

The Press and General Review.

UNITED STATES—CANADA.

From the Times.

The New World is fated to be the subject of geographical problems. First, there was the question, whether there be such a place; and then, how to get it? Columbus solved both by a sort of mistake, and got to the other side of the globe by taking a short cut to the Indies of Colocanda and the realms of Prester John—Three centuries have passed, and one great problem survives for the curiosity, the ingenuity, or the perseverance, of competing nations.—How to get across the huge double continent, which stretches, as it were the backbone of the earth from the North to the South Pole—For the pure love of geographical science, we are sending expedition after expedition to find a north-west passage. The United States, animated at this moment by a more earthly passion, are considering whether it is best to cut across at once as the crow flies, or to go round Cape Horn, or across Central America, at Panama, or at Lake Nicaragua, or at Tehuantepec, or at some other place. A glittering prize excites the enterprise of these discoveries, as the golden cup tempted the Sicilian diver to the bottom of the Charybdis. But another problem of almost equal importance, vexes American ingenuity. It is how to get out of North America. The interior of that continent is a region unsurpassed for vastness, for fertility, for its noble rivers, and its inland seas. How is the increasing produce of this region to be extricated and launched on the ocean? Nature takes the waters of these inland seas, and the produce of their shores, ten degrees to the North, through a British colony, and down a British stream of difficult navigation, fifteen hundred miles long. Art has already achieved another solution of the difficulty by linking Lake Erie with New York. There still, however, remains the question, which is the easier, shorter, and the cheaper route, the St. Lawrence or the Lake Erie Canal?

The Erie of the United States is somewhat hard. So beset are they with natural and political impediments, they cannot reach their own western shores. When they look at the narrow neck of isthmus which presents so inviting a contrast to the dreary interval of rocky mountains and sandy plains which separate San Francisco from New York, they see it in the hands of other Powers. When they look at the natural outlet of their mighty lakes, there again they behold a foreign flag. Brother Jonathan, indeed, can triumph over nature as well as any other member of the race to whom that dominion is given. Half man, half alligator, he will dash on, by land or by water, as they happen to come, floundering through bogs, splashing through torrents, cutting his way through forests, and following the stars through interminable plains. He will extend the Mississippi with a railroad, or join seas with a canal, as it may suit his convenience. Give him three years, and he will lease the undertaking to a house in New York which will do it, or die, in the stipulated time. He does not fret at that which cannot be helped, but sits down and does what he can. If the mountain would not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain. If the citizens of the United States were not allowed a practical equality in the use of the St. Lawrence, they made a St. Lawrence of their own, 15 yards instead of 15 miles wide, but sufficient to carry stout barges loaded with grain and flour. Such a small but useful St. Lawrence there is, in fact. It is expensive and tedious, but what of that, when it belongs to the Union, and converts Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, and Erie into canal-docks, No. 1, 2, 3, and 4, of New York?

It is an inglorious sort of tyranny to deny men the free bounties of nature, and to monopolise a great highway of commerce. There are regions of the world where we maintain a very different doctrine, and claim for man's common use the arterial streams of great continents.—But we practically deny the river and the gulf of the St. Lawrence to our republican neighbors, while we refuse him a share in its principal commerce. It is still more inglorious to be beaten, and to find that a narrow canal, with nearly a hundred locks, and with banks so fragile as to allow no greater speed than three miles an hour, after all is a silver stream of wealth, far more useful and productive than one of the noblest rivers in the world. The food which flows to this crowded capital, and to the famished borders of Ireland, through Buffalo and Albany, and the tedious locks between, and which is thrice transhipped before it reaches the Atlantic, very far exceeds the quantity we receive through the Ontario, the St. Lawrence, and the gigantic ship canals, the Rideau and the Welland, with which we have surmounted the natural difficulties of the navigation. The vulgar American canal has beaten the British river, through the instrumentality of our own demands. England herself gives the virtual preference to the canal, by using it more than its showy rival.

