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**The True Witness.**

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, OCT. 17, 1856.

**NEWS OF THE WEEK.**

The Persia brings Liverpool dates up to the 4th inst. The Italian question becomes daily more menacing to the peace of Europe. The Czar has given the Western Powers pretty plainly to understand that any attempt on their part to coerce the King of Naples, by a display of force, will be met with a corresponding display in his favor, on the part of Russia.

Archdeacon Denison has announced his intention not to make the retraction required of him by Dr. Sumner. This bodes no good to the Establishment; for if the Archdeacon will not retract, sentence of deprivation will be passed upon him, and the consequences it is not difficult to foresee. We may therefore confidently anticipate, during the coming winter, many lugubrious paragraphs in the English Protestant papers, headed—"Another Romish Perversion." So note it be.

"Brownson's Review." New York Series. No. IV. October 1856.

Of the articles in this number of the leading Catholic periodical of America—of which we published a list last week—the first, on the "Mission of America," and the fifth, on the "Presidential Election," will be the most eagerly read, and the most warmly discussed. They have elicited a pretty general expression of disapprobation from the Catholic press of the United States; but they have been warmly praised by the Irish-American, the N. Y. Citizen, and Meagher's Irish News—the two former of which, but a few years ago, were amongst the foremost and the most clamorous of the Reviewer's opponents. They have not, in so far as we are aware, changed, or in any respect even modified, their former opinions; and if we now find them in harmony with those of the Reviewer, it must be because he has come round to their side—not they to his.

The "Mission of America"—(meaning by America, the United States)—is—according to the Reviewer—to renew the face of the earth—to give birth to a new order of civilised life, before which the old and effete civilization of Europe must pass away—and to realise the idea of the kingdom of God upon earth. "America," says the Reviewer—"is the future of the world;" and "every Catholic should love America, rejoice in her prosperity, and pray for her conversion." The praying for her conversion, we admit to be the duty of every Catholic—but why he should love the United States, or why he should rejoice in her prosperity, we cannot for the life of us discover, either from the history of the past, or the prospects of the future.

"Asia and Africa have here long since lapsed into barbarism, and Europe, the heir of the ancient, and the seat of the modern civilization, has culminated, and the most that can be expected of it is that it shall preserve itself from growing worse."

And what more can we expect of the United States?—Can we even, judging from what is taking place before our eyes, expect even so much as that that country shall preserve itself from growing worse? We are certain that we are guilty of no injustice towards the United States—we believe that the Reviewer himself will admit that we are correct, in maintaining that their civilisation—meaning by civilisation a fact in the moral order—has retrograded rather than advanced since the commencement of the XIX. century; and that if "outside" of the American Republic there is "no where to be seen a nation advancing in civilisation in accordance with Christian principles"—the same may be said, and with equal truth, of the different States of the American Union. No doubt great progress has been made by the Americans in the material order—in trade, manufactures, and the acquisition of wealth. But these things are not civilisation in the Christian sense of the word—and even the Reviewer will not pretend that, since the days of Washington, his countrymen have become more generally religious, more disinterested in their patriotism, more loyal and obedient citizens, better husbands and fathers, or more dutiful children, than were the generation that immediately succeeded the heroes of the Revolution. Indeed the Reviewer admits the general relapse into barbarism of his fellow-countrymen; because he admits that they have, for the most part, thrown away what little of Christianity their progenitors possessed, and which alone entitled the latter to call themselves a Christian people.

"The bulk of our old American population have lost their confidence in Protestantism," says the Reviewer, using the word "Protestantism" to denote a phase of Christianity or revealed religion—"without having acquired faith in Catholicity." That is to say, the "bulk" have lost all faith in Christianity, and have relapsed into total infidelity,

which, we think the Reviewer will admit is a backward progress in true civilization. Indeed he himself says

"There are very few, comparatively speaking, of our Non-Catholic countrymen, who really believe in any positive religion, and even the foremost evangelicals have abandoned, or are abandoning, all dogmatic theology."

Now Protestantism, in so far as it is a religion at all, in so far as it is in any sense a phase of Christianity, is Catholic, and Catholic only; for Protestantism asserts nothing, but denies only, or protests against, some dogma of the Catholic religion. In rejecting therefore their Protestantism, as a religious system, the Non-Catholics of the United States have thrown away the last rags of Popery, and have broken the last cord that connected them with the Church of Christ. In other words, the American people are marching towards infidelity; and so far from America being the "future of the world," it seems very doubtful if it can preserve itself from growing worse, and from a relapse into barbarism, which is the invariable and inevitable accompaniment of infidelity. But upon this point we will appeal to Bishop Spalding—a witness whom the Reviewer will listen to with more respect than to us:—

"Our youth are growing more and more licentious and demoralised, with each succeeding generation; our boys particularly become men before they are half grown; they have learnt all else better than the art of governing their passions. The late fearful increase of crime, especially in our cities and towns, is a sad proof of this increasing demoralisation. To what an abyss of vice are we hastening?"—Miscellaneous, p. iii.

