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HENRY CHAPMAN & Co.,
St. Sacrament Street.

Montreal, March 1853.

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY AFTERNOON,
At the Office, No. 4, Place d'Armes.

TERMS:

To Town Subscribers. . . . \$3 per annum.
To Country do. . . . \$2½ do.
Payable Half-Yearly in Advance.

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, AUG. 5, 1853.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

Up to the time of going to press, the mail steamer had not been telegraphed. The news from Europe by the last arrival presents little of interest. The Eastern question remains a question still, and seems to defy all attempts at solution: the negotiators being at a "dead lock" as Mr. D'Israeli remarked in the House of Commons. The demands of Russia, as contained in Nesselrode's last note, are exorbitant; the withdrawal of the British and French fleets from the mouth of the Dardanelles being insisted upon before the Czar will consent to recall his troops from the invaded Principalities. Though peace, peace, is still on every body's lips, the general impression seems to be that war is inevitable. The disposition of Austria is very uncertain.

A gentle passage of arms betwixt Lord Shaftesbury of Exeter Hall notoriety, and Lord Mornington has terminated without effusion of blood. The evangelical peer having referred his opponent to the police court, and his solicitor, for satisfaction, Lord Mornington rejoined by telling Lord Shaftesbury that he was impertinent, and was not a gentleman; a proposition which nobody seems inclined to deny.

The project for extending the line of electric telegraph across the Atlantic, from Galway to the eastern point of the American continent, a distance not exceeding 1700 miles, is about to be carried into execution. A contract has been offered for making the wires, varying from £300,000 to £800,000. In Ireland the 12th passed off quietly; the crops are generally reported good; but in certain localities the potato disease is again making its appearance.

Another serious accident has occurred on the Delaware Railroad, by which 10 persons have been killed and 15 wounded. The sufferers seem to have been all Irish labourers.

THE GAVAZZI RIOTS.

There are two circumstances connected with this unhappy affair especially note worthy.

First—That the Zion church, said to have been attacked by an Irish mob on the evening of the 9th of June, did not, on the following morning exhibit the slightest marks of violence having been offered to it. Not a pane of glass in its windows was broken: not a scratch even was there to be seen on the paint work, or panels of its doors.

Second—That, though amongst the victims of these riots, we can enumerate Irish Papists who were murdered by Protestants, and Protestants and Catholics, who were killed by the fire of the troops, not a single Protestant's life has been taken by the riotous Irish Papists. These are facts, not without a deep significance, and which no amount of misrepresentation can affect. Having premised this much we will proceed with our narrative.

Although the events of the preceding days, coupled with what had occurred at Quebec, had caused much irritation, and anxiety as to what might be the result of Gavazzi's appearance in Montreal, it was hoped that all would pass over quietly; that all Catholics would abstain from taking any notice of a low blackguard like the lecturer, and leave their Protestant fellow citizens at full liberty to say and do anything they pleased, within their own buildings. Accordingly, about half after six, Gavazzi, attended by his friends proceeded to the lecture room, without insult, or molestation of any kind. The Zion church in which the lecture came off rapidly filled; and a strange spectacle did its interior present. We have the details from Mr. Bristow, one of the witnesses at the inquest, and who was himself inside the church during the lecture.

Near the pulpit, the audience seems to have been decent and sober enough; but about the door, and in the passages between the pews, were gathered together as "riotous and disorderly" a mob of ruffians as were ever collected inside the four walls of one building. Oaths and execrations against Papists, almost drowned the voice of the lecturer; whilst drunken blackguards, waving their bludgeons and pistols over their heads kept crying out for the "face of a d—d rebel." In fact the interior of this Protestant place of worship bore, for the time, a strong resemblance to that of some low brothel, or drinking house during a debauch; and the worship, if to such proceedings the name of worship may be applied, might easily have been mistaken for the Devil's Matins, or a Witches' Sabbath.

The howlings and vociferations of this "riotous and disorderly" (vide evidence) assemblage of "worshippers" naturally attracted the attention of people in the streets; of whom a crowd, numbering—accord-

