

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JAN. 7, 1859.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

After a stormy passage, the America, from Liverpool 18th ult., arrived at Boston on Monday. The Irish journals not only confirm the strange tidings of the arrest of a number of young men, upon the serious charge of being members of a Secret Society engaged in a treasonable correspondence with a gang of Yankee filibusters, having for its object the invasion of Ireland by the latter—but add, that the conspiracy was much more widely extended, and that its ramifications were far more numerous, than was at first suspected. There had been, so it is said, an organisation on a large scale, for the purpose of making war on the British Government; there had been importations of arms from the United States, an extensive manufacture of pikes, daily, nightly drillings of the insurgents; and the insurrection was almost ripe, when the Government interfered, and crushed it. Such is the story as told by certain Irish papers, but we are "free to confess" as they say in another place, that we believe scarcely a word of it.

In the first place the deponents are for the most part in the employ and pay of the Government; and in the second place, whenever that Government has entertained the design of inflicting Coercion Bill upon Ireland, it has always first endeavoured through a hirling press, to convince the world that such severe measures were rendered indispensably necessary by the insurrectionary proclivities of the Irish peasantry. There exist moreover in Ireland, and thrive to a degree unprecedented in any other country, a nasty class of bipeds known as "informers."—The infamous trade of these gentry consists, 1st. in catching the peasantry to form, and organise themselves into, Secret Societies; and 2d in giving information to Government against their dupes, for whom they receive a previously stipulated amount of "blood-money." By this simple process, and by the employment of these useful agents, the Irish Government can always get up a formidable insurrection at the shortest notice; and find a valid excuse in the eyes of the world for inflicting a few additional pains and penalties upon the Popish peasantry of Ireland. So in this instance, we read, that the authorities had availed themselves of the late arrests, and had greatly "improved the occasion," by letting loose large bodies of military and militia upon the inhabitants of the south-western portions of the island; and by appointing Special Commission for the immediate trial, or rather summary conviction, of the prisoners.

The Continental news is still very warlike.—Lombardy seems on the brink of a general insurrection; and that insurrection means war between France and Austria.

PROTESTANT INCONSISTENCY.—We have but to read the reports of the sayings and doings of our Protestant proselytising Missionary societies, to be convinced of their absurdity and inconsistency. Against those societies, as applied to the perversion of Catholics from the faith of their ancestors, Protestants themselves are the best witnesses; for they prove, what we have always asserted, that it is not Papists, but Protestants who stand in need of the missionary; and that the ignorance of, and insensibility to divine things of the latter, frankly admitted by Protestants, are greater, even than that imputed by the mendacious agents of the French Canadian Missionary Society to French Canadian Papists.

We have lying before us for instance, in the columns of the Quebec Gazette of the 29th ult., the Report of the Wesleyan Missionary Anniversary; the Wesleyans being prominent amongst those who profess a tender interest in the benighted condition of the Catholic population of Lower Canada. Let us hear then what our zealous Protestant friends have to say for themselves; and from their own lips let us learn the spiritual condition of that holy protesting society of which they so earnestly desire to make us members, and in whose glorious privileges they are so anxious that we poor benighted Papists, should participate.

The Reverend T. Derrick is the speaker; and he is describing the religious and spiritual condition, not of the French Catholic, but the English Protestant portion, of the population of Lower Canada. Let us listen to him.

"They had heard"—said the speaker—"of the want of light in heathen lands; but he stood before them, not as a Missionary whose sphere of labor was in the far off Eastern Indies, but as one whose work was nearer home—in the Eastern Townships. He would tell them, too, that in these townships there were countrymen of their own living who had never heard a sermon preached, who had never listened to, far less joined in prayer and supplication. He had been in a house inhabited by such persons not very long ago; and he had knelt down to pray, and had prayed earnestly in their midst. Whilst he was thus engaged he felt something pulling at the breast of his coat; on looking down when prayer was finished, he found it was a lovely little girl who was looking up in his face wondering and amazed to see him in such a position, and to hear him speaking with such earnest tones. The father apologised for its con-

duct, by stating that the child had never before seen a man upon his knees, never before had listened to the voice of prayer."