Neither is the progress of Catholicity in the United States—that is to say, the increase in the numbers of their Catholic population—such as to inspire any very lively hopes for the future. Certain it is that, hitherto, the Catholic Church in America has not been able to hold her own; and that, so far from having done anything to check the downward course of the Non-Catholic masses around her, she has had to weep over thousands, we may say millions, of her own children who have been swept away by the torrent of infidelity. The numbers of Catholics in the States have of course increased. But this has been owing entirely to the foreign Catholic immigration; not to conversions from amongst Non-Catholics, as in Great Britain, nor yet to the natural increase of the original Catholic population of the country.

From any causes now in operation, we have therefore little reason to expect anything like a general conversion of the American people, to the Catholic faith. With God, of course, all things are possible; nor is it harder for Him to melt the heart of a Yankee Know-Nothing, than of a North of Ireland Presbyterian. All we pretend is, that in the actual state of affairs in the United States there is nothing to make us look upon that country as "the future" of the world, or as the destined seat of a flourishing Catholic civilisation.

Neither can we agree with the learned, but in this case, we fear, rather partial Reviewer's estimate of the American national character. "No national character stands more in need of Catholicity than the American," he says; and no doubt truly—for no national character, at the present day, is more thoroughly anti-Catholic. This we can readily admit; but we are at a loss to understand what the Reviewer means when he adds—that:—

"Never since her going forth from that 'upper room' in Jerusalem, has the Church found a national character so well fitted to give to true civilisation its highest and noblest expression."

Now, unless the American "national character" has been greatly belied, not by foreigners, but by Americans, its chief characteristic is "smartness." It is essentially an active, energetic, business-like and money-making national character; a "national character" therefore, one would suppose, but little fitted to bring forth the peculiar fruits of a truly Catholic civilisation—contempt of wealth, and a lofty chivalrous sense of duty. Were a modern Peter the Hermit to preach a new crusade amongst the Reviewer's Non-Catholic countrymen, we fear that he would produce but little impression, unless he could make it appear that a handsome profit might be cleared out of the transaction. In which case indeed, his ears would be greeted, not with the old cry—"It is the will of God—it is the will of God;" but most probably with—"Well—I guess it will pay."

But what will Catholics think of the following eulogy upon the American national character? which should be graven on a pillar of brass, to be placed upon the site of the Convent burned a few years ago by the Protestants of Boston.

"The American people, in their national capacity, have never rejected the Catholic faith; as a government they have never made war on the Pope, have never cast off the authority of the Church. They have never, since their birth as a nation, performed one act of hostility to the Catholic religion, martyred or persecuted a single Catholic; and their first act on winning their independence, establishing their Federal Government, and remodelling their State constitutions, was to repair the injustice of the mother country towards the Church, and to place Catholics in their religion on a footing of equality with Protestants. We as a nation are not guilty of the sin of persecution or apostasy. We have never dishonored or blasphemed the Spouse of the Lamb. We have done no injustice to Catholicity, and have repaired the injustice of the country from which we sprang. We have opened here an asylum for the oppressed Catholics of all lands, and given them the equal rights of American citizens. We are not under the curse pronounced against persecutors, apostates, and blasphemers. We as a nation are entitled to the gratitude and love of the Catholic heart, throughout the world."

We pause here, to take breath, and to allow the reader to recover from the state of stupor into which the perusal of the above must have plunged him. As a satire upon his Non-Catholic fellow-countrymen, as a cutting reproach of their illiberality and cruel injustice towards Catholics in general, and Irish Catholics in particular, it is admirable in its way; for praise undeserved is the most cruel reproach that can be addressed to the unworthy. But what will the reader think when we tell him that the Reviewer is not joking—not inflicting a well-deserved castigation upon his Non-Catholic fellow-citizens—but is in serious earnest himself, and sanguine enough to expect that his readers will accept his fancy portrait, as an admirable likeness of his fellow-countrymen? We can fancy the comical look with which an Irish, or German Catholic, fresh perhaps from the hands of a Philadelphia mob, busily engaged in burning a Catholic Church, or tarring and feathering a Catholic priest—would receive the announcement, that the American people had never "performed one act of hostility to the Catholic religion—never martyred or persecuted a single Catholic—and were entitled to the gratitude and love of the Catholic heart throughout the world."

