

The True Witness

AND
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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1870.

ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR.

NOVEMBER—1870.

Friday, 25—St. Catherine, V. M.
Saturday, 26—Of the Immaculate Conception.
Sunday, 27—First of Advent.
Monday, 28—St. Irene and Comp., MM.
Tuesday, 29—Vigil of St. Andrew.
Wednesday, 30—Fast. St. Andrew, Ap.

DECEMBER—1870.

Thursday, 1—Of the Foria.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

No important change in the relative positions of the belligerents in France has occurred since our last. The Prussians still surround Paris; and outside they are likely to stay, till the combined influences of winter, and disease, and of the disaffection in Germany rapidly spreading and intensifying as war calls for fresh victims—compel them to moderate their terms, and conclude a peace which shall not dismember France. There have been skirmishing and sorties from Paris, but no decisive engagement has taken place.

Victor Emmanuel has not yet screwed his courage up to the point of making his entry into Rome. The unhappy man is in sore straits; behing him is the Revolution urging him—not to say kicking him—to go in and take possession of his prey. Before him is the majesty of the Vicar of Christ, to which he fears to offer the last and crowning outrage.—By orders of the Piedmontese Government the Palace of the Quirinal has been broken into, and robbed of its ecclesiastical archives. Such of the journals at Rome as have ventured upon criticism of this wanton act of spoliation have been forcibly suppressed. Rumors that the Sovereign Pontiff meditates a retreat to Malta are again rife.

As we anticipated would be the case, Russia is pursuing as towards the Sultan and the parties to the Treaty of 1856, the same course of policy as that which with the applause of Protestant Europe, Piedmont has adopted with regard to the Sovereign Pontiff, and France.—Emboldened by the present state of affairs which seem to leave her free to violate Treaties, and to trample upon the rights of her weaker neighbors, Russia has formally announced that she no longer deems herself bound by the obligations by her contracted in 1856 to put no armed vessels on, to build no naval arsenals on the shores of the Black Sea. She laughs international obligations to scorn; and with a cynical disregard for honor tears up ostentatiously Treaties which she imagines that the other contracting parties are no longer strong enough to enforce. We can scarce blame Russia however; for why should her rulers be expected to be more scrupulous about pledged faith and the rights of weak States, than are Victor Emmanuel and the statesmen of Italy. Russia has as good a right, if it can enforce that right, to annex Constantinople and make it the capital of the Pan-Slavonic Empire looming in the distance, as has Victor Emmanuel to annex Rome, and to make it the capital of the new fangled Kingdom of Italy. In denouncing the actual policy of Russia, Liberal writers do but make display of their contempt for consistency, and their disregard of the fundamental principle of all justice.

The upshot of this business is doubtful.—The diplomatic doctors who have been called in will try no doubt and apply some salve in the shape of a Congress, which may for a time cause the Eastern ulcer to scab over; but heal it by such appliances, or prevent it from breaking out again as virulently as ever on the first favorable opportunity, they cannot. Great Britain, single-handed, cannot enforce the terms of the Treaty of 1856. France is for the moment crippled, and cannot help her; and there is not in Europe one Power whom in her need, Great Britain can rely upon as an ally.

She will therefore again have to eat humble pie; but to this diet she is becoming, since the war on this Continent, well accustomed.

Among the minor items of news it is mentioned that the Duke of Aosta has been elected King of Spain. Were it not for his father's crimes, which must bring down punishment on the family, almost could we feel pity for the unhappy young man.

MANDEMENT OF HIS LORDSHIP THE BISHOP OF MONTREAL, ENJOINING A TRIDUUM OF PRAYER FOR OUR HOLY FATHER THE POPE.

IGNATIUS BOERGER, by the Grace of God and of the Apostolic See, Bishop of Montreal, Assistant at the Pontifical Throne.

To the Clergy Secular and Regular, to the Religious Communities, and to all the Faithful of our Diocese, Health and Benediction in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

We raise Our voice this day Dearly Beloved Brethren, but to make you hear Our sobs and groans; for the minds of all are preoccupied, and all hearts are agitated in these days of misfortune through which we pass. The striking demonstrations in honor of the safe arrival of our Zouaves do but confirm the sad news, and augment our just sorrow.

For three months, sad echoes have daily repeated what was passing in the old world, and plunged our souls in profound bitterness, as they informed us of the dreadful trials with which Divine Providence had visited France, the birthplace of our fathers, which in placing them on our shores, had together with the ancient faith bequeathed to them their great and precious establishments.

More and more were We grieved in learning that this great nation was deeply humiliated; that her armies hitherto invincible, had been beaten; that her Emperor and chief Generals had been made prisoners; that her fair and wealthy plains had been ravaged; that her cities and fortresses, deemed impregnable, had fallen into the hands of the enemy; that fatal divisions tore her internally, whilst externally she suffered from all the horrors of war; that all her families were plunged in grief and mourning, all having to weep over the loss of beloved relatives; that with each battle the numbers of orphans increased, because of the numbers of warriors who lay dead in the dust.