Such, by Protestant testimony, is the spiritual condition of a large portion of the Protestant rural population of Lower Canada; does any intelligent person believe that there is anything like thereunto amongst the French Canadian and "Romish" portion? or that there is a single Catholic householder in Lower Canada whose family have grown up in such complete ignorance of their religious obligations? Ignorant no doubt, in many respects are many of the latter; but amongst the poorest and most ignorant, you will not find one who from his infancy has not been taught that there is a God to Whom prayer is due; and who has not, at some period of his life, joined in humble prayer and supplication to the throne of grace. Such gross ignorance, such brutal oblivion of, and insensibility to divine things, as that described by the Rev. T. Derrick, is to be found only amongst Protestant communities, or the savage aborigines of New Holland.

And such being the case, are we not justified in denouncing the pretended missions of Protestant "Swaddlers" to our Catholic habitans, as a mockery of reason and of religion—as an insult to God and man? are we not authorised in applying to those "Swaddlers" the words spoken of old to the Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, who like our modern colporteurs compassed sea and earth to make one proselyte; and having found him made him tenfold more the child of hell than themselves?

AN IRISH MORTGAGE CASE.—In the Irish Courts, Lord Chancellor Napier has lately delivered judgment in the case of certain Catholic orphans, which has excited much interest, and furnishes an appropriate pendant to the Mortara business. The facts, as produced in evidence, are very simple, and may be thus briefly stated.

John O'Malley, the deceased father of the children in question, married to a Protestant woman, was during his life a very bad Catholic indeed; so negligent in short of his duties, so indifferent to all religion, and of morals so lax, as almost to pass for a Protestant. On his deathbed however, he sent for his priest, and endeavored to reconcile himself with his God; shortly after which he breathed his last, leaving strict injunctions with his widow to bring up his children as Catholics, and in the Church according to whose form they had been baptised. Within a few months the mother died also, leaving the children orphans; and the question then arose—to whom should their guardianship be entrusted?

Two claimants appeared. One the paternal uncle of the children; who being himself a Catholic, placed the Catholic children of his deceased Catholic brother, and in compliance with the latter's clearly expressed last request, in Catholic institutions to be educated as Catholics; apparently a very natural and laudable arrangement.

But lo! another claimant appeared in the person of a well-known mother in the Protestant Israel, and a prophetess highly esteemed in the House of Swaddlers—who is also spoken of by the profane, as the "Bishopess of Tuam." This eminent "professor" having discovered that there was a maternal aunt of the deceased O'Malley's children, who was moreover a Protestant, stirred her up to claim their guardianship; and hereupon the action of the Law Courts was invoked.

The process was very short and simple—the judge in the case being himself a Protestant, and the friend of "Swaddlers." He very quickly found therefore that the Court was bound to consult, not the dying wishes of the father, but the interests of the children; and it was for their interests that they should be brought up apostates to the religion of their fathers, and as sound Protestants. Upon these grounds therefore the Chancellor overruled the father's authority; and ordered that the children, eight in number, be dragged by force from the hands of their natural protectors, and consigned to an evangelical "Swaddling" establishment, in order, as the Herald would call it, to be made the victims "of a mechanical conversion." This is justice as betwixt Catholics and Protestants as administered by Protestant tribunals. The sequel, and concluding scene of this edifying story we give in the words of the correspondent of the Dublin Nation:—

