

The True Witness.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, SEPT. 7.

ECCLIASTICAL CALENDAR.

SEPTEMBER—1866.
Friday, 7—Of the FERIA.
Saturday, 8—Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
Sunday, 9—Sixteenth after Pentecost. Holy Name of Mary.
Monday, 10—St. Nicholas Tolentini, C.
Tuesday, 11—Of the Octave.
Wednesday, 12—Of the Octave.
Thursday, 13—Of the Octave.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The political events of Europe during the past week are of but trifling interest. The Roman question is, of course, that which now mostly attracts public attention; and for its solution the Catholic, who believes that God is willing and able to protect His own, and to take care of His own Church, can wait in confidence and with impatience.

The Great Eastern has succeeded in picking up the end of the cable that parted last year. Having made the splice, the captain proceeded, paying out at the usual rate, toward *Heart's Content*, which we expect every moment to hear that he has reached in safety.

In anticipation of fresh attempts upon Canada by that section of U. States citizens known as Fenians, the British Government is sending out reinforcements of infantry, cavalry, and artillery: these may be expected shortly.

M. Murphy, and four of his fellow-prisoners confined in Cornwall jail have escaped, or perhaps have been allowed to make their escape.—In one respect we are inclined to look upon this as a good deliverance, and regret only that the authorities should ever have wasted so much powder and shot, on such very poor game, as this Murphy and his comrades.

The long continued rains must have somewhat damaged the crops in respect both of quantity and of quality: but, on the whole the yield will be a good average.

DECLINE OF RELIGION AND INCREASE OF PROTESTANTISM IN THE UNITED STATES.

For some time the Protestant press has been complaining of what it calls the "Decline of Religion" in the United States. The sign of this decline, as cited by our contemporaries, consists in the numbers of vacant pulpits, in the numbers of Protestant ministers out of work, and loafing about the country in search of employment; and in the low salaries paid to the remainder who have had the good luck to keep their situations. Of this state of things we find a vivid picture in a late number of the *New York Independent*:

"By investigation I find that the Congregational Clergymen in Connecticut are really being driven from their posts of usefulness by want. Over one-fifth of all the pastors in the State were dismissed during the past year, while only eleven young men were ordained."

The same writer then goes on to show that this general discharge of their preachers, or ministers, by the Protestant congregations of Connecticut, is not the consequence of the poverty of the latter, because the State is revealing in material prosperity; nevertheless, in one sect alone, there are no less than seventy vacant pulpits, or meeting-houses shut up. In fact, to make use of a term in vogue during the recent disputes betwixt the English iron-masters and their hands, the Protestant congregations of Connecticut have agreed upon a "lock-out" of their ministers, though hardly can it be said that the latter are out upon a "strike." These phenomena are universal throughout the United States.

From these signs the evangelical press concludes to a great falling off in Godliness, or "Decline of Religion" in the Yankee world; with better reason might it have concluded to the general spread of Protestantism, and to the more logical carrying out of sound Protestant principles, particularly of those religious principles upon which the great majority of the early Protestants of New England piqued themselves, and from which they acquired their particular name of "Congregationalists."

This name was given to, or assumed by, them

to distinguish them from other Calvinistic sects from whom they differed originally, not upon doctrine—for at first all, like the Presbyterians, accepted the Westminster Confession of Faith—but upon questions of ecclesiastical discipline, or church government. According to the Presbyterian idea there is, or should be a regular gradation of Church Courts—General Assembly, Synods, Presbyteries, &c.—by which the National Church is, or should be governed, and through which the several congregations are united together into one visible, organic whole. The Congregationalists, on the contrary, as the children of the English Independents, asserted that every separate Congregation was in itself a Church, whole and complete, subject to no higher jurisdiction than that of its own members. Hence their name of Congregationalists, to distinguish them from their brother Calvinists, the Presbyterians; and though for the most part, the intellectual members of the Protestant world in the Northern States have passed from Calvinism, to Pelagianism; thence by an easy transition to Arianism, Unitarianism, Universalism, and Lord knows how many other *isms*, culminating in Theodore Parkerism, they have still retained the peculiar form of Church organisation from whence they took their name, based upon the idea that every particular Congregation is a complete Church in itself.