Has the Reviewer then lost all recollection of the events that have lately taken place in his country? or does he think that his readers have forgotten them? Does he think that we have forgotten the burning, by an American mob, of the Convent at Boston; and the subsequent ratification of the proceedings of that mob by the State Government, which refused to make pecuniary compensation for the property destroyed, and which it was its duty to have protected?—Does he think that we have lost all memory of the persecution of Nuns and Sisters of Charity by the Massachusetts Legislature, with their infamous "Smelling Committee"? Does the Reviewer then suppose that the Catholic heart throughout the world has not been stirred, by the tidings of church burnings, and convent burnings—of priests tarred and feathered—of nuns and Sisters of Charity outraged—and of their co-religionists insulted, persecuted, and oft foully murdered, because of their religion? Had he but glanced over the table of contents of the work whose name stands at the head of the article under notice, we think that he would hardly have ventured upon such an insult to his Irish Catholic readers as to tell them that the American people were entitled to their gratitude and love.

How far Bishop Spalding, of whom the Reviewer speaks so warmly, justifies the terms of eulogy applied by his Reviewer to the "American nation," will appear from his article on the "Native American Party," given in his "Miscellanies," p. 604:—

"Time was"—says Bishop Spalding—"when everything bade fair to make this a glorious Republic in deed, as it was in name. Time was, when the United States promised to be the peaceful home, and happy resting place of the oppressed of every nation. But alas! this beautiful vision was soon dissipated, and the poor stranger was awakened to a sense of the sad reality! The serpent of religious bigotry soon entered into this fair paradise, marring its beauty. . . . The charm was broken; the stranger felt that, instead of being in an earthly paradise, he had been cast out, like his first parents, into a frightful wilderness; that, instead of being at home, he was in a strange country, where he was branded as an alien and an enemy."

The Reviewer will perhaps tell us that the acts of hostility and persecution alluded to above, were the acts of the American people, not in their national, but in their individual capacity.—But he has himself anticipated, and satisfactorily disposed of this plea:—

"What matters it to honest men"—he says—"whether we do this (persecute Catholics) 'directly or indirectly? What is the difference in principle between passing a law excluding, under severe penalties, the exercise of the Catholic religion in this country, and, by our political and other combinations rendering its exercise impossible?"—Brownson's Essays, p. 430.

No difference whatever—the honest man will reply, for the result is, in either case, the same. When the Rev. Mr. Bapst was in the hands of the Protestants of Maine, when they were stripping him, passing obscene jests upon him, and treating him with indignities which the savage red men would have been ashamed to offer to their captives—the innocent victim of Protestant brutality would have derived but little comfort from the assurance that his tormentors were persecuting him, not in their "national capacity," but as private individuals. In England, and in Ireland, Catholics have been persecuted by Acts of Parliament; in the United States of America they are persecuted by a mob; and, as Bishop Spalding well says—"Far better be oppressed by one tyrant, than be crushed and torn by a thousand; far better have even a Nero or a Diocletian to lord it over you, than be ruled by that hydra-headed monster called a mob!"—p. xx.

Now the Government of the United States is responsible for the acts of the "mob," because it has done nothing to restrain them, nothing to punish them, and has constantly refused to indemnify the Catholic sufferers. On this point we again appeal to Bishop Spalding:—

"Five or six of our churches either burnt, or sacked, or blown up by gunpowder—most of them while our citizens were engaged in the joyous celebration of liberty-bellied Fourth of July—street brawlers, generally men of the lowest and most infamous character, hired to vilify and slander us, and all that we hold most dear and sacred in the public streets and highways, thereby openly exciting the passions of the ignorant to bloody civil feuds; our people, after having been thus grievously wronged in their

character as citizens and as religionists, butchered in brutal street encounters, or assassinated in detail, and then almost invariably placed in the wrong by a mendacious press and telegraph in the interest of their enemies; and the victims of all these cruel and accumulated wrongs generally receiving, instead of sympathy, but additional obloquy and persecution, they being in almost every instance the only ones arrested and punished for the riots which others had caused; while the murderers, and assassins, and church-burners, escape: these are some of the practical workings of that truculent spirit which, during the present year, has been aroused against us in this free country"—p. xxi.