The Canadian authorities, differing as they do in the question of free trade, and slightly disagreeing as to the minor items of the calculation, agree in the opinion that Quebec cannot pretend to vie with New York, or the Canadian with

the American settler, unless by repealing the navigation laws, and so reducing the price of freight at Quebec. Whatever the comparative cost of transport from the interior to New York and Quebec, it is evident that a high rate or a variably rate of freight from Quebec to this country must seriously clog the latter in the arduous competition. As the matter now stands Quebec and all Canada are well nigh beaten in the race. New York with its forest of merchantmen within sight of the ocean is above a match for Quebec some hundred miles up a difficult river, and further shut up by restrictive laws. It is now proposed to remove the disability under which it labors, and to permit the Americans to bring us the produce of the interior by our own river as well as by their own canal.

THE POPISH CHURCH RAMPANT.

From the London Examiner.

It will be strange enough if the immediate effect of the struggle for freedom of the last two years in Europe should end in setting free a power which, when uncontrolled, has never been exercised but for the enthralment of the minds, and not seldom of the bodies, of its votaries. At the present moment the Catholic Church, or rather Episcopacy, seems to be the only body likely to be gainers by the confusion. While princes and people have been tearing each other to pieces, they have been quietly looking on, slyly biding their time; and now, when both are exhausted with the contest, they boldly step forward and claim the lion's share of the spoils. That Church which, after tyrannising over the world herself, became the willing handmaid to every tyrant who chose to use her, now, forsooth, loudly demands freedom from all restrictions, as no longer consonant with the enlightened spirit of the present age. And mark the effect. In France the schools have been thrown open to the Jesuits. In Prussia the clergy, by order of their bishops, refuse to take the oath to the constitution; in Piedmont they protest against being subject to the civil tribunal; and in Austria they have obtained the relinquishment of the "Placetum Regium."

By a law passed in the reign of Maria Theresa—before any bull of the Pope could be published in any part of the Austrian dominions, it was necessary that a permission of "Placet" should be received from the emperor, after which the clergy were bound to obey. In like manner the bishops were obliged to subject their ordinances to the civil power before they could issue them in their own dioceses. This restraint—however necessary in respect to a Church which ere this has placed whole kingdoms under interdict, absolved people from their allegiance, and hurled princes from their thrones—galled the pride of the hierarchy, whose great object of late has been to get rid of it. The end sanctifies the means; and the Catholic Church, which at Rome allows no other worship within the walls of the city, now claims in Austria, on the plea of equal freedom for all creeds, a right to regulate its own affairs after its own fancy! Though the constitution by which this freedom is promised is still in obedience, and all other creeds are deprived even of the liberty they formerly enjoyed, the Catholics have accordingly obtained the following new privileges:—

1. Permission to apply to and receive orders from the Pope, independently of the civil power.
2. Similar freedom to the Bishops, with respect to their clergy.
3. The Church to be allowed to impose all ecclesiastical punishments which do not interfere with civil rights. By this act the greater and lesser bann may be published, and the sacraments of christening, marriage, and burial refused.
4. The Church to be permitted to punish priests by suspension, deposition, and deprivation of revenue. (If the Bishop of Exeter reads the *Examiner*, which we hope he does, how his mouth must water at the thought of such pleasant persecutions as the Austrian bishops may hereafter indulge in, should they get hold of an Austrian Gorkam "to suspend, depose, and deprive of his revenue.")
5. The civil power to be bound to execute such judgments.

In addition to all this, the bishops have declared their intention to hold provincial councils and diocesan synods. They have also demanded that should a priest be condemned by the civil power for any crime, the judgment, together with the documents of the process, should be given over to the bishop before the punishment is executed; and this demand has been granted! The emperor still maintains his power to nominate bishops; but he promises not to exercise it without the help of episcopal advice, and especially of the bishops of the provinces in which the vacancy occurs. Nor is this all. After some further concessions to the demand of hierarchy, there came the modest request that all other religious creeds should be forced to observe the Catholic saint-days, "the few saint-days" as they express it; and Count Thun, the Minister of Worship and Education, has actually had the effrontery, on the plea, be it marked, "of freedom for every religion, and equal justice to all," to obtain the emperor's signature to an order that "in all places where the majority of the inhabitants are Catholics, Sundays and saint-days," (jesuitically classed

together) "shall not be disturbed by noisy hand-rolls or public trailing."