Now just as Anglicanism was a logical application of the Protestant disintegrating theory, that every nation or political community constitutes a Church by itself; just as the first Protestants proposed to themselves to break up the One Catholic Church, which embraced all nations, all peoples, all languages, into a number of distinct independent national churches—the Church of England to wit, and the Church of Scotland; just as following up the same idea, the English Protestants of the seventeenth century proceeded to break up the National Church into a lot of distinct independent Congregational Churches, each an entire and perfect Church in itself—so, to-day, do the people of the United States applying the same principles, and carrying them out a little further towards their logical terminus, propose to break up the several Congregational churches, into a number of separate, distinct and independent Individual Churches, in which every individual shall be a Church whole and complete in himself: shall be his own minister, teacher, or pastor, his own congregation or hearer. This is the ultimate and logical development of the principle of private judgment, and of the disintegrating process which commenced with the great apostasy of the sixteenth century, by breaking up the One Catholic Church into a lot of independent National Churches. Now we have got down to individual churches, in which every man, exercising to the full, his right of private judgment, is his own teacher, his own hearer, &c., and acknowledges no authority in any other ecclesiastical tribunal on earth.

Of course in this last phase of Protestantism, there is no need for ministers, or salaried preachers; no place for meeting-houses or pulpits, for these imply the Congregational phase—which, to-day is rejected even as the National, and Catholic theories of the Church had previously been rejected. The first or National Churches threw off the restraints of Pope and General Councils, proclaimed their autonomy, and became a law unto themselves. So, in process of time, the Congregational churches threw off the shackles of Nationalism, the yoke of Bishops, Dioceses, Synods, Presbyteries and General Assemblies; each congregation set up on its own hook, and proclaimed its own autonomy or self sufficiency. And now, in the fullness of time, the individual Protestant carries out the process to its ultimate stage. He throws off the yoke or restraints of the minister or church session: he proclaims his own autonomy, and self sufficiency, and asserts his natural and inalienable right, according to Protestant principles, to do all his own religious thinking, and in all religious matters, to be a law unto himself. This process, then, indicates not a "Decline of Religion," but simply an "Increase of Protestantism," and the logical development of the principles of the Reformation.

Nor do we see why in the Protestant world, this should cause any trouble or consternation. True: at first, it may work badly for the ministers, whom it will throw out of employment, just as the introduction of machinery threw numbers of hand-weavers out of employment, and caused much partial suffering for a season. But so it is with all great social changes; nor have the discarded or "locked-out" ministers any right to complain, for as they did unto others, so only is it being done unto them. They, if they will but consult history, threw for a season the national bishops of the Anglican Church out of employment, just as the latter had previously attempted to throw the Pope out of employment, by rejecting the office of the Papacy.—Now if they will but summon up a little modesty, and look matters fairly and impartially in the face, they will see that their hearers really stand as little in need of their services, as do Congregationalist ministers of those of Bishop or of Pope; that if the services of the latter can be

dispensed with, so also can the services of the Protestant minister, of the preacher and expounder of Scripture, in a community which asserts, as one of its fundamental principles, that the Scriptures *alone*, without note or comment, are sufficient to salvation, and intelligible to the dullest intellect, so that even the wayfaring man though a fool, shall not err therein; are of themselves amply sufficient to make all men wise unto salvation, and therefore need no commenting upon, or expounding!

We have always, all the days of our life, looked upon a Protestant minister as an anomaly, as an excrescence upon the Protestant system, as a moral monstrosity, as a living abnegation of, or protest against the fundamental principle of Protestantism—that is to say, the self sufficiency and facile intelligibility of the Scriptures, and the right of private judgment. Never could we bring ourselves to see why Protestants should go to church at all; least of all could we ever understand how the man, who professed himself fully competent to find the way to heaven without a guide, who denied that God had appointed such a guide, and who insisted that every man was not only able, and free, but bound to find the road for himself—should, in glaring discrepancy with these principles, deliberately, in the very warmest of weather, and when the temperature was most provocative to slumber, doom himself and others to sit for long weary hours, listening to the dreary outpourings of a fellow mortal, no better instructed than himself on the matter under discussion, as if he were an oracle, as if he had some right to set himself up as a teacher, and a spiritual guide to others. The only plausible explanation of this phenomenon of stolid patience on the one hand, and of impertinent presumption on the other, that ever suggested itself to our intelligence was this: That these Sabbath Day exercises, this voluntary renunciation of the bright sun, of the balmy air, of the sweet singing of the birds, and the murmuring brooks, for the somewhat frozy atmosphere of the meeting-house, and the sleep provoking humming of the minister, who from his bad eminence seemed to take cruel note of all somniferous tendencies on the part of the much enduring congregation, was part of a penitential system, which in spite of its protest against Popery, and in obedience to an instinct in the heart of man, the Protestant Church had still retained. We knew that all religions enjoyed austerities upon their devotees: we had heard of the dreadful self-inflicted tortures of the idolaters of India, and the servants of Juggernaut; and we thought that these Sabbath Day exercises, that these awful preachings, which provoked the appetite for that slumber which the laws of the meeting-house denied to the tantalised sufferer, were part and parcel of a similar system. By a pleasant fiction, we knew that these "exercises," were styled "worship;" and we supposed that, as the wretch over whose mangled carcase the car of the hideous Indian idol slowly passes, deems his self immolation worship: that as the priests of Baal who hacked and stabbed and gashed themselves with knives in honor of their foul God, deemed their self-inflicted mutilations and lacerations worship: so also, and in equal good faith, though in equal ignorance, did our good seditate Protestants whilst undergoing the penance of their hebdomadal acts of mortification, deem themselves to be worshipping their God. It was in our eyes a great and grievous penance, hardly to be borne by flesh and blood.

