

Church Observer.

"One Faith,—One Lord,—One Baptism."

MONTREAL, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 1870.

THE FENIAN RAID.

In our last number, we adverted to this most iniquitous attack upon our country, viewed, mainly, with reference to the attitude of the United States. We now pass from that to a few thoughts on the mercy of God, displayed towards this country in this matter. Our sense of the evil conduct of sections of the people in the United States is undiminished, and our conviction as to the duty of the governments of Great Britain and the United States to put an end to this brigandage from the territory of the latter is, if possible, stronger than ever,—so strong, in fact, that we should not like to write what we feel, but which, we are sure, would meet with a response in very many hearts.

There is no doubt that the preparation made for the invasion of this Dominion of Canada was very formidable, and as little doubt that, if those preparations had only been partially successful, the partial success would have been followed up by desolating hordes, who would have spread unutterable violence and bloodshed over our peaceful land.

Now what earthly refuge does this country possess? On what arm could she rely in such a crisis? What earthly power was there to stay the threatened havoc? It might be said the United States Government would never suffer such a cruel wrong to be inflicted upon an unoffending and friendly people. We have no desire to speak harshly, and, therefore, we will ask every reader to consider the thoughts of his own heart, and to trust in the action of the United States in case of such an invasion; his reflections will be more severe than anything we care to write. Another might say, England would put forth all her might for our succour. Well, suppose this admitted; and that on the 26th of May, after two days' conflict, our brave men had been driven back,—that there would have been no repetition of the Colonel Peacock and Captain Carter affairs,—and the swarms who were ready to issue from almost every city and town in the neighbouring States, encouraged by the first signs of success, and lusting for plunder and license, clustered in thousands upon our borders,—suppose that, on the 26th May, it was discovered that we were not strong enough to stem the invading flood, and that telegrams for help were despatched to England, in the ten days that must elapse before her troops could be by our side, can you picture the horrors that might have been enacted?

Another, however, might say, our trust was neither in the United States nor in England, but in the strong arms and brave hearts of our sons. Very good—with certain conditions the true and right feeling. Now consider who were, at the two points of attack, to present their breasts, and form therewith a rampart against the foe. Were they not the choicest of our loved ones? We do not forget the brave British soldiers who were there; but our object now is to make this city and the surrounding country feel what desolation and mourning and woe would have been brought home to all, and, more especially, to individual hearts and homes, if this invasion had been permitted to develop itself, as might have been expected; and as even now it is difficult, by human reasoning, to understand why it did not. How many brave lads of our best families must have fallen! How many of those who are now the light and joy of happy homes, and in many instances their support, would have

been filling bloody graves! How many, with shattered health and mutilated frames, would have been lying on beds of pain and anguish! Surely every one must recognize the hand of God, in that we are spared all this, and yet have not felt the scourge. Surely it is impossible not to acknowledge the sparing mercy of our Heavenly Father. Surely we must give all the glory to the Lord of Hosts. The frustration of the designs of the foe at the very outset,—the complete protection of our defenders, so that not one is hurt,—point distinctly to the Lord God Omnipotent, and demand our grateful adoration; and we are glad that the Metropolitan so promptly called upon the diocese to unite in lifting up the voice of thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father. God grant that the sacrifice of grateful hearts may continually ascend before the throne of grace.

We have seen in some papers a cry for blood,—the blood of the prisoners. God forbid! God forbid that it should be gratified. As we have received mercy, let us show mercy,—no vengeance. "Vengeance is mine," saith the Lord, "I will repay."

THE WYMERING CONFIRMATION.