That the first mentioned of the ordinances we have thus described should have excited an immense sensation among the Conservatives of Vienna, particularly those most attached to the Monarchy, we can easily imagine; for any act more dangerous to that of Monarchy, than such a revival of Popish assumptions, never was passed—but the effect which this last-mentioned law will have in the provinces, it is difficult to picture to one's self. The Protestants will of course feel it as an insult and oppression, and resent it accordingly; but to the members of the Greek Church, who are already condemned to inactivity during nearly one third of the year by the fasts and feasts of their own ritual, such an additional burden of "the few saint-days," of the Catholic Church will be felt as intolerable, and may give rise to very serious disturbances.

The very circumstance of the existence of so many members of the Greek Church of Austria should have rendered the Government a little more cautious in throwing away this hold on the spiritual power; for, on the principle of "equal justice to all," it is difficult to see how they can refuse to allow the Greek bishops, who acknowledge the Emperor of Russia for their Pope, the same liberty. And yet to allow the subjects of one monarch to receive and publish the orders of another, and especially of one so powerful, and dangerous, would seem somewhat hazardous to statesmen less bold, though perhaps not less wise, than Messrs. Bach and Thun.

The propositions of the Roman Catholic Bishops, were they not so lengthy, would well deserve literal translation, so plausible and humble are their professions, so grasping and power-seeking their demands, so haughty and imperious their pretensions. We are much mistaken if the young Emperor will not live to regret the concessions he has been induced or compelled to make to these smooth-tongued, meddlesome ambitious churchmen. The small end of the wedge is now introduced. Every little blow will help it forward, and there is no want of hands to strike them.

The object of the Minister—we cannot call him Statesman—is evident enough. He has hoped that by giving additional power to the higher clergy, these will be enabled to domineer over, and bind more tightly, the lower; but he will shortly find, that, instead of grateful servants, bent only on promoting the service of the State, he has created impetuous masters, whose greedy demands no concession short of the persecution of other creeds can possibly satisfy.

We do not often find ourselves in agreement with the *Standard*, but our contemporary has been generally right on questions affecting Austria, and we quote with peculiar pleasure his remarks on the particular matter of which we have been speaking:—

"With an ingenious perverseness Austria is determined that if subjects do not rise in rebellion, it shall not be for want of substantial provocations. Having taught in Hungary and Croatia that governments can patronize treason and reward rebellion, Austria is teaching the converse of the lesson, and rivetting an ecclesiastical despotism upon a people disposed to quiet. Pius IX. and his patrons have forgotten that more than two centuries have elapsed since the period when it was possible to enslave a whole population by the machinery of papal despotism. An attempt to revert to that machinery will precipitate instead of retarding the progress towards democracy, of the people among whom the experiment was tried."

Meantime, what is to become of the Austrian empire, the persecutor of Zillertal, the tyrant of Hungary, the patron of Pius IX. and Baron Haynau? Incapable of independent action among the nations of Europe, since the Cadmean victory, which Russia obtained for her, Austria is at once the slave of another people, and the tyrant of her own—the capricious despot of one district, the abject dependant of another. Ignorant people will doubtless talk of the restored spiritual dominion of the Pope, and we have seen something of the kind already; but where are there any indications of a restored power? Foreign armies and foreign princes keep the expelled priest on his stage throne, but a more fatal one. Garibaldi has been in Rome. Romans have been taught the truth. Italians have learned to think, and speak their thoughts. No French army can quell that inward revolution.

We cannot refrain from adding, as an appendix to this choice page of Catholic Church history, another specimen extracted from the same journal in which the propositions of the Bishops are published. It may give the reader a notion of how Austrian Catholics themselves keep the saint-days. The scene is the parish of St. Georgen, a mile from the town of Klagenfurth in Carinthia. On a large meadow are assembled six or seven thousand persons to witness the representation of the "Christi-Leiden-Spiele," the mystery (as our forefathers would have called it) of Christ's Sufferings. These representations, which are common in Carinthia and Styria, are acted by men and women of the lowest classes under the tuition of the priests. Judas, who is represented as a common thief, packs up into his sack all the dishes and plate from the last supper; and as he is running off with it, is caught to the no small delight of the audience,