From the outbreak of this disastrous war We have been in prayer, imploring the Divine Mercy. We have had recourse to the good and powerful Virgin the *Help of Christians*: in our cities and rural districts We have enjoined pious and solemn processions to turn aside the terrible scourge of war. But still our hearts were in fear, in spite of our trust in her who can do all things with God; for we learned with pain, that those who had usurped power over this country once so flourishing, were doing all that in them lay to provoke the wrath of heaven, instead of seeking to turn it aside by humiliation and repentance; that the statue erected to Voltaire in a moment of sacrilegious effervescence, far from disappearing in the midst of so many calamities was receiving still greater honors as if to insult the Son of the living God of Whom he was the deadliest enemy; that, in fine, political parties instead of uniting to drive back the common enemy were but more and more dividing themselves to the ruin of the nation.

And whilst day by day these deplorable events were becoming more momentous, the Revolution has put the climax to our sorrow by consummating its projects for the spoliation of the Pontifical States, and by seizing upon Rome in violation of all laws, human and divine.

It was on the 27th of last September as you are aware, Dear Brethren, and by means with which you are already acquainted that this shameful and iniquitous act was accomplished. The public voice has informed you of the glorious defeat of the Pontifical army, and the shameful victory of the Italians on this day, ever sadly memorable. Our Zouaves, who took so active a part in the events of that day, and who to-day arrive from Rome, will repeat to you what you have already heard, and will supply many interesting details of which you are ignorant, but which are well fitted to excite your highest interest.

To them then We leave willingly the task of telling you in the simplicity of their souls what they have done to carry out their noble and important mission; what has been their conduct since the day of their departure to that of their return; how they lived whilst under the Pontifical flag; how they have acted in defence of the good cause; what caresses our common father has bestowed upon them; what affection he has incessantly displayed towards them, and what they have done in return; their cordial attachment to their chaplains who at all times were as fathers to them, their friends and guides in this long voyage; their efforts for the defence of the Holy City, and their good will to shed the last drop of their blood in the breach, but for the imperious order which compelled them to lay down their arms; the horrors and sufferings of the prison to which they were doomed; the outrages and insults

from their dastardly enemies which they were forced to endure; the imminent perils to which they were exposed, and from which they were miraculously delivered; in fine, all that relates to their expedition; that they might be as towards the Holy See, the representatives of the people of Canada. All these interesting details will be fixed in the memories of all our families, and will be cherished to the latest generations; and together with these imperishable facts will be spread filial love for the Holy Father, and devotion to the Apostolic See. Against these principles of attachment to the good cause—the waves of the Revolution which now shake the world, will henceforward dash themselves in vain.

But here Dear Brethren let us pause to fix our attention upon that serious subject which now most exclusively occupy us. To this end, let us fix our sad eyes upon our Holy Father the Pope, so as well to appreciate the position in which the Revolution has placed—1st. his sacred person; 2nd. the Holy City; and 3rd. the Christian universe. That we may the better understand this we will listen with deep respect to the touching words which have fallen from the sacred lips of this Venerable Pontiff, and which on these topics furnish us with ample matter for serious reflection.

The Pontiff-King, to spare the blood of his brave soldiers had given orders, even before the commencement of hostilities that the City should capitulate immediately that the guns of the enemy should have effected a breach in its walls. He designed by this, in his high wisdom to show to the world that he yielded only to brute force, but that at the same time he had a horror of blood. Nevertheless he made no surrender of any of his rights; and therefore in the strongest terms he protested before the Sacred College, and on the 29th of this same month of September against the sacrilegious invasion.

"Beloved Sons"—thus he addressed their Eminences the Cardinals in sorrowful accents—"Our Lord Jesus Christ has of late permitted that this City of Rome Seat of the Supreme Pontificate should as well as the rest of the Pontifical States, fall into the hands of the enemy. * * * We have this day resolved, in these Our days of mourning and grief to make known to Our enemies the inmost sentiments of Our soul which make Us detest and solemnly reprobate the existing state of affairs. * * * We * Shepherd of all the house of Israel, feel that we should enjoy practically that liberty which is essential for ruling the Church of God, and for upholding her rights; and that it is Our duty to make this Protest which We have resolved to make public, and to make it known, as should be the case, throughout the Catholic universe.

What Apostolic vigor reveals itself in all its splendor in our Pontiff, watched and kept a prisoner though he be in his own Pontifical Palace.

