crisis—session after session barren of legislation passes—election after election is held—and still the situation is nothing improved. If a Government is acceptable in one section, it is weak in the other. A strong Administration has apparently become out of the question, and without a strong Administration the country falls to get necessary legislation, while the finances are either corruptly managed, or at least managed without that vigor and that thorough economy which a strong Government might give. Even those who have profited by these difficulties must now see that the "system" cannot last, and that a remedy must be found. If those who have hitherto resisted all demands for constitutional reform are wise in their generation, they will set themselves honestly and earnestly to the duty which the House has imposed upon them.

We must bear in mind, we repeat, that with the *Globe*, and those whose opinions that journal reflects, "Constitutional Reform" as applied to

Canada, is the synonym of "Representation by Population." The *Globe* therefore naturally, and we think quite reasonably, accepts the late division on Mr. Brown's motion as a great step in advance towards that measure, which means death to Lower Canada.

"*Chateau qui parle, et femme qui écoute, tous les deux font bien vite se rendre,*" says the French proverb; or as the English equivalent has it—"A Council of War never fights." It is with these things in their memories that our enemies so loudly, and indeed so reasonably sing their song of triumph over the late vote. When a garrison consents to enter into negotiations with its assailants, it is a proof that it has no longer confidence in its means of defence, and that its surrender cannot be far off. The woman who listens, even for one moment, to dishonoring propositions is lost; and in like manner, the Upper Canadians are not altogether wrong in concluding that, since the representatives of Lower Canada, have consented to accept a *parlementaire* from their assailants, and have thus virtually already entered into negotiations for the surrender of the citadel, the fall of the place is at hand; that, since the guardians of Lower Canadian honor have lent willing ears to dishonoring propositions, the barriers of modesty and maidenly reserve have been broken down, and that the ruin and degradation of Lower Canada are as good as accomplished. A commanding officer never summons a Council of War but when it is his object to find a decent excuse for not fighting, or for showing the white feather: and in like manner, of our Lower Canadian representatives who voted for Mr. Brown's motion for a Committee, it may be said that their real design is to betray the interests committed to their keeping; and at the same time to make the best possible terms for themselves, should another revolution of the political wheel restore the "Outs" to office, and thus make it profitable to them to transfer their services to the enemy's camp.

The *Globe* fully endorses what we have often said as to the impossibility of devising any modification of our present form of Government which shall prove mutually acceptable to Upper and to Lower Canada. It says, "If a Government is acceptable in one section, it is weak in the other;" and it must be so, because of the irreconcilable antagonism which proceeds from the religious and ethnological diversities of the two Provinces—and which will remain in force until such time as one race, or the other, shall have been "improved off the face of the earth." "Constitutional Reform" such as the *Globe* and its friends call for, might have the effect of stifling the voice of Lower Canada, and of rendering her indignant protest against the injustice inflicted upon her inaudible; but it would aggravate rather than mitigate the discontent which of people would feel at being placed at the mercy of an alien and hostile race.

As to the "injustice of our representation" of which the *Globe* complains, we need only repeat that, until the Upper Canadians shall have proved their right to a Legislative Union with Lower Canada at all, it is impossible for them to establish their right to a Legislative Union under any particular conditions; and where no right is infringed upon, no injustice is done. A Legislative Union may be defended upon grounds of expediency and of common advantage; but neither Upper nor Lower Canada can claim such a Union upon the grounds of right or justice. This simple consideration disposes of the plea of "injustice;" and if the Upper Canadians like not the terms of the existing Union, they are at liberty to dissolve it. If Lower Canada had in the first instance imposed, and still insisted upon maintaining that Union, and upon terms unfavorable to Upper Canada, then indeed, but under such circumstances only, would the people of the last-named section of the Province be entitled to raise the cry of "injustice;" but no wrong is done them, in that the Lower Canadians refuse to accept a Union at all, except upon the condition of "Equality of Representation"—for the simple reason that the latter are not bound in "justice" to assent to any kind of Legislative Union with their Western neighbors. It may be—though into this question we care not to enter—for the commercial and material interests of both that they should be bound together in Legislative Union; but no wrong or injustice would have been, or would be, done to either, had that Union never been contracted, or were it to be repealed to-morrow.