It is a common resource of the members of a weak, aggressive party to represent themselves as the victims of persecution—a cheap and often an effective method of engaging the sympathy and support of the unwary. Those who have opposed ritualism in the Anglican Church, and have appealed to the law to make their opposition effectual, have, naturally enough, incurred the odium of uncharitableness. But if anything could show that the Protestant section of the church are largely endowed with the charity that "hopeth all things, and believeth all things," it would be the hopes that were entertained respecting Bishop Wymering on his translation to the diocese of Winchester. Many were so sanguine as to believe that his lordship's removal from Oxford would dissociate him, at least partially, from the party of which he had, till then, been one of the most formidable champions, and that in his new see he would discountenance the innovations which he had allowed to be introduced in his former charge. Observations made by his lordship, on several occasions, both prior and subsequent to his translation, were eagerly received, and interpreted as indicating a wish to recede from the position he had hitherto occupied, and assist in the conservation of the pure doctrine and simple ritual of the Reformed Church of England. These expectations found further encouragement in some of his early administrative acts in his new diocese, from which the most favourable inferences were drawn.—We must confess that we never saw much reason to hope for so radical a change in his lordship's views and feelings. Our observation of the course of men occupying high political and ecclesiastical positions made us chary in accepting these auguries as so very favourable; and we are glad of it, as we do not now share the disappointment of those who took a more hopeful view of the matter than ourselves. We could not believe that a prelate so completely identified with the High Church party would suddenly break loose from it, simply on account of his translation from a diocese in which that party was dominant, to another in which it was comparatively feeble. We believed that the Right Rev. Samuel of Winchester would be precisely the same as the Right Rev. Samuel of Oxford, and we regret to find that our judgment was correct.

The Rev. Mr. Magee, the vicar of Wymering, in the diocese of Winchester, is an advanced ritualist. For eight years he was the diligent coadjutor of Mr. Bennett, of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, where

he was fully initiated into the mysteries of albs, stoles, birettas, chasubles, altar-lights, elevations, etc., etc., all which he has introduced at Wymering, to the disgust of his parishioners. Bishop Sumner showed his disapprobation of the vicar's proceedings, by declining to perform the rite of confirmation in his church, as well as in other ways equally significant. Bishop Wilberforce has done what his predecessor in the diocese declined to do—has sanctioned the proceedings which the latter systematically condemned. Judging from the reports published in the ultra-ritualist organs, the paraphernalia surpassed anything hitherto seen on such occasions. A clergyman who took part in the procession, writes to the *Record*, apologizing, we may say, for his participation in the outlandish ceremonial, and saying that at the time he was so much grieved and amazed that he scarcely knew what to do. But how about the Bishop? He did not utter a word of remonstrance, or show a sign of disapproval. The address which he delivered subsequent to the administration of the rite was calculated to confirm the sanction which his silence had seemed to give. He may have disapproved of the performance from beginning to end—as one apologist charitably suggests—but neither by word or deed did he signify his disapprobation.

We see in the following description of what took place at Wymering subsequent to the Bishop's visit, and which the *Church Herald* rightly describes as "unparalleled since the Reformation," the first fruits of this memorable confirmation:—

On the festival of SS. Philip and James, in the parish church of Widley, Hants., there was a special early celebration of the Holy Eucharist to enable those parishioners who had been confirmed a few days before at Wymering to make their first Communion. They were much pleased to observe that the females wore their white veils. The demeanour of all was most devout, and must have been very satisfactory to him who had bestowed so much pains on their instruction. An incident occurred which is probably unparalleled since the Reformation, viz. the solemn conveyance of the Blessed Sacrament to a dying man. The celebrant having heard of the man's critical state while vesting, sent to inquire if he was still alive, and being notified during service that he still retained consciousness, but that the utmost haste was necessary, after the blessing instead of receiving the abolutions the priest (Rev. N. B. Whitty) proceeded direct from the altar in the full Eucharistic vestment and biretta, carrying the Blessed Sacrament covered with the pall or veil of linen and lace, the outer one of silk being over all. Two acolytes preceded him with the Burse, Cruets and Book, and on the procession passing through the kneeling people, a member of the congregation knelt at the gate of God's acre, as the Blessed Sacrament passed, then rose and opened the gates of the field which the procession had to cross, the wind and rain meanwhile, apparently inspired by the Prince of the Air and Powers of darkness, vainly striving to arrest the progress of God's messenger. Never shall we forget the scene when the corporal having been unfolded, and the paten and chalice reverently placed by the death bed, the priest (with the acolytes kneeling about him) exhibited the Blessed Sacrament to the dying man. The gleam that shot from those glazing orbs told that he was famishing for the Body of his Lord and Saviour, as did the eagerness with which he strove to open his mouth. This, however, had to be done for him by the priest; then he seemed for a moment to get fresh life, and his head being supported for him, he received the chalice of Viaticum. Then he gave one heavenly smile of satisfaction and sank back to eternal peace. Ah! could our Protestant friends but have been present at that death scene, they never again could have doubted of the reality of their Saviour's presence in His Sacrament. Then the procession returned as it came, the boys (three of whom had that day made their first communion) clustering round their priest and listening to his teaching on the solemn scene at which they had just assisted, and the tremendous mystery in which they had that morning been permitted to share. On arriving at the church we were gratified that the other boys who had remained behind waited till their priest's return, when he went to the altar and received the abolutions. The funeral took place on Friday. As the friends lived at a distance, it was necessarily late in the day, which rendered a celebration impossible; but the vestment was arranged on the Epistle corner of the altar, in testimony of the priest's desire to offer the Holy Sacrifice. He (vested in the very handsome cope of black moire belonging to Wymering), with the choir, met the corpse at the churchyard gate, and, preceded by the jewelled processional cross and smoking censer, entered the church singing the opening sentences to the 1st tone (Clement Smith's setting) which was also used for the Psalm. After the Lesson *Dies Ira* was sung, the priest and acolytes kneeling before the altar. At the last