ing to the evidence of Dr. McDonnell, a Protestant gentleman, living within a couple of hundred yards, or so, of Zion Church—from 200 to 300 persons—"including men, women, and children"—had by this time assembled. The voice of the lecturer could be heard as far as Dr. McDonnell's house; and the crowd gathered round, and in the vicinity of the church, to listen to what was going on inside. From time to time the howlings of the "worshippers" provoked counter cheers from the crowd collected outside; but no violence was offered; and, in the language of Dr. McDonnell, who was watching the whole proceedings—"no attempt was made by any person to get into the church." This evidence of Dr. McDonnell is further corroborated by that of a host of other witnesses: of Colonel Ermatinger and Capt. Ermatinger—who were on the ground, and who swore they saw no attack made on the church—of Mr. Sprohlon, who was seated in the gallery of a house opposite the church, taking notes of all that occurred, and who positively swore—"that he saw no attack, though he must have seen it, had one been made"—of R. McDonnell, Esq., a Protestant gentleman, who was inside the church, and who testified that, during the whole time, "he neither saw, nor feared any attack;" and of every respectable witness who was examined on the inquest. But we need not appeal to the evidence of these witnesses to convince any reasonable person of the falsity of the assertion, that either Zion church, or the "worshippers," were attacked. The appearance of the church itself is a sufficient refutation of the lie; for, what kind of an attack must that have been, would we ask, which left not a trace on the building attacked? It is not thus with Catholic buildings, attacked by Protestant mobs. The blackened walls, and smoking rafters of the Charlestown Convent, long bore unmistakable testimony to the attack of a genuine Protestant mob upon a few inoffensive, and unprotected ladies; the ruins of Catholic chapels, and houses at Stockport, destroyed last summer by another Protestant mob in England, still tell the tale of Protestant brutality, and Protestant intolerance. But what marks of an attack does Zion church bear? or what traces are there of the assault made thereon by a Popish mob? Not one; not the slightest. It must be admitted that, when Protestants attack Catholic Churches and Convents, and wage war against women and children, they do not do their work thus negligently; they fail not to leave behind them traces of their assault.

But though there was no attack on the church made or offered, the crowd, and the increasing excitement, evinced by the increasing noise made by the people outside, in response to the howlings of the "worshippers" within, alarmed the police. As a measure of precaution they commenced pushing the crowd back. At first—and here we are merely quoting the evidence of Dr. McDonnell—the crowd retired quietly; the police still kept pushing them back; and the crowd gave way, until it was driven some distance from the church. But the mob, as mobs often will, became at length restive, at being pushed, and shied about, by the police. It was not till then that, in the words of Dr. McDonnell, "the mob became excited, and commenced to resist the police." The mob refused to retire any further; several individuals of whom it was composed exchanged blows with the police; and in the rear, others took up, and threw, stones at them, by which one or two policemen, as well as Colonel and Captain Ermatinger, were struck. "Altogether" says Dr. McDonnell, "the number engaged in the riot amounted to from 30 to 50." Now, we don't attempt to offer any excuse for this conduct; these 30 or 50 persons had no business to resist the authorities, to strike them, or to throw stones; and we only regret that the police did not succeed in arresting the more riotous of them; but this was rendered impossible by the conduct of the armed, and more lawless, mob inside the church, who now sallied out, and fired upon the crowd.

These fellows, who had been watching for an opportunity to take revenge for the row at Quebec, thought this a fine opportunity to make a display of their Dutch courage. Half drunk, and thoroughly brutalised, these ruffians rushed out of the church, immediately upon hearing the scuffle betwixt the police, and the crowd; and, "without the least necessity" (vide evidence) opened an indiscriminate fire upon the crowd below, which had the effect, not only of thoroughly dispersing the mob, already routed by, and retreating before, the police, but of dispersing the police as well (vide evidence.) Then growing bolder, as they became more assured that there was no danger, these valiant champions of Protestantism waxed almost heroic in their drunken valor. They ran after, and nobly shot down, an unarmed, and inoffensive man named James Walsh, who was running away, and otherwise greatly distinguished themselves; until finding that there was no enemy in front, they returned to the church, and resumed their devotions, unmolested by the police, who were intimidated, and overawed by their numbers, and the display of arms. Why did you not arrest the murderer of Walsh, when you saw the murder committed? was a question put to the police. "Because," they replied, "we did not dare do so, lest we should have been shot ourselves; and we were not in sufficient force to make such an arrest in the presence of the armed party in the church." Thus we see,—if the majesty of law was violated,—that the culprits are to be found, not amongst the Irish Papists only, but the "riotous and extremely disorderly" mob of Protestants, so graphically described by Mr. Bristow in his evidence before the Coroner's Jury.

Upon the subsequent events we need not dwell, as they are sufficiently familiar to all our readers. The troops were called out, and drawn up in front of the church, as a protection to the audience against the mob, now rapidly increasing in numbers, and furiously excited by the wanton murder of Walsh.

This demonstration sufficed to allay the tumult, and, but for the unaccountable firing of the soldiers, there is no reason to believe that any more lives would have been sacrificed. Why the troops fired—or by whose orders—is still a mystery which is not likely to be ever fully cleared up; and though great blame attaches somewhere, it's impossible, from the conflicting statements, and the contradictory evidence adduced on the inquest, to decide where.