THE RECIPROCITY TREATY.—Our Yankee neighbors have been threatening us with terrible things, because we do not sufficiently love them—or admire their goings on against the Southerners.—They have been holding over our heads as a terrible rod, the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty; and Canada was, in punishment for its offences and Southern sympathies to be made desolate by the withdrawal of the commercial advantages which that Treaty conferred upon it. After much talk however our neighbors have apparently discovered that they are as great gainers as are the Canadians, by that Treaty; and in consequence the discussion of its Repeal has been postponed until the second Tuesday in November next.

There is at the present moment a Bill before our Provincial Parliament for giving a Divorce to certain parties named therein. We have been asked whether our Parliament is competent to pass such a Bill.

By "competent" we suppose that our querist means legally and morally entitled to perform a certain act; and understanding him in this sense we will give him our reply—and first as to the legal competence of our Provincial Parliament to pass a particular Divorce Act.

Such power was always claimed and exercised by the Imperial Parliament, but it does not thence follow that it is inherent in our Provincial Legislature. According to the theory of the British Constitution the former is legally omnipotent; it holds from none, and its legitimate functions are absolute and unlimited. The morality of its acts may be called in question, not their legality; for it has no legal superior on earth, none therefore by whose laws it can be bound, or whose laws it can infringe.

Our Provincial Parliament, or Legislature on the contrary is the creature of the Imperial Legislature; holding from the latter, and exercising only limited and delegated functions. It is not Sovereign or supreme as is the Imperial Legislature; and therefore it may be admitted that it may exceed its legitimate functions, since it cannot pretend to the legal omnipotence which the Constitution recognises as inherent in the Imperial Parliament. For instance, our Legislature is not legally competent to pass a Bill of Attainder; the Imperial Parliament is.

The latter also—and this seems to us an important distinction—can in virtue of its peculiar composition, exercise judicial as well as legislative functions. The House of Lords, one branch of the Imperial Parliament, is a Court of Judicature as well as a Court of Legislature. In the exercise of its judicial functions it was legally competent to determine the truth of the criminal allegations upon which the Divorce Bill before it was based; and it was—it seems to us—in virtue of this two-fold power, of these double functions—judicial and legislative—that the Imperial Parliament, before the erection of a special Divorce Court, undertook to hear, and try the complaints of married parties, and to give legal remedy in the shape of Divorce *a vinculo*. So much for the legal aspect of the question, upon which however we confess that we pronounce our opinion with much diffidence, seeing that it is surrounded with difficulties. As to the moral competence of the Provincial Parliament to pass a Divorce Bill there can be no two opinions.

No Court, so tribunal upon earth, civil or ecclesiastical, is competent to grant to parties validly united in Christian marriage, a divorce *a vinculo* under any circumstances. The law of Christian marriage, "one with one, and for ever," is not of man's making; it is not merely a commandment of the Church which the Church is competent to suspend, mitigate or annul; but it is a Law of God's own making, and which under no conceivable circumstances either King or Pope, High Court of Parliament, or General Council can set aside, or allow to be violated.—The civil magistrate may indeed exempt from all civil penalties those who violate its provisions; he may give legal sanction to polygamy and adultery; and accord to the impure and sinful unions of divorced persons the same civil effects or consequences as are attached to valid Christian marriages; but naught that he can say, do, or enact can render such divorces valid in the eye of God, or absolve those who are parties thereunto from the consequences of mortal sin should they in consequence thereof contract other sexual unions. Whom God hath once joined together, man cannot put asunder; death alone can dissolve a validly contracted Christian marriage; and a Divorce is merely an exemption awarded by the civil magistrate to parties already married, from certain legal pains and penalties, and civil disabilities which attach to the offence of bigamy.

It follows therefore that the Provincial Parliament is, morally, as incompetent to pass a Divorce Bill as it is to pass a Bill authorising incest, or bestiality, and abrogating the entire of the Decalogue at once.

The Catholics of Scotland, and of Scotch origin throughout the world will be happy to learn that there are prospects that their native land is soon to be restored to that dignity of a Christian and Catholic country which she forfeited by her apostasy in the sixteenth century. The Holy Father it is said, deems that the time is now arrived for giving Scotland a Hierarchy of her own; and that for this purpose Edinburgh is to be raised to the rank of an Archbishopric See—to which the Right Reverend Monsignor Talbot, brother of Lord Talbot de Malahide will be promoted, with the dignity of Primate of Scotland. Other Episcopal sees will also it is said be created, but the names of their future occupants are not as yet designated. Such at least is the substance of an article in the *Dundee Advertiser* a Scotch paper, which we sincerely hope may be correct.