This is what the Protestants of New England are discarding; and who shall say that in so doing they are not acting Protestantly and most consistently? Broken up into Individual Churches, each such Church, as Sabbath comes round, will be able to do for himself all his own religious exercises; he will be able to commune with his own heart, to hearken to his own thoughts; and if these be not enough, he will still have the same Bible, as he had whilst he was only a fraction of a Church. Now this Bible is either enough of itself, or it is not enough. If the first, then is there no need of preachers, Gospel expounders, or ministers; if not enough, then Protestantism itself must be a snare and a delusion.

What is the good of ministers? this is the question that Protestants should ask themselves. And if to that question the answer is, as it must be, that ministers are no good; that they can do nothing that every individual Protestant is not fully competent to do for himself; that as teachers and Gospel expounders they are impertinent pretenders, since God, if teachers were necessary, would have appointed them Himself; that they are unnecessary, since the Scriptures are so clear that the most illiterate can understand them, or notes and comments explanatory of the text would be necessary; if this be the answer to the question, it follows necessarily that Protestants will no longer be so silly as to pay large sums annually to men of whose services they have no need, and who, in fact, are incapable of rendering any services whatsoever.

We would direct our readers' attention to the advertisement, which will be found in another column, of the Pic-Nic in aid of the St. Ann's Church and Schools. The weather not having been favorable on the two previous occasions, it has been determined to hold another; and we hope that there will be nothing to interfere with the enjoyments of the large number, who, we have no doubt, will attend this pic-nic, and join by their presence, in the charitable purpose for which it is held.

We beg to call attention to the advertisement of the Masson College, Terrebonne, which will be found in another column. This is one of the best educational establishments in Canada, and well adapted for the training of Catholic youth being under the personal direction and superintendence of the Clergy.

The spirit of God and the spirit of the world are, and will ever be, antagonistic. The spirit of God can alone inspire highly educated and tenderly nurtured young woman to bid farewell to the world forever, just when it is budding forth for them, with its deceitful charms, and induce them to consecrate their thoughts, their acts, themselves absolutely and entirely to the service of their Creator. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," says the Apostle. "Let the dead bury the dead. If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and come follow me. He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." This, the spirit of their Divine Master, cannot but be deeply infused in the hearts of the young when they determine themselves to have no other object in life, no other thought than of Jesus Christ and His interests.

To do their share by the means of imparting a religious education to incite others so to love and serve their Creator in the days of their youth, that He may not forsake them in old age or utter the sentence of departure when life, as we mortals term it, has ceased, and a never ending state of existence is to begin. Such was the object of the sacrifice made by so many in the chapel of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame last week—a notice of which the crowded state of our columns prevented from obtaining a place in our last issue.

The Rt. Rev. J. Conroy, of Albany, N. Y., U. S., presided at the ceremony, receiving the vows and admitting to the reception of the religious habit the following young ladies:—Misses McDonald, in religion Sister St. Peter Chrysolos; M'Laughlin, Sister St. Willibrod; M'Gowan, Sister St. Veator; Lahaie, Sister St. Urban; Poneau, Sister St. German; Bisson, Sister St. Casimire; Pion, Sister Saint Faloise.