Such then is the "asylum" which the United States offer to the oppressed Catholics of all lands—such the "equal rights of American citizens" that Catholics enjoy in that "free country"—and for such fair courtesies, we, as Catholics, give to it all the gratitude and love that it deserves at our hands. The Reviewer takes offence at the feeling expressed by an American born Catholic the other day, in a Catholic journal, that he had no country, that he was a helot in the land of his birth; this expression, the Reviewer condemns as "unfounded" and "impatriotic." If the picture drawn by Bishop Spalding of the condition of Catholics in the United States is a true one, the American-born journalist has but too many and too good causes for his assertion. To all intents and purposes, American Catholics are helots, are proscribed, in the land of their birth.

Not indeed by the letter of the Constitution; not in virtue of any positive law—but by the spirit of Protestant bigotry which seems to be an essential ingredient in the American national character. Theoretically, every post of profit or honor in the State is open to all citizens, of all denominations; practically, the Catholic is excluded from every important situation. Of the candidates for the Presidency, Col. Fremont is perhaps the most generally popular amongst his fellow-citizens; but even he well knows that he would not have the faintest chance of success, were he to acknowledge himself a Catholic; and, in the language of the Boston Pilot, the Reviewer must know, from personal experience, that, even with the aid of party stratagems and manoeuvres, the election of a Catholic to any State, county, or municipal office, from a porcine constable to a Governor, is an impossibility. Practically, Catholics are as much a proscribed class in the United States at the present day, as they were in the British Empire, previous to the repeal of the Protestant Penal Laws.

Of the other articles in the number of the Review before us, we have left ourselves no room to speak. The are all, as usual, of a high order; though we cannot but express our regret at the tone which the Reviewer has permitted himself to use towards the amiable author of "The Catholic Church in the United States." Here again, we fear, that he has allowed his national prejudices to warp his judgment; and in his anxiety to prove the intensity of his patriotism, has forgotten to be just. Perhaps the best thing in the Review for this quarter, is the notice of Mr. Derby's controversial letters to his son. The slashing style in which the Reviewer deals with the presumptuous jurist, who has provoked his fate, is truly refreshing; and will, we have no doubt, prove a salutary caution to any who might otherwise be rashly disposed to follow Mr. Derby's example.

"If Canada has Common Schools, her youthful population will grow up comparatively united and homogeneous; if she has Sectarian Schools there will be a perpetuation of animosities between races and creeds, which will greatly hinder, if not effectually mar, future prosperity."—Montreal Witness, 8th Inst.

How a Common School education can tend to do away with the "animosities between races and creeds," we cannot understand, unless it be admitted that its natural and inevitable tendencies are to obliterate all national and religious distinctions; or in other words, that Common Schools beget indifference. But this is the very charge brought against them by their enemies; but this is the chief reason why Catholics object to them. Betwixt infidels there can be no "religious animosities;" but it does not thence follow that it should be the object of a wise government to convert its subjects to infidelity.

The "animosities" of which the Montreal Witness complains, are the necessary consequence of the ill advised attempts of his friends to establish "Protestant Ascendancy" in Canada; they are the price which he and they must be content to pay for the glorious Protestant Constitution which it is their object to force upon us Papists. It is not then we can assure him, and them, by persisting in taxing us for schools to which we are conscientiously opposed—and which, whether we are robbed for their support or not, we will not allow our children to attend—that they will allay the "religious animosities" which distract the peace of the country, and retard its progress.

No—if they would have peace, they must first learn to be just; they must respect our religious convictions, as we are willing to respect theirs. We ask not of them to sacrifice principle, but merely to abstain from forcing their principles, either in religion or education, upon us. And if their consciences are too tender to allow them to vote money for the support of Catholic schools, we only ask of them to abstain likewise from taxing us for the support of Non-Catholic schools. We would ask no assistance from the State whatever for our schools, were it not the State taxes us for school purposes; and though we do not demand it, still we would offer no opposition to the establishment of the "Voluntary System." But we have the right to insist, that, if we are taxed for schools at all, we shall have such schools for our money as we can make use of without doing violence to our conscientious convictions.

