

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, FEB. 20, 1852.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The Canada arrived below New York on the morning of Wednesday, after a long and tempestuous passage across the Atlantic. The following are the principal items of intelligence transmitted by telegraph:—

It is rumored that a coalition between Lord Palmerston and Lord Derby is about to take place, with the intention of forming a new administration; the report, however, does not seem to be universally believed.

The strike amongst the operative engineers still continues, and their numbers have been considerably augmented: there seems to be no prospect as yet of any amicable arrangement betwixt them, and their former employers.

The people of England seem still to be haunted with the terrors of an invasion, and with visions of a French army encamped in Hyde Park, and levying forced contributions upon the City of London, although the President of the French Republic loudly professes the most pacific intentions, and a reduction of the Grande Armée is spoken of, as being in contemplation. As a measure of precaution, the Tagus Squadron has been ordered home, and an order has been given to the gun-makers of Birmingham, for a supply of 23,000 "rifle muskets," on the Minie principle.

The first of the Australian Packets was to sail early in April; the late gold discoveries on that continent, are exciting much interest in England; the demand for freight and passage has greatly increased, and it is said, that proposals for the establishment of a mint in that remote colony, are seriously entertained.

The Orangemen of Ireland have put forth an address to the Protestants of the British empire, urging upon them the importance of taking "adequate steps to frustrate the audacious designs of the Papists;" the absurdity of the Penal legislation of last session is discussed in a masterly manner, and it is proved to be perfectly useless as a barrier against Popery. The Orangemen admit that the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill is, what its opponents always prophesied it would be—mere waste paper, a standing memorial of Protestant malice, and of Protestant impotence; they complain that its (the Penal Bill's) provisions are either evaded, or defied—that the Synod of Thurles has organised a regular system for the propagation of Popery, and counteracting the plans of the Jumpers—and that their lawful titles are openly assumed by the Catholic Bishops, without any effectual opposition, or resistance. "The address insists that there will be danger to the Empire, if Papal intrigue be not frustrated, and reiterates the demand that there should be a further inquiry into these intrigues." Poor men! it must indeed be galling to them, to see the contempt with which the Catholics treat them, and their Penal Laws; however, they will get used to it in time, and will, we hope, learn that Protestant legislation against the Church, will always receive from Catholics the same amount of respect and obedience, as—and no more than—that which has been accorded to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.

Much dissatisfaction has been expressed in France at the decree of the President, confiscating the property of the Orleans family; the King of the Belgians,—as representing the interests of his wife, the daughter of Louis Philippe—has entered his protest against it; and M. de Montalembert, and several others—eminent statesmen—have tendered their resignations as members of the Consultative Commission. The following is the letter of M. de Montalembert, announcing his resignation:—

PARIS, Jan. 23, 1852.

M. le Ministre.—In consequence of the decrees which appeared this morning, I consider myself called on to perform an imperative duty; and I pray you accordingly to be good enough to present, for the acceptance of the President of the Republic, my resignation of the functions of member of the Consultative Commission created on the 2d December last. Though that commission has not been consulted on any of the acts of the Executive, there does not the less exist, in the eyes of the public, for those who compose it, a species of solidarity, with the policy of the government, which it becomes impossible for me, henceforth to accept. I appeal to your honor, M. le Ministre, and in case of necessity, to that of Prince Louis Napoleon himself, to make my resignation public through the same channel as my nomination, that is, by its insertion in the Moniteur.

Accept, M. le Ministre, &c.,

CH. DE MONTALEMBERT.

The Minister of the Interior has addressed a letter to the prefects to release immediately from prison, and restore to their families all poor misled insurgents.

The decrees of the Provisional Government, abolishing titles of nobility, have been rescinded.

The Emperor of Russia has published an ukase, forbidding the export of Corn, and in consequence, a considerable advance in the price of grain, is anticipated.

TO WHAT DO PROTESTANTS SEEK TO CONVERT US?