Invested with the Holy Habit:—Misses Byrne, Sister St. Mary John; Kelly, Sister St. Mary Dunstan; Kennedy, Sister St. Mary Isabella; Spalding, Sister St. Mary Elmera; Sheridan, Sister St. Mary Ahe; Kearney, Sister St. Mary Bernard; Montchamp, Sister St. Constant; Cateller, Sister St. Marie de l'Esperance; Drouin, Sister St. Jean Cleme; Brunette, Sister St. Florentin; Lefebvre, Sister St. nom de Jesus; Corrier, Sister St. Antoine de Padone; Fournier, Sister Saint Leandre; Bussiere, Sister St. Marie Clotilde; Fortin, Sister St. Marie des l'Erphanis; Lefebvre, Sister du St. nom de Marie; Caron, Sister St. Fortunat; Bernier, Sister St. Philippe Beneti; Brunelle, Sister St. Tibura; Vellandry, Sister St. Stanislas de Jesus. "Audi filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam; et obliviscere populum tuum, et domum patris tui, quoniam epse est Dominus Deus tuus."

A MAN SHOT.—Acting sergeant Burke reports that John S. Burrows, No. 2 Montrose Terrace, Drummond street, came to the Chaboillez Square station, and informed him that he shot a man who was entering his house at 2 o'clock this morning (Aug. 31) for the purpose of robbing as he thought. Dr. Leprohon was immediately summoned and proceeded to Mr. Burrows's, and found that the man was dead, he was lying near the fence outside the door. The body was removed to the Chaboillez Square station where an inquest is now being held.

We would earnestly deprecate all attempts to stir up either national or religious animosity, because of a late most melancholy occurrence.—We allude to the shooting of Felix Prior, by J. G. Burrows of Drummond Street, on the night of Thursday last, or rather early on Friday morning.

That when Mr. Burrows fired the fatal shot he had any, the slightest, idea of the nationality, or the religion, of the man on whom his shot took fatal effect, there is not the shadow of a reason for suspecting; as little reason therefore is there for suspecting him of criminal motives. He may have been nervous, over excited, and sadly deficient in pluck and prudence; but beyond this we do not see that he can be taxed with any moral or legal guilt. We are sure also that he must himself deeply regret the consequences of his own act.

The verdict of the Coroner's jury, on which we give the comments of the *Evening Telegraph*, seems to us to be far from harmonising with the evidence adduced before it. That verdict absolves Mr. Burrows from all blame, on the grounds that he, in shooting Prior, was acting in defence of his own life and property. The truth is that, according to the evidence, neither the life nor the property of Mr. Burrows was menaced; and the verdict would have been more in accordance with the evidence, and, we think, more satisfactory to the public, had it found that Mr. Burrows had committed homicide, whilst acting under the erroneous, though in the circumstances pardonable belief that his life and property were in danger. We intend to cast no slur on the jurors, who may well have given their verdict conscientiously; and our sole object is, as we said at first, to deprecate all attempts to stir up national or religious strife, because of this most melancholy occurrence.

THE SHOOTING CASE.

(From the Evening Telegraph.)

The mortal shooting of the unfortunate man Prior by John Geering Burrows on Friday morning, has created as we indicated at the time, intense feeling throughout the city. That feeling, it is scarcely necessary to remark, has in no degree been allayed by the result of the investigation of the circumstances by which so grave and deplorable an act was consummated. The facts so far as elicited at the inquest before Coroner Jones are already sufficiently in possession of the public. Those facts we need not reiterate are at once painful and such as to arouse comment of greater or less asperity. Society ever jealous of her rights, is not slow in detecting an apparent infringement of them however trivial, or delicate in uttering conclusions in the premises. The present case is no exception. Disguise it as we may an unfortunate feeling of dissatisfaction exists in connection with the inquest of Friday, and perhaps still more unfortunate conclusion has seized the public that a fair investigation has not been had—that all has not been severely correct—that the trial was pushed through with undue haste, and that justice has thereby been foiled and the public robbed of its due meed of satisfaction—that, in short, means for a second investigation into the circumstances of Prior's death should be forthwith devised and carried out. This is the serious, solemn, we had almost said, religious, character in which the matter is viewed. Nor will impartial men, we think on calm reflection pronounce the view altogether unjust. With the immediate merits of the case, whether the subject of the present disagreeable notoriety, Burrows, discharged the fatal shot in defence of his own life and property as alleged, we do not propose now to discuss. But with regard to the construction of the court of inquest, the means adopted as well as neglected thereto to elicit the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in a case of life and death, and in which the whole bond of society is involved, there is so much room for cavil and disappointment that a word on one or two of the most unjustifiable points becomes imperative.