The remedy then that we would propose for the "animosities between races and creeds" is simply this, "justice to all, and favor to none." If the Protestants of Upper Canada will but try this simple prescription, we are certain, in so far as Catholics at least are concerned—that all "animosities of races and creeds" will rapidly disappear. This is a better mode of treatment than

that recommended by the Montreal Witness, as all history testifies; for the surest way to perpetuate the disease, and to render it incurable, is to make one portion of the population feel that they are ill used and persecuted by the other. Had the Stuarts for example, succeeded in their efforts to establish a "Common Church" system throughout Great Britain, does the Montreal Witness really think that the "animosities of races and creeds" betwixt the English Episcopalians, and the Scotch Presbyterians, would have been assuaged?—and if no traces of those "animosities" can now be found save in the pages of history—is it not owing to this, that, grown wiser by experience, the State made a virtue of necessity, and conceded to its subjects in different parts of the Empire, the right of "Separate Churches"? Has not, again, we would ask—has not "State-Churchism" been the chief cause of "religious animosities" in England and in Ireland? Are not the heartburnings, and the wars of races which have so long afflicted the latter, due chiefly to this—that, in Ireland, the British Government effected that which it vainly endeavored to accomplish in Scotland?—that a "Common Church" system was "by Law Established," for the English Protestant, and the Irish Catholic?—and will not even the Montreal Witness admit, that, so long as the latter is taxed for the support of the Church of the former, so long it is absurd to look forward to the restoration of peace and concord betwixt the citizens of the same Empire, but of different religious persuasions? Even so it is here in Canada. The strife which now rages betwixt Catholics and Protestants is the inevitable consequence of the attempts made by the latter to impose upon us a "Common School" system. "State-Schoolism" is the curse of this country, as "State-Churchism" is of Ireland; and the same remedy that cures the disease in the one case, will prove also a specific in the other.

"In matters of religious faith, as all history testifies, men do not reason, they feel. Religion is a matter spiritual, an affair of the heart, of the sentiments."—Montreal Herald.

This is no doubt true of most Protestants, of all who retain any of the positive dogmas of Christianity. Their faith, or belief, as the history of the sects testifies, is not reasonable. It is an impression, a persuasion, not in any degree the result of a calm, and deliberate exercise of their rational faculties. Protestants will of course talk confidently, and boast loudly, of their readiness to give every one a "reason" for the faith that is in them; but when put to the test, they are obliged to admit that, in matters of faith they cannot reason, but only feel; that their religion is "an affair of the heart," a vague sentimentality, with which their intellect has no concern. The fundamental tenet of Protestantism, regarded as a phase of positive Christianity—is,—"believe that your sins are forgiven, and they are forgiven," this is what evangelical ministers mean by a "Positive Assurance" and is a favorite doctrine in the conventicle. Of course for such an "Assurance" or faith, "no reason" can be assigned; and whilst by some it is attributed to the direct action of divine grace upon the human heart—by others it is treated merely as an ordinary psychological phenomenon, dependent again in a great measure, upon the state of the believer's bowels.

So when at "Revival," or "Camp Meeting," the old women stop their groaning, and by their loud shouts—"Oh—I'm upon a rock—Glory—Glory—Hallelujah!"—bear witness that the "power has kin down," and that they have "got happy"—who would dream of asking these silly devotees of a blasphemous superstition for a "reason" for their strange ecstasies, and frantic gesticulations? Any one can see at a glance that, with them, religion is a matter of sentiment, or feeling; a strange something that addresses itself not to their rational, but to their sensitive natures; a sudden fury like that which of old inspired the votaries of Bacchus, and prompted the fervid worshippers of Baal to cry aloud, and cut themselves with knives; and which now, as then, degrades its victims below the level of the beasts of the field. The spiritual phenomena of the Protestant "Camp Meeting" are evidently closely allied to those to which the obscene rites of Oriental paganism gave birth; and a "shouting Methodist," save that he wears a tight fitting coat and breeches, is not easily distinguishable from those prophets of Baal, at whom Elias mocked.—III. Kings, xviii., 27.

Now all this would only excite our pity and contempt, were it not that these same Protestants, whose religion is not an affair of reason, have the impudence to attempt to reason us Catholics out of our religion, which is a good deal more than an affair of the heart or the sentiments; and which addresses itself to man, as to eminently a rational being, or a being endowed with reason, and so endowed, in order that he might be a religious being, or capable of faith. And herein consists one great difference betwixt Catholicity and Protestantism.—Whilst the former asserts both human reason and human nature, in their integrity, the latter denies nature—in order to make room for grace, and ignores reason by way of doing greater honor to faith. Human, or natural reason, though of itself incompetent to take cognisance of that which belongs to the supernatural order, is supreme in its own sphere, and is the work of God, Who made all things very good, and for His service. Now the service or worship that God demands of man, is eminently a reasonable worship; the religion which has God for its author must therefore address itself, in the first instance, to human reason, which has God for its Creator; and if, as they themselves tell us, Protestants do not exercise their reason, God's noblest gift to man, in matters of religion—it must be because their religion is not of God, not fitted therefore for His rational creatures, and is therefore at best but an irrational superstition—as were the brutal practices of the pagan nations of old, which were an abomination unto Him.