

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MAY 10, 1861.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE Emperor of Russia is amusing himself putting down the Polish rebels; Victor Emmanuel in like manner shoots down the Neapolitan brigands, as in official phrase are styled the misguided peasants who are in arms for their King, and their country's liberties. The liberal press with strange inconsistency blames the Czar, but lauds the Italian despot to the skies.

The war-cloud seems likely to pass away harmlessly, for it appears that France is about to recall her troops from Syria, thus consenting to the removal of the *casus belli*. The exciting event of the week at Paris has been the Duc D'Aumale's pamphlet in reply to the Prince Napoleon. The latter snarls under the lash, and it was thought that he would demand personal reparation from his ebullient. The illustrious Jerome, however, is more formidable with the tongue than the sword, and much to the disgust of French military men, has again "shown the white feather." Bold as a lion against the Pope, and very terrible in his courage when Priests alone are his antagonists, Prince Napoleon is very respectful towards those who by their sides wear steel.

From the United States we learn that "War is just about going to begin." As yet the civil contest has been one of the most grotesque farces ever enacted upon any stage. With the exception of some more heroic meetings, heroic speeches, and heroic hoistings of flags, there is nothing new to report. General Scott has taken the oath of allegiance to the Constitution for the third time, so we suppose that the Union is saved.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.—The Ministry have been again sustained upon a motion brought forward by M. Dorian implying a vote of "Want of Confidence." Advances made to the Grand Trunk without the consent of Parliament was the ground chosen, but after a somewhat animated debate the Ministry were gladdened by a majority of ten. Owing to some mistake, the telegraph spread the news all over the country that the Government had been defeated, and great was the triumph of the "Outs" and the expectant office holders, dire the dismay amongst the "Ins" and the actual possessors of governmental good things. To the spectator, unconcerned in the distribution of patronage, the excitement was very amusing; but in a short time a second, and more correctly prepared telegraphic report rectified the error, restoring joy and confidence to the friends of the Ministry, and causing bitter agony to the other party, proportionate to their intense but alas! short lived gratification.

The Session is evidently drawing near its end, and the 14th instant is spoken of as the day when the members shall be released from their troubles, and Parliamentary reporters be at rest.

RELIGIOUS PROGRESS IN ENGLAND.—Two currents of opinion, setting in directly opposite directions—one Rome-wards, the other hell-wards—are at the present moment clearly to be traced in the British religious world. Of the latter, or ultra-Protestant current, the much discussed volume of "Essays and Reviews," by the Anglican divines of the Broad Church school, is a striking instance; and it is not too much to say that no quasi-religious treatise that has issued from the English press during the XIX. century, has excited so much attention, or exerted so great an influence over the intelligent and thinking classes of which British Protestantism is composed. The work itself has already reached its sixth edition; and the demand for it is rapidly increasing, and actually surpasses the existing means of supply.

The thoughts to which it gives utterance, the ideas which it expresses, have long been fermenting, as it were, in the brains of the more intelligent and philosophically disposed Protestants of the British Empire. It is not therefore because of the novelty of the views therein expressed, but merely because of the distinctness with which those views have been brought out, that the "Essays and Reviews" have become so rapidly and extensively popular; and because

almost every thinking Protestant finds therein a clear image or reflection of those very doubts and difficulties which had always tormented him, when he addressed himself calmly and dispassionately to a careful examination of the grounds of his faith. The merit of the Essayists consists, not in having given a new direction to the current of public opinion amongst the more highly cultivated intellects of the Protestant world; but, in having been the first to map out clearly its channel, to mark its rapids, its eddies and currents on the chart, and to follow it closely throughout its meanderings from its source in Protestantism, to its outlet in the vast ocean of infidelity and general scepticism. As moral surveyors the "Essayists" have well performed their task; they have left a valuable contribution to English literature, and have done good service to the cause of Protestant theology throughout the world.