The Common Law of England and the practice laid down for the guidance of coroners in selecting jurors, is to take at least twelve householders in the vicinity of where the crime has been committed; in the absence of any law of our own, this law is held to govern coroners in Lower Canada, and by it the inquest on the body of Prior is supposed to have been conducted. We find, however, no householders in the vicinity were selected, but they were procured for the most part as far from the scene as would appear to be necessary to the interests of the accused. Again, the law says that 'the jury shall visit the spot where the body was found, examine the position in which it was found, and from personal inspection ascertain the locality, measure distances in yards, rooms, windows and doorways, &c., as to their bearing upon the crime. This most important point was neglected in the inquest on Friday. It would seem that in the extreme hurry to get over the case, a legal duty scrupulously insisted upon in all cases where the English law obtains, was for the time set at defiance. The illegal selection of the jury before referred to, together with the slovenly neglect of personally visiting Burrows' house by the jury and judicial officers charged with the conduct of the case, lends the entire proceedings, we say, an air of illegality apart from anything else.

But these causes of dissatisfaction are trifling as compared with others which involve no illegality, but at the same time betray a series of 'peculiar circumstances,' so strong taken together that the public have found no difficulty in arriving at its present conclusion, that the inquest on Prior was imperfect if not a failure.

Burrows was a sergeant in a Volunteer Corps. In his difficulty we find that the Colonel of the corps who resides at Lachine, happened to be in town and was selected by the coroner to act as foreman. His late captain was also sent for to act on the Jury.—Others of the jury were selected whose feelings and influence were well known to be in sympathy with the accused. No council was appointed to watch the case on behalf of the crown, while Burrows was defended by the best legal talent of the city. The want of a crown council is apparent at every point in the evidence. We are aware that strictly speaking the inquest of a coroner is not a trial, and counsel are very often not allowed to be present, but where there are counsel on one side there ought to be on the other side. And while here it may be well to remark that admitting Prior's culpability in being at the house of Burrows at an unreasonable hour, what was there in the evidence to justify his being shot as a robber? That Prior entered the house was not shown nor had he weapons that would denote him to be there with evil intention, or with a purpose that would justify Burrows in abruptly using firearms. These were points for a crown council to have fully elucidated, and the absence of such is counted a grave omission.

Had the coroner and jury been as anxious to have proven the slaying of Prior unjustifiable as they were to get an excuse to justify such a verdict, the question is asked, "was there not ample material to have done so?" Painful as an answer in the affirmative may be, we are not altogether sure that justice has already pronounced it. Nor can the public imagine what excuse the jury can find for the incorporating in their verdict the words 'in defence of his life and property.'

Take all together we believe that in order to rescue the inquisition of Friday from the slur of judicial farce which already too widely attaches to it in the city, another tribunal possessing none of the fallacies of its predecessor (if such can by any possibility be obtained) must be forthwith summoned. That such will be done we are assured on tangible authority, and that the servant girl, in the attempt doubtless to visit whom Prior lost his life, will be again brought forward and compelled to throw additional light suspected to be in her possession, on the subject. Such it is hoped will not either be too long delayed.—Justice to the dead as well as the living demands impartial administration of our laws at the hands of those charged with its dispensation, be they judges, juries or coroners. This it behooves society in its own best interests to see to. It matters not to us that Burrows is connected with what social conventionalists dub "the upper class," nor is he therefore to be exonerated from blame. It appears that he should at least not have been permitted to escape without a judicial reprimand, and if one court has proved itself incompetent to do justice let us in the name of truth ever sacred have another.

ST. PATRICK'S SOCIETY.—We understand that at the monthly meeting of the St. Patrick's Society, held on Monday evening last, a deputa-tion was appointed to wait upon the Hon. G. E. Cortier, Attorney Gen., in relation to the unsatisfactory circumstances connected with the Coroner's inquest held on the body of the late Felix Prior, and to urge that a thorough investigation of all the proceedings had therein take place without delay.

RETURN FROM EUROPE.—The Very Rev. Vicar-General Dollard reached Kingston by the afternoon train on Friday, and was met at the station by a great number of his parishioners, who heartily welcomed him back to the Diocese. Father Dollard was escorted to the city by the Boys' Band of the Christian Brothers' Schools, followed in procession by a long concourse of carriages. He resumes his episcopal duties in a recruited state of health, and, we hope, may be spared for many more years of usefulness.—*British Whig*, 30th ult.