But from the discussion of this much vexed question we will refrain: our object being to vindicate the Irish Catholics of Montreal from the charge unjustly brought against them as a body, that they were the instigators of, and responsible for, the fearful loss of life upon the evening of the 9th of June. That the crowd who collected in the vicinity of Zion church during the lecture, were blameable, we admit; we admit, that the "30 to 50 persons" who resisted the police with violence, were rioters, deserving of punishment; we fully admit that they had no business, directly or indirectly, to interfere with, or insult, either Gavazzi, or any who chose to go and listen to him, much less to strike, or throw stones at the police in the execution of their duty. All this we admit: but we protest against attributing this illegal and offensive conduct to a whole class of men, of whom the immense majority, both before, and after the outbreak, did their best—and many at no small risk to themselves—to preserve the peace, and to cause the unmistakable right of their Protestant fellow citizens to be respected. That their exertions were not wholly successful must be attributed, in a great measure, to the brutal conduct of the armed party within the church, and to their indiscriminate firing upon an unarmed and fleeing mass. It was this wanton act that roused the indignation of the mob, and led to the excitement which rendered a repetition of Gavazzi's lectures so dangerous to the public peace, as to induce many Protestants to recommend their discontinuance.

We have so often, and so fully expressed our opinions as to the legal rights of Protestants to do and say what they liked within their own conventicles and meeting-houses—and of the duty of the civil power to protect them in the exercise of that right—that we think it unnecessary to repeat them.—That even the semblance of an interference with this right should have been offered, is a subject of deep regret to every Catholic; because, of all men, Catholics are most interested, in asserting and contending for the true principle of Religious Liberty, and in condemning all acts of violence, lest, by their silence they should give their sanction to the brute violence which, since the days of Luther, Calvin and John Knox, has been exercised against them, and whose records are still to be read in the ruins of churches, convents and monasteries throughout England, Scotland, and every country where Protestantism has ever gained any ascendancy. Next then to the terrible loss of life, we regret the opportunity that the Gavazzi riots have furnished Protestants, for representing Catholics as inimical to "Freedom of Discussion"—and ever ready to have recourse to force. For this purpose, these riots have been ridiculously misrepresented—and the facts connected with them have been—sometimes grossly exaggerated, at others suppressed—but always shamefully distorted. A trifling skirmish betwixt the mob and the police has been magnified into an attack upon a Protestant place of worship; but scarce a word has been said about the brutal murder of unarmed men, by the party from the church; whilst the obscene and blackguard language applied by Gavazzi to Catholic priests and nuns, has been either passed over in silence, or openly defended, as by the *Montreal Gazette* who can see nothing intemperate in calling a clergyman a "murderer, a soul of the devil or of satan himself"—in speaking of the Nuns of the Order of the Sacred Heart as "devils—very charming devils—but still devils"—(we quote from the printed report of Gavazzi's lectures, "corrected and authorized by himself")—or in his filthy insinuations against the Sisters of Charity, whom he represented as "corruptors" of female innocence, and accomplished procurers. We do not cite these foul insults as offering any warrant for violence, even against the foul-mouthed blackguard who uttered them; but, we do say, that justice requires that they should be taken into account in judging of the conduct of those against whom these insults were directed. It is because these facts have been suppressed, and the amount of violence, resorted to by a few hot-heads in consequence, has been grossly exaggerated, that the conduct of the Irish Catholics of Montreal has been so harshly judged; it is in the hopes, that an impartial examination of facts may yet lead to the revision of that judgment that we have endeavored to represent them in their true proportions—naught extenuating, naught setting down in malice.

FREEDOM OF DISCUSSION.

The *Montreal Gazette* asks—"Does freedom of discussion exist here?"—At the same time defining this "freedom" to mean the right of all men freely to speak, and write their opinions upon all subjects, provided they do not unjustly injure private reputation, or advance doctrines specially reprobated by the laws as *contra bonos mores*. From this definition we may conclude that the *Montreal Gazette* admits that "freedom of discussion" has its limits which the speaker may not overstep; and that where an "unjust attack upon private reputation" begins—"freedom of discussion ends." We will, for the sake of argument, accept our cotemporary's definition and limitation and apply them to the case of his friend Gavazzi:—

But lest we should be misunderstood—or rather misrepresented—we state distinctly, that we do not undertake to defend—nay that we repudiate—the proposition that because Gavazzi's lectures were

offensive to Catholics, they should not therefore have been allowed to be delivered within a private building; or that any man, or body of men, had the right to offer any obstruction to the lecturer, or insult or violence to the audience. Still we do contend that—if the definition of "freedom of discussion" as laid down by the *Montreal Gazette* is to be accepted as determining and limiting the right of every man to speak his mind freely—then Gavazzi, in his lectures, far overstepped these limits; and that therefore, even had he been forcibly prevented from lecturing—which we deny—no violence would, in his case, have been done, to "freedom of discussion," as defined, and determined, by the *Montreal Gazette*.