"The eldest boy of the O'Malley's has been torn off by brute force, under circumstances which give a complexion to the Lord Chancellor's statements about the 'Protestant impressions' of the children, which ought to cover him with shame. In this case there was no one by to encourage the boy, even by a look, to any resistance; his master expressed himself indifferent as to the boy's religious course. But the lad, with a vehemence which was painful to the last degree, resisted his legal kidnappers as he would the most abhorred executioners. I will give in, as far as possible, the words of one of the Messrs Smyth, (to whom he was bound as bootmaker) an account of the affair. About eleven o'clock to-day the police stationed themselves not merely in front of Smyth's house, but they took their stand in front and rear, right and left of the house at such distance as would secure and put into their hands any one endeavoring to escape; this arrangement palpably shows that the parties looking for the boy expected that he was not willing to go with them and that he would endeavor to escape. "Shortly afterwards a Rev. Mr. Fowler, Mrs. Jane Robinson (the aunt), and Mr. Drury (holding the Chancellor's warrant), entered Smyth's house. Mrs.

Robinson at once said 'Oh, William is this you; is it here you are?' The boy was then sitting at work on his seat; he at once sprung from it and went between his master and the wall and said, 'I don't want to know you at all; I know the treatment you gave my mother and myself when we were with you before; you starved us and sent us back to the work-house.'

"Oh, William," exclaimed the woman Robinson as if much surprised, 'don't take me this way, that's not the way your sisters received me yesterday when I took them out of the convent of Tuam; (this, as you may see, was a falsehood which she told him for a purpose. The sisters made similar resistance). 'I don't care,' replied the boy, 'I won't go, I'll stop with my master.' Mr. Smyth then said, 'It seems you know this woman, William.' The boy answered, 'yes, sir, I know her well from the way she once treated me.'

"At this stage of the conversation Mr. Drury produced the warrant, and said he claimed the boy for Mrs. Robinson, his guardian. A conversation then ensued about Smyth's right to hold over a boy apprenticed to him according to law; Mr. Drury in the meantime making the utmost possible use of the Chancellor's name as to testify Smyth.

"The Rev. Mr. Fowler at this time seemed shocked at the inhumanity of proceeding further with a boy whose convictions seemed so determinedly fixed. Smyth then asked the boy, 'will you go with Mr. Drury with us?' The boy said, with passionate emphasis, 'I will not go with her, I will stop with you.' Drury then collared him, and Mrs. Robinson laid her hands on his back to force him out. Mr. Smyth said that he or his brother would not interfere with the boy's religion—but he might go 'to church or chapel as he pleased.' He was then asked whether he would be a Catholic or a Protestant. He said, 'I will be a Catholic; I will not be a Protestant; no, never.'

"Before they collared him they asked him several times to go with them, and he refused, always answering in the most determined manner that he would not go. At length Drury collared him in the manner I have alluded to, and the aunt like a 'bally ballif,' assisting absolutely, forced the boy out, he in the meantime crying most bitterly, and making vain but painful efforts to resist or escape. A curious way of showing the veracity of so great a man as the Lord Chancellor, whose heart was so touched by anxiety to respect the boy's 'Protestant impressions.'

To fully understand the meaning of the decision recorded above, it must be remembered that in the case of Alicia Race—the daughter of a deceased Protestant father, but who by will made his Catholic widow the guardian of the child—the Court ruled that the daughter be torn from her mother, and be brought up as a Protestant. And this iniquitous decree, despite the prayers and tears of mother and child, was fully carried into execution.

"THE CONDITION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN AMONG THE CELTIC, GOTHIC, AND OTHER NATIONS." By John McElheran, M. R. C. S. E. Boston, Patrick Donahoe.

This is not a work for which we would bespeak an extensive circulation either amongst the enemies of our Church, or of the Irish people; lest we should run the risk of being credited with the false ethnology, and the worse theology, which the author has ingeniously contrived to compress within the compass of some four hundred pages. If on the one hand the absurd self-laudations of the Anglo-Saxons are enough to disgust one, the absurdities with which our "Member of the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh," has contrived to cram his book, must excite our wonder; either at the ignorance of the writer, or his cool assumption of the ignorance of his readers.