We think that they have also rendered important service to the cause of Catholicity by their elaborate, even if unintentional development of the thesis that—betwixt Popery and total infidelity, or the entire rejection of Christianity as a supernatural revelation, there is and can be no middle ground logically tenable. The writers are men well known to the Protestant world for their attachment to Protestantism, and their active hostility to Popery. By their social position, by their antecedents, and their actual associations, they are irrevocably committed to the support of Protestantism; and they cannot be suspected even of any prejudice against a system which furnishes them with their daily bread, and which therefore they are personally interested in upholding. The rabid anti-Catholic effusions of Protestant writers of the last century, such as Tom Paine, were looked upon with distrust, because of the well known bias of the authors; but no one can accuse men like Temple, Powell, Williams, and the other "Essayists," of immorality, or of anti-Christian proclivities; and their conclusions must be accepted by Protestants as the results to which years of honest, persevering search after truth upon Protestant or Non-Catholic principles, have led the writers. These conclusions are, it is true, fatal to Christianity, and incompatible with a supernatural objective revelation in any form; but upon Protestant principles their truth is incontestable. Many have taken up the pen to refute them, and all have signally and ludicrously failed. Not one of their opponents has so much as attempted to go into the merits of the question, or to meet them upon fair terms; and the very best thing that has as yet appeared against them is a miserable wishy-washy article in the London Quarterly, generally attributed to the Government Bishop of Oxford, in which it is not easy to say whether the writer's want of candor, or deficiency of logic is the more painfully conspicuous. Hitherto the "Essayists" remain undisputed masters of the field, and must remain so, so long as none but Protestant artillery is brought to play upon them.

Of this fact the Protestant public are well aware. "What we all want," they cry, "is not a condemnation but a refutation of the offending work"—and it cannot be refuted, without a previous repudiation of the essential Protestant principle of the "right of private judgment." Read, study and interpret the book called the Bible, just as you would read, study, and interpret any other book—is the fundamental canon of the new exegesis, as laid down by the "Essayists." They insist, and with reason, that to come to the study of any book, with prepossessions either in favor of, or against its truth, or with preconceived notions as to its supernatural origin, must incapacitate the student so prepossessed from forming a calm and impartial judgment. The question of Inspiration—the question whether the book called the Bible is the "Word of God" in a sense different from that in which the writings of Homer, of Dante, of Shakespeare, or of any poet, bard, or prophet, may be called the "Word of God"—are questions to be decided by every individual student for himself, in the exercise of his impartial private judgment upon the book itself. The historical credibility of the Pentateuch and the Jewish Chronicles is to be tested by the same rules as those by which we test the credibility of Livy, of Tacitus, or of Baron Macaulay; the claims of the Psalms, and of the Song attributed to Solomon, to a divine origin are not to be assumed as valid, but are to be subjected to the same rigid scrutiny as that to which we should subject the claims of the "Nibelungen Lied" to a similar origin. The Mosiac cosmogony must be examined by the lights of modern geological and astronomical knowledge, and accepted or rejected according to its capacity or incapacity to bear the test; and, in a word, all authority external to the Bible itself, as asserting either its natural or supernatural credibility, must be discarded, as incompatible with Protestant principles, and with all the canons of sound criticism.

Approached, studied, and dealt with in this spirit, and upon those principles—and in no other spirit can the consistent Protestant approach the Bible—upon no other principle can one who denies all authority external to the Bible, consistently deal with the Christian and Jewish

hagiography—the supernatural authority of those writings must, by every one capable of reasoning, be at once rejected. Make the Bible the sole "rule of faith," and treat the Bible as you would treat any other book, and you can have no "rule of faith" at all; and therefore the opponents of the Essayists protest loudly and emphatically against the principle of interpretation laid down by the latter—whilst, at the same time, it is impossible for them, upon Protestant principles, to assign any reason for not adopting it; or for approaching the Bible with the presumption that it is in any sense more authoritative over conscience than the Talmud or the Book of Mormon. The belief in the Bible as the Word of God—if a reasonable belief—must be the result either of a careful study of its contents, or of a perfect confidence in the authority of something external to the Bible, which assures us that the latter is the Word of God. If we reject the latter, and all Protestants must in virtue of their Protestantism reject it, our belief in the Divine origin and supernatural authority of the Bible, must be the consequence of our study of that book, and cannot, therefore, logically or chronologically precede that study. He who believes the Bible to be the Word of God, previous to such a careful, thorough and critical examination of its contents as not one in a million is capable of, and who rejects all infallible authority in matters of faith external to the Bible—has no reasons for his belief, and practically makes abrogation of that noblest faculty of reason which distinguishes man from the beasts of the field. And such actually is, and must be the case with all who on the one hand reject the authority of an infallible Church, and on the other hand assert that the Bible is in any sense the "Word of God," or the channel of a supernatural revelation.