The *British American* is the name of a paper published in Kingston, which, in its issue of the 19th ult., thus discourses on the respective liberality of Catholic Lower Canada and Protestant Upper Canada, on the School Question:—

It has all along been claimed by the bastard Protestants who have supported the claims of the Hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church for separate schools in Upper Canada, that the Roman Catholics of Lower Canada were more liberal to the minority in that section, than the Protestants of Upper Canada were disposed to be to the Roman Catholic minority in their midst. This turns out to be unfounded. It seems more concessions have been made to the demands of the Hierarchy in the West than to the convenience of the Protestants of Lower Canada.

We say again to the *British American*, as we have already said to the *Witness*, that hitherto the Protestants of Lower Canada have had no cause to complain of the hostility of their Catholic fellow-citizens on this question, seeing that as yet it has not been brought before the notice of the Legislature. It is for the Protestants of this Province to state their grievances in petitions to the Legislature, and to embody the reforms which they ask for in a Bill. When they shall have done this—when the truth of their allegations of unfair usage shall have been substantiated—and when their demands for redress shall have been generally opposed by the Catholic press, and the representatives of Lower Canada—then, but not before, will the *British American* have the right to sing out, and to complain of unfair treatment.

For our own part, we hesitate not to avow our opinion that, in every respect, the Protestant minority in Lower Canada should, in the matter of separate schools, be put in as favorable a position as are the Catholics of Upper Canada; and that, if to the former any legal obstacles to the formation or support of their separate schools still exist, those obstacles should be immediately swept away. We pronounce no positive opinion on the allegations of hardship made by our separated brethren; they may well be true, for the Lower Canada School Law is certainly not perfect, and may be used as an instrument of oppression to minorities whether Catholic or Protestant; but we believe that, were the two Laws—that of Upper, and that of Lower, Canada—laid side by side and carefully compared, it would be found that the dispositions of the latter in the matter of separate schools are at least as favorable to the Protestant minority, as are the dispositions of the Upper Canada Separate School Law, to the Catholic minority of that section of the Province. But whatever the state of the law, it is for the Protestants, if they deem themselves aggrieved to take the initiative; and we think that we may safely promise them that no Catholic in Lower Canada will grudge to them any advantages or facilities in the matter of separate schools which are actually enjoyed by the Catholic minority of the Upper Province.

The following truthful and striking passage from a speech lately delivered by the Marquis de Bossy in the French Senate, upon the disgraceful orgies enacted in London in honor of "The Revolution" and "The Dagger" personified by Garibaldi, was omitted in the official report of the debates published by the *Moniteur*. The correspondent of the *London Times* gives it as follows:—

"We have seen—oh shame of our epoch! shame on a certain country, but not on us!—we have seen the heir to the Crown of England soil his Royal hand with the touch of a filibuster who calls Mazzini his master and his friend. It is '93 which is announced to England, and which I desire as a merited punishment. The Revolution cajoles Princes, it flatters them, and the day it can get no more from them it devours them. It is well. Let not the imprudent Prince who thus dishonors and lessens himself be deceived: the step which he has taken in descending so low, is the first step towards the scaffold."

The sting of these words of the Marquis lies in their truth, and by every true loyal British subject will be acutely felt. That the Prince whom we would all delight to honor, that the son of the good Victoria, that the heir of a hundred kings should so demean himself, so forget what is due to his dignity and to his royal office, as to visit a low revolutionist like Garibaldi, the bosom friend of Mazzini, Greco, and other Continental convicts and galley-slaves of a similar stamp—must be felt by every English gentleman as an indignity and a national degradation. Yes, it is dangerous for Princes of the Blood to coquet with the Revolution, as the end of Philippe Egalité clearly shows to all generations.

In the selected matter of the *Evening Telegraph*, we find the following little story which we transfer to our columns, because of the light that it throws upon Protestant Missionary triumphs in the Levant:—

"Some innocent American missionaries, who founded a school among the Nestorians, were much delighted by the cheerfulness and regularity with which three scholars, the sons of a widow, attended at their seminary, and the comfort and benefit they were glad to declare that they derived upon all occasions from the instruction provided for them. This agreeable state of affairs lasted about three weeks, when the old lady, their mother, sent in a bill for their attendance; and upon the astonished missionaries making some objections to pay a demand so unexpected, she at once removed her children from the school, saying, 'that they were not slaves to work all day for nothing; and that the politicians which they had hitherto shown in reading the missionaries' books for them had its limits, and was now exhausted.'"

His Lordship the Bishop of St. John's, N.B., has been amongst our visitors during the past week.