The limits to "freedom of discussion" as laid down by our cotemporary, are—that no man shall by speech, or in writing, unjustly, or what is the same thing, falsely, attack private reputation. But Gavazzi's lectures did most falsely, and therefore, most unjustly, attack private reputation. In them, from beginning to end, there is not to be found one word of argument, or the slightest attempt at reasoning from acknowledged premises. Nothing but the lowest ribald abuse of Catholic ecclesiastics.

GAVAZZI'S LECTURES.

"Oh de Priests! my brethren—Oh de Nuns! my brethren—Oh de Sisters of Charity! my beloved brothers—De priests, my dear brothers. Dey are de devil, my beloved brethren—dey are murderers my brethren—men of bloods and slaughters my dear brethren—dey are de soul of de Satan my brothers.—Destroy de nunneries my dear ladies—very nasty things is done in nunneries my dear ladies—dout let your daughters go to dem dear ladies—dey will be corrupted—Oh de nuns! dey are de Devil. Oh de priests! dey are de very Devil—de Jesuits are de soul of de Devil."—*De Capo*.

Such—eked out with "gesticulations, and silent but expressive face-workings," as his editor styles the grimaces of the buffoon—was the staple of Gavazzi's lectures; such the trash, that for hours, with scarcely a variation, he poured forth, and to which gaping ninnies sat, and listened with intense delight, as to the most sublime eloquence that ever fell from mortal lips. If then, to denounce innocent men as murderers—accomplished ladies and gentlemen, as devils—and a whole body of Ecclesiastics, renowned for their virtues and indefatigable charity, as souls of Satan, be an unjust attack upon private reputation—as we contend that it is—Gavazzi did far overstep the limits of "freedom of discussion" as laid down by the *Montreal Gazette*; and his friends have no right to complain that in his person, the "freedom of discussion has been violated.

For it is an unjust attack upon private reputation to call a man, falsely—"cruel—cruel-hearted, and animated by a cruel nature against all beings of mankind"—to tell him that he is a "murderer"—(that he is at the head of a society for "murders and assassinations"—that "he is the soul of Satan, the soul of the Devil himself." Will the editor of the *Montreal Gazette* pretend to say that, if any man came up to him, and applied to him all, or any, of the above epithets, he would not pitch "liberty of speech" and "freedom of discussion" to the devil, and pitch into his insulter right and left? Would he not knock the fellow down who should dare thus address him? And small blame to him if he did.

Now Gavazzi did apply every one of the above epithets to the clergy and nuns of the Catholic Church, without exception; and particularly to Irish clergymen. Either then, these attacks were false and unjust, Gavazzi himself a black-hearted liar, and his applauders nothing better, or else, Mgr. Bourget is a cruel-hearted monster of "blood and slaughter"—the Rev. Mons. Billaudel is a "murderer" and a limb of Satan—the clergymen of St. Patrick's church are members and chiefs of a society for "murders and assassinations," and the Catholic Clergy of Canada, generally, are "souls of Satan, souls of the Devil himself." If our Clergy do not merit to be so branded, then were they unjustly attacked in their private reputations, and therefore, having overstepped the limits of "freedom of discussion" as determined by the *Montreal Gazette*, neither Gavazzi nor his friends, can complain, that, in his case, this "freedom" has been violated, or outraged.

We are sick of these expressions—"Freedom of discussion," and "Liberty of speech," from Protestant lips; they are cant, bare unmitigated cant and hypocrisy. Either they are intended by the Protestant to denote something different from what the Catholic means by them, or they are not. If they are not so intended, then it is cant and hypocrisy to employ them as if they were, or as if they were peculiarly characteristic of Protestantism. If they are so intended, still is the employment of these expressions by Protestants nothing but cant and fustian; because their practice is always at variance with their professions. The Catholic claims "Freedom of discussion" and "Liberty of speech"—though it is precious little of either he would enjoy if Protestantism were as powerful as it is malignant—but avowedly under certain restrictions and within certain limits, defined and determined, not by the caprice, or private judgment, of any number of fallible individuals, but by God Himself; and these limits are, the good and the true. Every man has the right to say that which is true and good;—no man has the right to say that which is false and evil. These are the only limits to "freedom of discussion" which the Catholic recognises. If the Protestant recognises these limits, it is sheer hypocrisy for him to set himself up as, in some especial manner, the champion of "freedom of discussion"; if he does not recognise them, he is none the less a hypocrite, for his practice constantly gives the lie to his professions. No Protestant would tolerate in others the unlimited "freedom of discussion" which he claims for himself.

Were some foreign Catholic lecturer of infamous