"Lord—to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal life." Such was the reply of the Prince of the Apostles, to our Lord's question: "Will you also go away?" Our Saviour had just propounded one of the most mysterious dogmas of our holy religion, to a mixed multitude, composed of unbelieving Jews, faint-hearted disciples, and the faithful companions of His wanderings; He had just assured them, and He had confirmed His assurance, with the solemn "Amen, Amen, dico vobis—Amen, Amen, I say unto you,"—that He would, in due time, give them His flesh to eat, and His blood to drink. This was a hard saying, too hard, for the majority to bear. "How can this man, give us his flesh to eat?" they inquired amongst themselves; but, our Lord persisted, and most of His hearers, in consequence, protested; many, even of the disciples, heedless of the mighty works they had witnessed, lost faith, joined the ranks of the protesters, and turning back, "walked with Him no more." Not so Peter, and the other Apostles; though, to them, the words of Christ were as incomprehensible, as they were to the Jews, and the protesting disciples; though, even to them, the Lord, who, on all other occasions, condescended to make clear, what was enigmatical in His sermons before the multitude, deigned to give no explanation, they were not staggered; they would not quit their Lord and Master—for, whither should they, whither could they go? They had seen Him, give sight to the blind; they had seen the winds, and the waves, rebuked at His voice; and, at His command, they had beheld the grave compelled to give back its dead; should they leave Him, because they did not understand Him? whither, then, should they go? if He was a deceiver, in whom could they, again, put trust? "Lord," they said, "to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal life."

And as Peter answered our Lord, so does the Catholic, at the present day, answer the Protestant proselytiser, who is exhorting him to leave the Church. "Whither shall I go? to whom shall I turn? when I shall have left the Church, where shall I find repose?" To these questions, the Catholic has the right to demand a clear, and satisfactory reply; he has the right to demand—"To what do Protestants seek to convert me? and if he is wise, until such time as this question shall have been answered, he will treat those, who try to convert him, with suspicion, and will not leave the Church, wherein he has found refuge, until he is certified that a safer asylum is ready for his reception, and that he can obtain, elsewhere, something as good, if not better, than that which he is called upon to discard. We know well enough what is that our separated brethren call upon us to leave, and would fain persuade us to reject. We know that their object is, to induce us to come out of the Catholic Church, and to reject her authoritative teaching—the only authority given unto man whereby he can obtain a knowledge of the things that belong to his eternal peace. We know that we are expected to deny something, and to renounce something, and that, the something which we are expected to deny and renounce, is the testimony upon which the whole of our Faith, as Christians, is built up. This we know, and as yet we know no more; but this is not enough: here we will consent to exchange faith for doubt; or be content to protest, instead of believing, we must know—"To what do Protestants seek to convert us?"

To the Protestant Faith, is the reply; but still, we ask—What is the Protestant Faith? A mere bundle of negations; a faith, which is distinguished from the Catholic Faith, by this—that it denies something. Such is the "Protestant Faith;" and, as if to make this "Faith" still more vague and unsatisfactory, no two of the thousand sects, into which it is split up, can tell us exactly, how much we are to deny, or when, and where, we are to leave off protesting. We have heard of an ingenious individual, who went deliberately to work, to make out an inventory of everything, he had not got; his task was an easy one, compared with that of the man, who should sit down, and endeavor to draw up a definition of the "Protestant Faith," that would be accepted by all Protestants: to define, who are Protestants, is easy, but, to say what is their Faith, is impossible, for the simple reason, that it is not necessary to have faith at all, in order to be a good, sound, Protestant. A Protestant is any baptised person, who is not—a Catholic: in the same way, a "heathen" is one, who is still, unbaptised; and, the "Protestant Faith" means nothing more than—"Not the Catholic Faith,"—or, the religious opinions of the millions of baptised persons, who are not Catholics. Protestantism can only be defined by negatives.