Scorning to follow the old path of ethnological investigation, our author, as he himself informs us, p. 25, "has broken up new fields of inquiry in the reports of hatters, dentists, hair-dealers, &c.," and has arrived at a series of conclusions utterly irreconcilable with the teachings of ethnography and history, and altogether at variance with the conclusions arrived at by the most eminent Catholic philosophers and theologians of modern times.

The great discovery of Mr. McElheran is this—that the higher civilization, and purer morality of certain members of the great Indo-European family are to be attributed, rather to the mysterious effects of race, than of grace; and proceed, not so much from the supernatural gifts of God, as from a certain happy development of the cerebral organs. These conclusions our author supports by a very simple process, and one by no means uncommon amongst a certain class of controversialists. He coolly assumes the truth of all facts which appear to countenance his theories; and as coolly rejects all those which decidedly militate against them.

Thus for instance, he starts with the assumption that a certain physical organization, common to and characteristic of all the Indo-Germanic races—Celts, Teutons and Slavens—is peculiar to the Celt; and without a moment's hesitation, he discards the facts with which the modern science of ethnography furnishes us, and which have clearly established the fact, not only of the common origin of, but intimate connection between, those two races, one of which he designates as Celts, and the other as Goths; both members of the Arian or Indo-Germanic family, and alike separated by indelible marks from the Turanian stock, with which he confounds the Goth or Teuton. Had our author devoted some of those hours which he passed amongst "hat-makers, dentists, and hair-dealers, &c.," to the study of comparative philology, the indispensable basis of all sound ethnology, he would not have fallen into this ridiculous blunder; he would not have been guilty of the almost incredible absurdity of jumbling together, as he does at pp. 20, 30, Goths, Fins, Huns, and Turks!—and of confounding Gothic with Tartar races!

In like manner a little acquaintance with the facts of history would have prevented him from confounding the Franks or French—with whose

capacity for civilisation he admires, and whose virtues he extols—with the Celts, or Gallic race whom they reduced to slavery in the V. century under their leader Clovis. The Franks were a German or Teutonic, and not a Celtic race; of which their Salic law—whose Gothic origin our author admits—is a conclusive proof. The "French Conquerors" or Franks—whom in company with "the Irish," our author at p. 144, justly lauds for putting a stop to the sale of Anglo-Saxon slaves—were of the self same Gothic, or rather Teutonic stock, as that to which the conquered Anglo-Saxons belonged. They were the descendants of the Norse-Men, and the Salian Franks—the introducers into Gaul of their peculiar Salic law; and therefore as thoroughly Goths, as those whom they subdued. They were of that Teutonic stock which gave to all Continental Europe its chivalry, which made the name of Christendom glorious throughout Asia, terrible on the field of Ascalon, and before the walls of Acre. Bayard, the Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche, came of that Gothic or Teutonic stock; to it we are indebted for the greater part of our music, our poetry; and last not least, that glorious architecture which has almost made the name Gothic, the synonym of all that is beautiful, of all that is highest and purest, of all that is most truly noble and expressive of Christian sentiment, in art. And yet this Member of the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh, has the amazing audacity to tell the world in the middle of the XIX century, that "the Goth is always, and in all circumstances utilitarian."—(surely then the Yankees must be the only genuine Goths)—"with little of the soul that distinguishes humanity from brutality; that he has little or no faculty for poetry, music, or abstract science," p. 26. Oh, hosts of "utilitarian" crusaders! brave soldiers of the Cross! how will ye receive these tidings? Oh Ruskin! Ruskin! what think ye of this reviler of the Gothic in art?

As a specimen of the summary process by means of which our author gets rid of all testimony unfavorable to his hypothesis—that, even before the introduction of Christianity amongst them, the morals of the Celtic race were of a higher order than those of the other members of the Indo-Germanic family—we may be permitted to quote the following.