And now—What is the position in which the Revolution has placed Our Holy Father, the Pope? Dear Brethren, most melancholy is that position; for at the present moment he is reduced to a general and absolute destitution. For his protection there is neither Prince nor Government. The two Emperors who but ten years ago placed at his disposal their armies and the forces of their Empires have abandoned him, and indeed one above all others has most efficaciously contributed towards the spoliation of the Pontifical States. He—the Pontiff-King—is without an army, without a guard, without funds, without followers, without protection. But a shred of royalty, of Sovereignty is left to him in a corner of Rome, which has been ostensibly spared in order to delude the world into the belief that he is perfectly free at home. It is in this shadow of a City that stands the Vatican, which is for him but a prison house. It is in front of this Palace that every evening, and at the hour of prayer, hordes of mercenaries, it is added, gather beneath his windows, howling their cries of war and blasphemy—"Death to the Zouaves; death to the priests; death to the Cardinals; death to the Pope."

Stupefied at this desolation which makes his heart bleed, one naturally asks—What will become of the Pope? will he remain in Rome? Can he take shelter anywhere? whether will he go when he leaves the City? Let us again pause to consider the resemblance which thus abandoned the Vicar of Christ bears to Our Lord Jesus; for the Divine Master is denied by His people, condemned by Pontius Pilate, and insulted by Herod; and all this we find in the disciple who declares that this evil time is the hour given to the powers of darkness to work for the overthrow of the Church. Let us not fear however; that hour will be short, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against her.

(2.) What then is the position in which the Revolution has placed the City of Rome? Nothing more unjust than the lot which has been forced upon her. Without any Declaration of War, she is besieged. In violation of the rights of nations she is bombarded; without the shadow of a reason, or any pretext of provocation, her walls are battered down; and the

most impudent lies are in circulation to make it appear that she is disloyal.

By the driving from her bosom of the thousands of strangers who brought thither their abundance when they thronged to assist at her great solemnities, she has been reduced to want. She has been shorn of all her splendor by being degraded into being but the capital of Italy, and thus spoiled of her ancient right as Capital of the World. The peace which under her pacific king she enjoyed is troubled, whilst she is abandoned to hordes of barbarians who carry on therein the most hideous brigandage. From being a City of prayer she is changed into a hell, by the murders, the outrages, the pillage which are therein perpetrated with impunity. If we may believe the tidings which reach us from the Eternal City, therein are committed the most abominable atrocities; and the most revolting means are employed to excite evil passions, to corrupt good morals, and to poison the minds of all by the circulation of the most impious and obscene pamphlets.

At the aspect of such desolation may we not apply to Rome what Jeremias inconsolable said of Jerusalem when that City fell a prey to her enemies. "The ways of Sion mourn, because there are none that come to the solemn feast; all her gates are broken down; her priests sigh; her virgins are in affliction, and she is oppressed with bitterness."

(3.) Lastly. In what position is the Christian world placed by the Revolution? In the most disastrous, for it was by the Princes and the people of Christendom that the Patrimony of St. Peter was founded. These well understood that the Supreme Chief of their religion should be independent of all alien rule. Those who seated on a throne, he should be the better able to represent on earth the King of Kings, and to secure for religion the splendor, the privileges and the majesty which become the Queen of the nations. In setting up this temporal Principality they gave to the Sovereign Pontiff means for preserving his perfect liberty in his decrees concerning faith and morals, and in his canonical judgments. They thus at the same time made free the means of communication betwixt all the children of the Church, whether rich or poor, and the common Father of all; and by these means all can obtain justice, and challenge their rights; for by this wise arrangement prepared by Divine Providence, the Supreme Chief of the Church exercises free from control his divine authority, holds the balance even for all, inspires all with a just confidence, and is hampered by no one in his government of the Church.

But this harmony is troubled, this order reversed if the Pope be not independent; what is now taking place at Rome proves this. Already persons coming out of the Vatican have been searched by the soldiers of the new regime, who wished to know if they carried nothing beneath their clothes; on the academies Professors of bad principles have been thrust, in order to corrupt the education of the young; the rights of property are violated in the expulsion of monks and nuns; it is now in contemplation to destroy the churches and other sacred buildings with the view of converting them into theatres. God grant that all these impious projects of the Revolution be brought to naught.—And what will be our state, Dear Brethren, should our communications with the Holy See cease to be free, should Our letters be intercepted and read, or the replies of the Holy Father no longer reach us. Were the powers and dispensations asked for Us stopped upon their road.

In short, what disastrous consequences for religion if the first of Pastors be unable freely to exercise his vigilance over all the churches; if it be rendered impossible for him to confirm his brethren in the faith, and to publish his decrees for the general good of the Church. All would soon be overthrown, and soon would the sacred bonds of unity be broken.

Thus, Dear Brethren, you see that throughout the Catholic world the invasion of Rome by Italian troops is indignantly protested against. At a great meeting held in Belgium the Clergy and the people denounced this invasion in the face of the world, as a usurpation of the rights of nations, as an act most dastardly, as a blow aimed at the divine independence of the sacerdotal order, and the freedom of souls.