Some of our separated brethren may object to this definition, and say—"Oh we believe a good deal, we have very strong opinions upon many matters; ours is a positive, not a mere negative faith." It may be so; but still this does not affect the correctness of our definition. Neither Mr. Styles, nor Mr. Stiggins has any right to call his religious opinions the "Protestant Faith," and if they should happen to coincide with any of the dogmas of Catholicity, he must remember that this is an accident, not the essence, of his Protestantism, and proves, not that he is a good Christian, but merely, that he is a bad logician. For instance, there is no relation like that of "cause" and "effect," between a denial of the authority of the Church, and an acknowledgment of the Divine authority of the Bible; it does not follow, as a logical sequence, that, because a man disbelieves in the Real Presence, he believes in the Incarnation; that, because he rejects the intercession of Saints, he admits the vicarious atonement of Christ, or that because he refuses to the Blessed Virgin the title of "Mother of God," he intends to assert

the Divinity of her Son. Certainly, it is true, that most of the sects, which have been cut off from the Catholic Church, have retained some traces of their former connection, some Catholic traditions, more or less corrupted: even in his fall Lucifer is still represented as not less than "Archangel ruined;" but this resemblance, though it may increase his shame, by reminding him of the glory he has lost, can constitute no claim, on his part, to be considered as one of the host who minister round the eternal throne. So with Protestant sects; the likeness which they bear to Catholicity, is as the likeness which the monkey bears to man; it is but a foul and loathsome caricature of a Divine original; and if some Protestant sects do pretend to have retained some old Catholic doctrines, we see how misplaced such doctrines are in their system, by the unwillingness of Protestants to avow them, or to accept their consequences. A Protestant will tell us, perhaps, that he believes in the Incarnation, but if we begin to examine him as to his belief, what a mess he makes of it; in what a mass of contradictions does he not involve himself; how careful is he to deny, and protest against the consequences of every dogma which he professes to hold? Ask him if he believes that He, by Whose Almighty power the heavens and the earth were made, was borne in the womb of a virgin, was fed upon her breasts, cradled within her arms, subject to her, as a child to its mother, for thirty years—and he will look horrified; the idea of the "Infant Jesus," is evidently something quite new to him, and, consequently, startling; he will tell you, perhaps, that "he believes it in one sense—or after a sort," which means, in plain English, "that he does not believe it at all." The very doctrines, which orthodox Protestantism professes to have retained, it has so frightfully mangled, and distorted, that we can hardly recognise them; for indeed they resemble the old Catholic doctrines only in name. In vain then can Protestantism profess to be any thing more than a bare negation; it is consistent, so long as it contents itself with denying something; when it attempts to affirm, it is positively ridiculous, which is the only thing "positive" about it.

But though it be impossible to define, with any thing like logical accuracy, what the Protestant, or non-Catholic, faith is, though the nearest approach to any thing like precision, can be attained only, by stating what it is not, we can sometimes get a glimpse of the faith of some of the various sects of which Protestantism is made up. The Anglican professes to hold the three creeds; another sect more consistently defines the essence of its Protestantism, to consist in the rejection of all creeds; the Presbyterian and the Mormonite finds his faith duly set forth, one in the Westminster confession, the other in the golden plates of Joe Smith; but the best description of the Protestant Faith, and its fruits, that we have seen for some time, is contained in an article in the London Quarterly, for the month of September last, entitled "Puritanism in the Highlands, or The Men;" as it may amuse our readers also, we will lay before them some specimens of the workings of Protestantism, in essentially Protestant Scotland, and, in the words of the Reviewer, amidst a population "for a long time distinguished for a transcendental Calvinism, or as they prefer to say, for ultra-evangelical tenets." We give them as specimens, not of the, but of a Protestant Faith, which has been freely allowed to develop itself, under circumstances the most favorable to the growth of evangelical Protestantism; we hope, as we intend to quote only Protestant testimony, and, for the most part, the testimony of a Scotch Protestant minister, who signs himself Investigator, that we may not be accused of libelling either Scotchmen, or Protestants.