Cæsar in his treatise De Bello Gallico, l. v., tells us that the Britons in bodies of ten or twelve, had their wives in common, chiefly brothers with brothers, and fathers with sons:—

"Uxores habent deni, duodecime inter se communes, et maximo fratres cum fratribus, et parentes cum liberis; sed si qui eunt ex his nati, eorum habentur liberi a quibus primæ virgines ductæ sunt."

This explicit declaration of a close observer, and trustworthy witness as to the immorality of the heathen Britons, and the degraded condition of their women, is cited by the illustrious Spaniard Balmes in support of his thesis that European civilization is a plant of Christian growth; and that it is to the grace of God, rather than to any virtue inherent in particular races, that we are indebted for our higher and purer morality, as compared with the morality of the best of heathen nations. But this evidence is destructive of Dr. McElheran's pet theory; and so he coolly disposes of it, by the simple assumption that Cæsar was wrong, and prejudiced against the Britons. We quote the passage as an amusing specimen, both of the author's style, and of his critical acumen:—

"Cæsar was not very exact or nice in his account of the British race, that drove him and his vast army into the sea. He says that the Britons had wives in common, brothers with brothers, and fathers with sons, and that the children were given to him who had first taken the women. Cæsar's word may appear sufficient evidence, but it is obvious that he was under a misapprehension of British custom. Anciently it was considered a dreadful misfortune to die without issue. In such case, the Jews, and I believe the Phœnicians, gave the widow to her deceased husband's brother, in order that he might raise up children for his brother. The same custom may have prevailed in South Britain; and therefore Cæsar was right in saying that the children belonged to the brother who first espoused the woman."—p. 120.

This conclusion from "posse" to "esse" is most amusing; and is only exceeded in comicality by the bonhomie with which the author attributes to the painted denizens of British forests, the peculiar institution of a Semitic race. But though he thus attempts to account for the community of wives between brothers and brothers, Dr. McElheran will, we think, hardly deem it a satisfactory explanation of the other part of Cæsar's story—to the effect that, amongst the Britons, fathers and sons had wives in common. Cæsar must, therefore, be discredited as a competent witness; though when the same witness testifies to the depravity of the German heathen races with whom he came in contact, his evidence is to be received without a moment's hesitation. To such miserable shifts, and palpable inconsistencies, is our author reduced by his attempt to maintain an untenable hypothesis.

If we speak thus harshly of Dr. McElheran's book, it is not that we deny the truth of a great many of his statements as to the brutality and filthiness of a very considerable portion of the middle and lower classes of society in the British Islands at the present day; but this we attribute to their Protestantism, and not to their race, or Teutonic origin. It is to the absurd stress which our author lays upon "Race," and the little importance he attaches to "Grace," that we object, as false in theology and unsupported by facts.

It is notorious that the most impure, the most degraded people in Great Britain are Protestantised Celts; as for instance the Welsh Methodists—whose "bundling" is but another name for "Free Loveism;" and "The Men" as they style themselves, in the Western Highlands of Scotland, who carry the principles of Calvinistic Anti-nomianism to their ultimate logical consequences. At the same time we agree with the author that the purity of the Irish Catholic Celt, is beyond suspicion. The women of Catholic Ireland are, as a rule, as chaste as they are beautiful; but this we attribute to their faith and not to their race, to the Sacraments of the Church whose most faithful children they are, and not to their Celtic blood. Dr. McElheran is quite right when he denounces the absurd glorification of a mythic Anglo-Saxon race; but he should beware lest he himself fall into precisely a similar error as that which he condemns in others.