verse the priest rose, and fresh incense having been put into the thurible, blessed it, and censed the coffin. "Brother, now thy toil is o'er," was sung at the grave; and "Love Divine," by the priest and choir, in returning to the church. One of the nursing sisters from St. Mary's Home placed a wreath of beautiful flowers on the coffin.

THE LAITY FOREWARNED.

We have seldom seen a more audacious attempt to influence public opinion by the use of threats than that made by a writer in the *Church Review* in an article headed "Scottish Layman and Ecclesiastical Synods." The point discussed is the proposal to give lay representatives a power analogous to that of presbyters in Synods. The writer argues rightly enough that in the case of a clerical member of Synod there are certain guarantees of position and character which have not hitherto been demanded of lay representatives. This is true, and would have some weight in a discussion on the precautions to be observed in admitting laymen to Synods. But what will be thought of our contemporary's modesty when he warns the laity that if they demand equal power with the clergy the latter will tighten the cords of ecclesiastical discipline, in self-defence as he says, but in revenge as he evidently means.

If the laity are to assume in Synods rights analogous to those of presbyters, it is plain that out of Synods they will have to submit to some such discipline as presbyters; they will not be admitted to communion without careful examination as to their ecclesiastical and moral state; they will not be received at a new altar without a certificate from their former priest; they will in general be subject to a vigilant supervision in things spiritual from their immediate ecclesiastical superior, the priest of the church they attend.

We dare say that in some cases, as the writer alleges, discipline is somewhat lax, but that there is a universal negligence in admitting persons to the communion—a fair inference from the above extract—we are in a position to deny. But, growing bolder as he proceeds, he gives us his estimate of clerical fairness and charity:—

"It is not in the least likely that a presbyter will continue to recognise as a communicant one whom he knows will prove, from his position as such, a thorn in his side in Synod and in such-like assemblies, if he can find good and sufficient reason for depriving him at once of his status and power of annoying."

Either the writer has purposely set himself to malign the character of the clergy or he has been very unfortunate in his clerical associates. We do not believe that there are many ministers in our church who would rejoice to find an opportunity of debarring a man from the Lord's table, because such rejection would disqualify him for election to a church court in which he might prove troublesome. This is not all. Not content with insinuating that the clergy are not anxious to admit all who are, by proved immorality, disqualified for the sacrament, and that they are pained whenever exclusion on that ground becomes a duty, the writer says:—

"At present a priest can afford to wink at certain irregularities in many who approach the altar, knowing that they themselves are the only persons directly injured by their unworthiness; but he will not be able to afford to wink at such things if, by their being communicants, such persons entitle themselves to a position which enables them to become direct hindrances and nuisances to the work of God in any place."

So the enforcement or non-enforcement of discipline is measured by the ability of a communicant to annoy his clergyman, and the being "able to afford" it is the criterion which determines the latter in this most responsible part of his pastoral work. One more extract:—

"Let the laity rest assured that if they make themselves obnoxious or troublesome, such discipline will, in very self-defence, be most surely revived and used by the parochial clergy, in whose hands it may prove a more effective and disagreeable weapon than the laity at present calculate upon. Thus, by agitating for their own admission into Synods, certain bumptious laymen may have laid in pickle a pretty rod for their own backs. We are far from saying that this would be a bad thing, but it is not exactly what they anticipate."

Such a revelation as the foregoing is valuable at the present time when there is a wide spread feeling that it is desirable to secure hearty lay co-operation.