"The Men," or the evangelical Protestants, whose faith and habits we are about to describe, are the spiritual leaders of the ultra-Puritans of the north of Scotland; amongst the Saxon speaking part of the population they are called "Professors," but whether known by the title of "The Men," or the "Professors," their Faith is well worthy of a place in any future history of the variations, or vagaries of Protestantism. The subjects over whom "The Men" rule with despotic sway, are the true spiritual children of the old Puritans:—

"Like other people of cold climate and nature, they love the excitement of long and vehement preaching, and are capable of being roused by it to a dangerous frenzy, venting itself in scenes only short of the dreadful American revivals. But like their Puritan prototypes, while thus seeking the stimulants of spiritual exercises, they profess to distrust and despise all secular learning (head knowledge is their term), however dedicated to pious uses. Ordination of any sort has no value in their eyes, and thus the clever, talking, ranting, uneducated layman who possesses the 'gift of prayer' and has Scripture phrases on his tongue, is more acceptable with them in their 'fellowship-meetings' than the sober ecclesiastic who would try to instruct before exciting. This religious society has another curious feature. Its individual members not only think themselves entitled to assert generally their own acceptance with the Deity; but they measure with great minuteness their several degrees of progress in spiritual attainments; and take rank according to the indications of divine favor—according to the success of appeals to God—of struggles with the Devil; to use their own language, according to their 'experiences.' Each man is his own judge, and what is more remarkable—the society in which he moves admits his judgment of himself. The self-constituted leaders of these religionists are known by the appellation of 'the Men,' and they distinguish themselves by a particular dress. In Skye they wear, even in church and at the administration of the sacrament, red, striped, or blue woollen night-caps—the colors marking different degrees of godliness; in Caithness their dress is a cloak, with a peculiar handkerchief tied over the head.

"The cloak which 'the Men' wear is considered apostolical; it formed part of the costume of St. Paul, who left his 'cloak' at Troas. It is of dark color; generally of camlet. They never lay it aside in the heat of summer. We have not learned the authority

for their various head-gear. It would seem that from whatever color commencing, it culminates into white. The colors, whether in spots or stripes, are, we presume, symbolical of some partial remainder of human frailty—of the stains of earth; and it is only where all traces of the world are washed out that a handkerchief of unmixed white is blazoned."—Reviewer.

Notwithstanding the outward purity of their garments, Investigator more than insinuates that "The Men," are not much unlike a certain description of "Saints," to which the Reformation gave birth; veracity and sobriety are not virtues much esteemed amongst them, and they indulge in some little peccadilloes, such as "the besetting sin of impurity, in which many of them are known to wallow," without any loss of popularity; but this has been a privilege of the "Saints" since the days of Luther.

"But while offences against morality are denounced as certain to bring upon all unregenerate men, guilty of them, the Divine vengeance, it is held (we speak it advisedly) that a person of great faith, according to his own account, and of extraordinary attainments, as his neighbors believe, in praying and prophesying, and generally of high devotional repute, may indulge in various sins, without endangering his everlasting safety or, of course, weakening his position as a Man. Not only may his gifts be so remarkable as to render it most improper to censure him for failings; but we fear that in too many instances the surrounding votaries, as well as the culprit himself, labor under the delusion that crime is venial in the elect."—Reviewer.

Investigator thus accounts for the origin of this saintly caste, and for the manner in which it obtained its influence:—