And this, too, was well understood by our Zouaves, who so nobly manned the breach, exposed to the fire of the enemy, and ready to shed their blood for the defence of the temporal dominion of the Holy See; this, too, was well understood by their parents when they offered the sacrifice of their children in so good a cause.

For such sacrifices are not made to sustain an imaginary or ill-founded right. It is this that was keenly felt and loudly proclaimed by the Catholic population of our cities and our rural districts who so warmly welcomed the return of our Zouaves as Canada's representatives in the defence of the Holy See. How splendid were these demonstrations! how touching and eloquent were the words that were addressed to them; how full of life and vigor the protestations in favor of the sacred rights of the Holy See! We cease not to bless the Lord, because

we look upon those holy dispositions as a great grace accorded to this country, which we must hope will reap the fruits thereof from generation to generation. Therefore is it that with a heart overflowing with joy We hail all these noble protestations in the name of the Holy Father, and that We felicitate all those who have taken part therein.

In any case however, Dear Brethren, all is not yet over, and there remains to us still some most important duties to perform; for we cannot remain idle or indifferent spectators of the terrible events. In fact in this horrible calamity Divine Providence gives a great lesson to the entire world, from which we must try and draw profit. To all it furnishes the occasion of practising many acts of virtue; we must be faithful. In one word, we must learn to adore, and bless the hand of God when he smites man, so that His justice may be changed into mercy.

(1.) Lessons which in the events of the day, Divine Providence is giving to the world.

Why, asks the Psalmist, have the nations raged, and why have the people imagined a vain thing? The kings of the earth have stood up, and the princes have taken counsel together against the Lord, and His Christ. Let us break their bonds, have they said, and let us cast away their yoke.

In these divine words are beautifully set forth the furious passions of the age. The unheard of efforts of impiety to destroy religion by its vile books, its pestiferous journals, its harangues replete with pride and insolence, are therein faithfully brought to light by the Holy Spirit. Since then all has been foretold, we need be neither surprised nor confounded. But let us see what will be the result.

He who dwelleth in heaven shall laugh His enemies to scorn, and the Lord will have them in derision; then shall He speak to them in His wrath, and overthrow them in His anger. He says to His Christ in giving to Him the nations for His portion: Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Who but can see clearly in these words the events passing before our eyes! Need we a commentary to profit by them? It is impiety that in these evil days darkens the intellect, and ferments in men's hearts. We must then avoid it, to escape so great evils. *Aburgentes impietatem, et secularia desideria, sobrie et juste, et pie vivamus.* Therefore will you, Dear Brethren, be more than ever on your guard against the dangers presented by irreligious discourses, books opposed to faith or morals, and also those journals which, like venomous snakes, insinuate themselves into all ranks of society to seduce and poison them.

2. Virtues we must practice to disarm the divine wrath.

At all times, but especially during great calamities, God, before letting fall from heaven upon earth the scourge of His anger, seeks if He may not find some victims pure enough to appease Him. For our God is so good that He dislikes to punish, and that nothing is so pleasing to Him as to find somewhere devoted souls which by their immolations may disarm His vengeance. He shall find, let us trust, these victims of sweet odor, not only in the sanctuary and in the cloister, but in those holy families as well, in which together with the faith is kept alive the fire of divine charity.

Compassion, Sacrifice, and Prayer are the chief arms employed by those who present themselves before the divine Majesty, to offer to Him gifts and oblations fit to stir the bowels of His mercy.

Compassion.—We find an admirable example of this in those Jews who remained faithful to the law of the Lord, when His terrible arm weighed heavily upon His guilty people, and when in punishment of their crimes which had so long tried His patience, He led them captive to Babylon. Yes, truly, if we but inspire ourselves with feelings of compassion at the sight of the terrible evils which the world to-day presents, we shall have discovered the admirable secret of touching the heart of our God.

Penetrated then with sorrow at the sight of the misfortunes of our father, and the disaster that has fallen on the holy City, let us enter into the sentiments of these Jews inflamed with zeal and ardour, and with them let us cry out: "We sat down and wept by the waters of Babylon, shedding torrents of tears as we thought of the evils that had fallen upon Jerusalem, our beloved country." *Super flumina Babylonis, illic sedimus et flevimus, cum recordaremur Sion.*

And so since the Capital of the Christian world has fallen by violence under the power of the unjust ravishers of the sacred Patrimony of St. Peter, we have hung our musical instruments on the willows which overhang the graves of the heroes who fell in its defence. *In salicibus in medio ejus suspendimus organa nostra.* "For all pleasures have become wearisome to us since the world is plunged in this depth of woe."

The children of the world call upon us to take part in their profane joy, but with sad accents we reply—how can we sing the song of