These considerations are influencing, and must still more influence the intelligent portion of the non-Catholic public, whose hearts are Christian, and who would fain have a rational as well as an emotional basis for their faith. This basis they can find only in Popery; and by convincing them of this fact, by showing them that the assumption by Protestants that the Bible is the Word of God or divinely inspired, is a vain and idle supposition, as destitute of any solid or valid foundation as is the belief of Mahometans in the inspiration and divine origin of their book, Bible or Koran, the Essayists have rendered and are daily rendering most important service to the cause of truth. Hence it is that, whilst one current is setting strongly and steadily towards the bleak and shoreless ocean of infidelity, another and contrary current in the British Protestant world, setting also steadily towards the haven of Popery, is strikingly perceptible.

In justice to Mr. McGee we reproduce the subjoined letter which in reply to the TRUE WITNESS of the 3rd instant, he addressed to the Montreal Herald of the following day. We publish also, side by side with this letter, the report given by the Montreal Gazette of Mr. McGee's attack upon the Ladies of the Hotel Dieu, which provoked our strictures:—

"Mr. McGee brought up the subject of the grant to the St. Patrick's Hospital declaring that no such institution as that now existed, the building having been sold and the Nuns formerly in charge of it, gone back to the Hotel Dieu. "The Finance Minister said separate application had been made and separate accounts rendered. "Mr. McGee said he would not assert positively that this was a ruse to obtain two grants for one institution, but the facts as stated to him were an unpleasant appearance of that sort."—Montreal Gazette Par. Report.

"Living in the immediate neighborhood, I could not be ignorant of the removal of the Hospital, and the sale of the building formerly occupied for that purpose; but on receiving the explanation of the Hon. Finance Minister, I at once expressed my satisfaction that the institution had not changed its character, though it had its locus in quo. Your, &c., Thos D'Arcy McGee."

It will be noticed that Mr. McGee does not venture to impugn, or call in question the substantial accuracy of the Montreal Gazette's report, and that consequently the sole questions at issue betwixt him and the TRUE WITNESS resolve themselves into these—Did Mr. McGee's language, as reported by the Gazette, convey an insinuation against the honesty of the Bishop of Montreal, in that His Lordship had made application to Parliament for a grant in aid of the St. Patrick's Hospital—"no such institution," as Mr. McGee assured the House, being any longer in existence? And were the terms in which he spoke of the said Hospital, of the Hotel Dieu, and the proposed grant, calculated to raise doubts in the minds of his hearers as to the integrity of the applicants, and their good

faith in presenting themselves before Parliament? What others may think, how others may answer these questions, we know not; but to us, in our simplicity it seems, that to apply for a grant for an institution which does not exist, is a dishonest act, and that the applicant must be a very dishonest person. Now His Lordship the Bishop of Montreal did apply for a grant for the St. Patrick's Hospital, and in reply Mr. McGee affirmed that "no such institution any longer existed." From these data every one is at liberty to draw his own conclusions.

As betwixt Mr. McGee and his Catholic constituents there are several other grave questions at issue. "How came it," unsophisticated people will persist in asking—"how came it, that the opposition to a grant in aid of a valuable Catholic institution in Montreal, and applied for by a venerable dignitary of the Catholic Church, proceeded, not from George Brown, nor yet from Tom Ferguson, nor from any of the Clear-Grits, Rouges, and Protestant Reformers, to whom it is a labor of love to offer opposition to every measure designed for the benefit of Catholics, and emanating from a Romish Bishop—but from the junior member for Montreal, a *soi-disant* Catholic, and returned to Parliament by a Catholic constituency expressly to watch over Catholic interests, and to defend them against the malicious assaults, and more dangerous inroads of the zealots of No-Popery?"—"Are the Protestant Reformers then generally"—it is asked—"so lukewarm in their hostility to Catholic endowments, that it was necessary for a Catholic to reanimate their expiring courage, to prompt their attacks, and to point out to them the path to victory?"