"The Men, I believe, are indebted for the commencement of their dynasty to that deficiency of pastoral superintendence which, till a very recent date, was universally admitted to exist in the Highlands,—to the long-continued deafness of the Gaelic Bible,—and to the ignorance of the uneducated Highlanders.—It was but little instruction that the minister of a Northern parish could supply to his parishioners, when they were living at a distance of ten or twelve miles from his church, and were scattered over a tract of country which, in the south, would have comprehended the greater part of a whole Presbytery.—Hence arose the demand for catechists, to supplement, as it was pretended, the acknowledged lack of spiritual guides to the people. Persons were appointed to this office, and were commissioned to hold meetings for prayer, and the reading of the Scriptures, in those hamlets which were so far removed from the parish church as to render it impossible for their inhabitants to wait upon the services of the sanctuary. This book which was handed to these individuals as the Bible was not the Gaelic but the English version; the former work being much more expensive than the latter, and Highlanders in the humbler ranks of life being unable to read in their native language. The catechists speedily discovered that their readings were vastly more relished by the imaginative and superstitious Celts when a few grains of enthusiasm and extravagance were added to what seemed to them the cold and constrained "letter of the Word." Accordingly, in translating from the English version which they held in their hands, they gradually deviated farther and farther from the literal meaning of the Scriptural expressions, till at length they might be said to "touch for doctrines the commandments of men;" since, instead of giving the Gaelic equivalents, to the terms in the English Bible, they read out to their hearers, as the Word of the Lord, what was the concoction of their own wild and wayward fancy. In thus acting, they were safe from detection by the people, for they could not read for themselves, and knew nothing of the Scriptures except what they learned from their catechists.—The transition was easy from reading and praying to expounding in public, and it was unscrupulously made. The catechists became lay preachers, and had regular meetings for display of their oratorical powers at the ordinary hours for Divine service. Abandoning all those restraints which information and intelligence impose upon exponents of Scripture, they indulged in fantastic declamation, which charmed the semi-savage peasantry of the North, and made them crowd to their meetings, instead of attending at the parish churches. The consequences were what might have been anticipated. The catechists increased in number and importance. Some assumed the office from a regard to respect and renown, and even reverence, which took it up with savorers were rewarded by the people. Others took it up with a view to the temporal profit which it secured in the shape of gifts of various kinds. Not a few became catechists that they might escape being craftsmen. And cases were of frequent occurrence, in which there could be no doubt that the motive was the same with that which prompts licentious hypocrites to go forth after their prey, clad in a long and closely-drawn cloak of seeming sanctity."

In fact, "The Men" were in the beginning something like our Canadian Colporteurs; the passage which we have italicised contains the secret of their success.

Besides the general—Investigator gives a particular description of one of these Protestant Saints, which we must omit as too long for insertion; at his death, in November 1829, he left a glorious protest or testimony, one or two passages of which we cannot refrain from quoting:—

"I, as a dying man, leave my testimony against those who tolerate all heretical sects. I also bear testimony against the Church of England, for using their prayer-book, their worship being idolatrous. I bear testimony against the Popish Erastian toleration of Popery, sectarianism, idolatry, and will-worship.

"I, as a dying man, leave my testimony against the learned men, that are not taught in the college of Sinai and Zion, but in the college of Babylon, 2 Cor. iii. 6, Rom. vii. 6. They wanted to interrupt me by their letter learning, and would have me from the holy covenant, Luke i. 72, and from the everlasting covenant, Isaiah xxiv. 5.

"I, as a dying man, leave my testimony against unequal yoke of marriage, 2 Cor. vi. 14; 1 Cor. vi. 39.

"I leave, as a dying man, my testimony against play actors, and pictures, Numb. xxxiii. 52; Deut. xviii. 10-14; Galvi. 10.

"I, as a dying man, leave my testimony against women that wear Babylonish garments, that are rigged out with stretched out necks, tinkling as they go, Isaiah, iii. 16-24, &c.

"I, as a dying man, leave my testimony against gentlemen; they altogether break the bonds of the relation of the words of God, Jer. vi. 5.

"I, as a dying man, leave my testimony against men and women to be conformed to the world in having dresses, parasols, vain head snails, as vain children have plucking on the top of sticks to the wind, that women should become baits. So that men have whiskers like ruffian soldiers, as well as Ismael, not like christians as Jacob, smooth.

"I, as a dying man, leave my testimony against QUAKERS, TABERNACLE-FOLK, HALDIANS, INDEPENDENTS, ANABAPTISTS, ANTI-BURGHERS, BURGERS, CHAPELS OF EASE, RELIEF, ROMAN CATHOLICS, SO-CENTIAN, PRELACY, ARMENIANS, DEISTS, ATHEISTS, UNIVERSALISTS, NEW JERUSALEMITES, UNITARIANS, METHODISTS, BAREANS, GLASSITES, and all SECTARIANS."

Behold a Protestant, indeed, who was revered and feared when alive, and canonised after his death, having, it is confidently affirmed, being carried "into heaven in a fiery chariot."

Next to boasting of their certainty of salvation, and describing their "experiences," the chief duty of "The Men" seems to be to keep the unfortunate

* Thus, THE TRUE WITNESS is most "unjustifiable" in its censures on the conduct of certain fraudulent bankrupts.