The fact is, the greater part of this controversy about "race" is sheer humbug, in so far as the natives of Great Britain are concerned.—Amongst the aristocracy and gentry the Anglo-Norman type predominates; amongst the lower classes the Anglo-Saxon element is stronger; but amongst all classes there is, we suspect, a strong dash of Celtic blood. There have been great and good men amongst all classes; in the practice of the natural virtues, British Protestants have often set an example which it would be well if all Catholics would imitate; and we cannot, therefore, but consider the work under review, which denies to the Teutonic members of the Indo-Germanic stock the possession of a single good moral quality, as very disreputable both to the head, and to the heart of its author. That he should execrate the wrongs perpetrated upon his own brave countrymen is natural, and indeed laudable; that he should feel indignant at the wanton insults offered to Ireland by scribblers in English journals is pardonable enough; but it would have been well if he had kept in mind throughout the progress of his work, the words he puts into his Preface, to the effect that "we cannot glorify Celts, by debasing Saxons; whilst as a Catholic he should have known that it is only by the grace of God that the former are what they are—and that before Him, neither Celt nor Teuton has any cause for boasting or self-glorification.

CANADIAN HOMES, OR THE MYSTERY SOLVED.—A Christmas Tale. By Maple Knot. Author of Simon Seek.—An amusing story, and as the product of a Canadian author, eminently deserving of Canadian patronage.

It is with deep regret that we have to announce the total destruction by fire of St. James' Church in St. Denis Street, on Tuesday night, the 4th inst. This Church, which was one of the handsomest ecclesiastical edifices in British North America, has been but recently finished at an expense of some £30,000, and its loss will be severely felt by the Catholics of the neighborhood. The cause of the calamity is said to be the overheating of the flues.

The Superior of the Seminary returns his sincere thanks to all the Fire Companies of the City for their noble exertions to save the Church.—All that men could do, they did.

The Courier du Canada must excuse us for this week as we have no space at our command. In our next we shall endeavor to explain ourselves.

MR. MCGEE'S LECTURE BEFORE THE ST. PATRICK'S LITERARY ASSOCIATION.

On Thursday evening of last week, 30th ult., T. D. McGee, Esq., M.P.P., delivered, in the Bonaventure Hall, the inaugural address before the St. Patrick's Literary Association of which he is President. Several of our Catholic clergy were in attendance, and the body of the room was crowded with a numerous and highly respectable audience. The learned gentleman, who on presenting himself on the platform, was received with loud applause, then addressed his audience to the following effect. We copy from the Herald:—

After stating that he had been elected President of the St. Patrick's Literary Association, he said that custom had established that the presiding officer of a Society should deliver an inaugural address. Having explained the objects of the Association, such as the mental improvement, etc., of the Irish youth of the city, Mr. McGee proceeded with his lecture. He said—"The world fairly admits the existence of a very active Irish intellect in two departments—namely, in the department of oral eloquence and in another in which wit and humor are prominent. It is supposed by those who adopt whatever notion they find current, that these faculties of eloquence and wit, are, in the case of the Irish people divorced from the more solid and patient energies which would enable them to excel in the acquisition of languages or in the exact sciences. It is said that the perseverance necessary for acquaintance with the exact sciences is to be found more in the German, English and Scotch, than in the Irish mind; and so it happens that the credit given us is usually accompanied with the good-natured regret that we are not blessed with more solid and persevering qualities. [A laugh.]—Let us now see if our ancestors were wanting in the faculties for which the world gives us no credit. We will take three different periods of our country's history; the first, the Celtic period, from the fifth till the tenth century; second, the medieval period from the tenth till the Reformation; third, the modern period, from the Reformation till our own time. Our first native princes, with all their faults, were, without a single exception, the friends of science and the patrons of learned men; they flourished in the first period. But the second period was the middle age period of Europe; Ireland, at this time, was in a state of constitutional anarchy. In the third and last period, we find learning proscribed, and those who ought to have been the instructors of their race, were driven into banishment, to seek that fair play denied to them on the soil of their birth. Ireland, after receiving the Christian religion, received also an important element of cultivation—a knowledge of the Latin language. It is stated that St. Patrick, during his life, conferred holy orders on three thousand persons; and at all events, we have it in the ecclesiastical history that at the time of his death there were three thousand persons possessed of the language, and the consequence of the key to some knowledge of the literature of ancient Rome—up to this time it will be remembered that the population of the island was to be reckoned by thousands; it had not yet reached a