It is asked too—since, as Mr. McGee himself now confesses the St. Patrick's Hospital does exist as an actual fact, and has "not changed its character"—why he, Mr. McGee, did not take the trouble to inform himself of this very important fact, as he might easily have done by application to his Bishop, or to the Ladies of the Hotel Dieu, before he brought the subject before the House? If a Catholic—such at least is a very general opinion amongst simple-minded, non-place-hunting, Catholics—has any reasons to suspect improper conduct on the part of the authorities of his Church—he ought at least to take every possible precaution before giving publicity to those suspicions, before an audience from its composition predisposed to accept as God's truth every insinuation prejudicial to Popery and Popish ecclesiastics. These are questions which we leave Mr. McGee to settle with his Catholic constituents as best he may.

ANOTHER PROTESTANT LIE NAILED.—Sophia Bluth—but, who is Sophia Bluth? our readers will naturally ask.

Sophia Bluth is, or rather was, the heroine of the last Protestant Romance. She was a victim of Popish fraud and cruelty; the latest instance of the wickedness of tolerating Nunneries—and of not expelling the Jesuits. She was a Jewish child of great personal attractions, carried off and forcibly baptised by the emissaries of Rome; then immured in the dungeons of a convent, there where fervent Protestants of epicene gender believe that the corpses of the children are buried; whilst according to some theories, she had been put to death by horrid tortures in some Nunnery—name not given—by the orders of some Jesuit Priest—name of Priest of course not specified. Was [not this a pretty dish of nonsense to set before a Protestant public? Was not this a full vindication of the course pursued by the French Government in suppressing all religious associations, not recognised by law?

But alas! for Exeter Hall—alas! for the saints of the Evangelical Alliance.—This promising romance has gone off in a puff, and with the most unpleasant odor. In a word, it is a Protestant Lie, of the genuine Maria Monk breed, from beginning to end—destitute of even a shadow of foundation. Sophia Bluth herself has come forth from her dungeon where she had suffered so many things at the hands of the Nuns; she arises from the bloody grave to which Jesuit Inquisitors had consigned her, to tell her own story, to put the saints, if possible, to the blush, and to refute their calumnies. Here for example is Sophia Bluth's unromantic version of her adventures, certified by a London notary, and authenticated by the French Consulate at London—whence it appears that Sophia Bluth never was carried off, never was immured in a dungeon some fifty fathoms under ground, with the rats and mice for her sole companions—never was tortured or cruelly put to death, and for the best of all reasons, viz.: because she is, and long has been living in freedom and good health in London. Exeter Hall should have this Sophia Bluth put to death for thus ruthlessly disposing of one of the best authenticated Protestant lies, that has appeared for many years. We commend to the notice of our readers the annexed document:—

I, the undersigned Sophia Bluth, of full age, single woman, now residing at No. 8, Oakley-square, Bedford, New Town London, declare sincerely as follows:—

I was born on June 6, 1839, at Saarbrücken in Prussia not far from Metz. The name of my father was Jacob Bluth, and of my mother Sarah, nee Levi. At

that time my father was, I believe, professor of languages and mathematics. My parents were Jews, and I was reared in the Hebrew faith till the year 1848. In the month of June of that year my father embraced the Christian religion, and was baptised in the convent of Our Lady of St. Agnes at Paris. He took me with him, conducted me to the convent and placed me there. In the month of November I was baptised, and took the name of Sophie. Till then my parents had called me by the name of Theresa. I remained, and was educated in this convent till the month of October, 1855, and my father often came to see me. In the month of October I went to live at Cambrai in the Dep. du Nord, in France, with my sister Gabrielle Bluth, who kept a retail shop in that town. My father at that time lived with her. I continued to live with her till November 1856, as I believe. Then I went to Roubaix, Dep. du Nord, to live with Madlle. Charlotte Mazure, who kept a *magasin de nouveautés* and a book shop.