and throttled by two devils, who carry them off with them. The crucifixion is carried out, according to the exhibitors' interpretation of it, in all its details. The thief on the left shares the fate of Judas; while he on the right answers the word of Jesus, "To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," with a contented "All right." The Virgin is a pretty young girl, while her son is an old man with long white hair. The Magdalen, who appears as a girl of the town, decked out in her best finery and by no means too modest in her deportment, is converted by the remonstrance of an angel; and in sign of her repentance begins to throw off her ornaments and fine clothes before the public, till not a little fear prevails that the beautiful Magdalen will remain at last in the dress of Eve in Paradise.

And such are the feast days which Protestants must respect! Such the ceremonies of a Church to which unlimited power is again to be given!

THE SABBATH MAIL QUESTION.

The places in Canada West, which have moved in relation to the Sabbath mail question are beginning to ask, What is doing in Montreal? Montreal—which used to take the lead in efforts for the good of the country—why is she so changed that, so far from leading in this singularly important agitation, she does not even follow the good example set by others? No satisfactory answer can we apprehend, be given to this question. It is true, Christians here feel themselves crushed beneath the weight of pro-Papal legislation, and they are apt to despair of relief, when they see Western religious papers and religious statesmen, not only dumb concerning this oppression, but actually stepping out of their way, loudly to profess that they will take no part in Lower Canada questions, but leave us wholly to the priests and their subservient Roman Catholic majority; but this is no good reason why we should not be diligent in aiding Canada West in every good effort. Nay, we should be the more active and zealous, both in prayer and labor, just in proportion as the prospect waxed darker and darker, in the hope that the Lord may yet plead our cause. To serve a political party in the hope that it will bring deliverance, would, in view of past experience, be fatuity; but to serve the Lord, in the hope that He will deliver, would be the perfection of wisdom; and he has promised special blessings to those who are zealous for his sabbaths. Ministers, Merchants, Mechanics of Montreal, will ye not hold a public meeting and strengthen the hands of those who laboring to abolish public official compulsory Sabbath desecration in connexion with the Post-Office? If ye do not in some way co-operate in this effort, it will be a sore discouragement to all who are doing their duty, and a chief argument on the other side of the question. And though you should afterwards repent of present supineness, and be willing to make efforts, the opportunity will have passed away. These remarks are applicable, in many respects, to Quebec, Toronto, and all other places which have not yet held meetings and petitioned.

Since writing the foregoing, we learn that the Congregation of Zion Church of this city, has adopted a petition on the subject; but a public meeting and a general petition would be much more influential than separate petitions, though both ought to be forwarded. The extraordinary zeal in petitioning on this question in Britain, offers a striking contrast to the apathy of Canada.—*Montreal Witness*.

POST-OFFICE LABOR ON THE SABBATH.

From Scottish Guardian.

The progress of the Sabbath question is truly cheering, especially to those who, like ourselves, have struggled for it as public journalists for years almost alone. It appears from Mr. Hill's official minutes to the Postmaster-General, of date 28th January, 1850, that the money-order offices have all been closed on the Lord's day,—that all country offices are now shut from 10 in the morning till 5 in the afternoon, that the arrival of certain Sabbath mails has been discontinued, as well as the delivery of letters in the villages round London. This is encouraging, as showing how much may be done by well directed public opinion. At the same time it shows how vast an amount of Sabbath work has been going on for years, all unnecessary; and what a responsibility has meanwhile been incurred. The cry has always been, when any one proposed to touch the Post-office, that the work done was indispensable—that any change would only introduce universal confusion, and make matters much worse. Mr. Hill comes forward and practically declares that there was great room for beneficial change, and that he and his predecessors have been uncalled-for desecrators of the day of God. The friends of the Sabbath from this may learn what weight to attach to Post-office assertions when they are told that this thing cannot be done—and that that other must continue as it is. They must be encouraged, from what has been gained in deference to public sentiment, not to be contented with a partial, but to press more zealously for a full and permanent Post-office reform. The difficulties now to be overcome are not greater than those which a year ago seemed, and were pleaded as, quite insuperable, but which have been found on the trial to be of easy management.