I remained there till I could find suitable employment at a *magasin de modes*. I remained there about three months, till I went to the Mdlles. Bernard who kept a *magasin de modes* in the same town and I stayed with them till the month of September, 1859, when I resolved to cross over into England because I feared that my parents wished to keep me with them by force, and because I did not wish to live with them for the reason that my mother had remained a Jewess, and I feared that my faith would be endangered. I thought that I could learn English, and put myself in a position to become under-mistress at a boarding school. I arrived in England in September, 1859; I have resided here in several places from that time to the present, where I am living as is declared at the beginning of this declaration. My residence has been the result of my own free will, and in everything I have been free in my actions. All my proceedings have been inspired by my personal and free will. My will is to remain in England, and not to return to France, and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously, believing it to be the expression of the truth, &c.

(Signed) SOPHIE BLUTH.
Declared and signed in my public office by the declarant,
(Signed) WILLIAM W. VERN, Notary Public.
313 Vu au Consulat General de France.

We copy from the Toronto Mirror of the 19th ult.:

"UPPER CANADA CATHOLIC REPRESENTATION.—Now that the question of Representation by numbers is agitating the public mind, we consider it necessary to call public attention to the fact, that the Catholics of Upper Canada are almost entirely unrepresented in Parliament. We cannot now number less than a quarter of a million. We would be entitled in proportion to our numbers, to at least thirteen members. Yet such is the exclusiveness of the population by which we are surrounded, that we cannot return, except in the case of Scott, of Ottawa, one representative to Parliament. The Protestants of Lower Canada have more than twenty members to represent them—more than their just proportion—but the same class of electors up here will throw aside all party ties and predilections, even in a municipal contest, to prevent the election of a Catholic to office. It may be unpalatable to say it, but it is true nevertheless, that a sincere Catholic can no more get elected for Parliament in Upper Canada against a Protestant, no matter what may be his qualifications, than he could sit in the Imperial Parliament before the Emancipation Act.

If then the demand for Constitutional changes is agitated, we demand the agitation of the question, whether or not it be expedient that a representation according to numbers shall be conceded to the Catholics of Upper Canada. In order to press the demand it will be necessary for the people to take it up. What do they say to it? What say the Catholic press to it? Would it be less than fair? We think if a Convention would assemble, that the necessary steps could be taken to accomplish it, and that the Catholics of Upper Canada would have to thank the said Convention for obtaining a representation in Parliament."

There can be no doubt as to the truth of the facts as stated by our Toronto cotemporary; the practicability of applying any remedy, and above all, such a remedy as he suggests, is more questionable. It is for our cotemporary however to develop his plan for securing some share in the Legislature to the Catholics of the Upper Province; and if he can devise any plan which shall have that result, he may reckon on our hearty though humble co-operation.

But if such be the actual condition of the Catholic minority of the West under the actual system of representation, what would it be under the system which the Protestant Reformers are now trying to force upon us? Under no circumstances can a sincere Catholic expect to win the suffrages of a Protestant constituency; and no Catholic, whose political conduct is in accordance with Catholic principles, can under any circumstances avoid the political hostility of Protestants. The condition of the Catholics of Upper Canada presents nothing exceptional, indicates no unusual amount of anti-Catholic bigotry, and is, in one respect very gratifying, for it is suggestive of firm adherence to Catholic principles under most trying circumstances. Catholics whose political action is in harmony with Protestant prejudices, and provokes the applause of the Protestant community, must be traitors; and a Catholic may lay it down as an inflexible rule, that, when he is cheered by the acclamations of his spiritual mother, he has done something very dirty, something very dishonouring to her whose child he calls himself.

What the Mirror asserts with regard to the non-representation of the Catholics of Upper Canada, we have often insisted on; pointing out that, if represented in Parliament at all, they are represented by the members of Lower Canada—nor do we see how it can be otherwise. It proceeds from the social circumstances of the Catholics of Upper Canada, and as such is beyond the reach of Legislative enactments, which can deal only with evils accruing from vicious or defective legislation. To assign members upon a religious basis seems to us an impossibility; and were it possible, it would we think be unwise on our part to attempt to introduce religious tests, or to make the profession of any particular form of belief a condition either of eligibility to Parliament, or a qualification for voting. It is, however, as we said before, for our Catholic cotemporary to develop his plan, and if feasible, if