

The True Witness

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, FEB. 17, 1860.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

By the Bohemian we are put in possession of European intelligence to the 1st inst.

Though apparently but a slight matter, though but one of many instances of the exercise of arbitrary power, the news of the suppression of L'Univers will, we expect, excite considerable sensation in the Catholic world; and will go far, we think, to convince the most sceptical, of the anti-Catholic tendencies of the policy to which in a fatal hour for himself, for his dynasty, and for the fair land of France over which he has been placed as ruler, Louis Napoleon now stands fully committed.

The immediate cause that led to the suppression of L'Univers was its uncompromising advocacy of the rights of the Sovereign Pontiff; and in particular, its publication of a letter from the Pope to the Bishops and Archbishops of France, wherein his reasons were set forth for refusing to alienate, at the bidding of Louis Napoleon, any portion of the territories of the Holy See.

Whilst thus provoking the enmity of the Catholic community, from whom hitherto he has received a generous support, and by whom the most favorable interpretation possible has been put upon his most questionable actions, Louis Napoleon is careful to ingratiate himself with the Protestant world; and like the unjust steward spoken of in the Gospel, is striving to make unto himself friends of the Mammon of iniquity—de Mammona iniquitatis.

The Montreal Gazette is unjust in attributing to us the doctrine of the "divine right" of Kings. We hold, it is true, that all power is from God. "Non est enim potestas nisi a Deo; que autem sunt, a Deo ordinatae sunt." Rom. xiii. This is the teaching of the Church; and in so far we assert the "moral obligation" of the subject to obey. But the doctrine of the "divine right" of kings is essentially a Protestant doctrine, whose chief supporters are to be found amongst the Anglican controversialists of the XVII century; whilst its most prominent opponents were the Jesuits, who by their opposition drew down upon themselves the wrath of the leaders of the Protestant party in England.

Rumors are again rife of the existence of negotiations by which Savoy is to be ceded to France. The Congress is postponed sine die. Austria has her hands full of the troubles in Hungary, and can scarce be expected to interfere in behalf either of the Pope, or of the exiled Grand Dukes. From Italy there is nothing new. The domestic political news is of little interest. The disturbances at St. George's-in-the-East were attracting much attention from the press and Parliament. On the evening of the 29th ult., an evangelical mob crowded the church during the services, which they violently interrupted, threatening to destroy the altar—as the Puseyites delight to call the table whereon they enact a parody of the Catholic sacrifice. Much

property was destroyed; and it is probable that Government will interfere to put down those Popish practices in the Establishment, with which the evangelical party are disgusted, and which are constantly provoking to riots of a most serious and scandalous complexion.

MEETING FOR THE POPE.—In consequence of the very limited area of St. Patrick's Church, it is feared that it could not furnish sufficient accommodation for the numbers, who from both sections of our Catholic community would naturally assist at the meeting announced for 4 p.m. on Sunday next. It has therefore, though with regret, been thought advisable to restrict the assembly of Sunday to the English speaking portion of the Catholic population of Montreal; leaving it to our French Canadian brethren to hold their demonstration of sympathy with the illustrious Pontiff, Pius IX, at such time and place as shall best suit their convenience.

The Montreal Gazette is "quite ready to admit that obedience to government is a 'moral obligation' up to a certain point;" but it holds "that the people alone who are governed have a right to judge as to what abuses justify revolt." This, though the Gazette may not perceive it, is tantamount to denying the "moral obligation" of obedience, and is but the assertion of the "right of insurrection," in another set of words.

It is an axiom in law, approved of by the common sense of mankind, that he who is an interested party cannot be a disinterested or impartial judge; and that therefore no man, no set of men, is or are qualified to sit in judgment upon a case wherein he or they are directly interested. This rule is of universal application, and admits of no conceivable exception; and though the rule laid down by the Gazette has been often acted upon, though in practice our rule has been often violated, no argument can thence be drawn in favor of the former, or against the latter.

But the Gazette does not urge, and cannot so much as pretend, any oppression on the part of the Pope towards his revolted subjects. The latter, if they have suffered wrong, have suffered from the Austrians and not from the Court of Rome; and the fact of the "revolt" which the Gazette cites as proof of misgovernment and oppression is not conclusive, because it is also a fact that the revolt was not primarily the work of the subjects of the Pope, but of the soldiers, and emissaries of Sardinia.

We congratulate our cotemporary upon his progress in political science. He has abandoned his position that subjects "have the right to overturn a government which is distasteful to them;" because he now recognises that obedience is a "moral obligation," and therefore an obligation imposed by God Himself. By dint of reflection and meditation upon the axioms that "an interested party cannot be a disinterested judge"—and that, above all other qualifications, perfect disinterestedness or impartiality is indispensable on the part of the judge,—he will in time we trust arrive at the conclusion that neither prince nor subject can be competent to sit in judgment upon questions wherein their own interests are involved. There must be, or at all events there should be, some third party, morally distinguishable from subject on the one hand, and from prince on the other, to whom all such questions should be referred. This third party, and competent, because disinterested or impartial judge, the Catholic has no difficulty in finding; and perhaps when our cotemporary shall have carefully studied its origin, and mode of application, he will understand how and in what sense Catholic writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries asserted the "deposing power" of the Pope; and will perceive how, by the assertion of that power, the Catholic consistently reconciles the "moral obligation" of the subject to obey, with the "moral obligation" of the prince to govern justly.

The Montreal Gazette is unjust in attributing to us the doctrine of the "divine right" of Kings. We hold, it is true, that all power is from God. "Non est enim potestas nisi a Deo; que autem sunt, a Deo ordinatae sunt." Rom. xiii. This is the teaching of the Church; and in so far we assert the "moral obligation" of the subject to obey. But the doctrine of the "divine right" of kings is essentially a Protestant doctrine, whose chief supporters are to be found amongst the Anglican controversialists of the XVII century; whilst its most prominent opponents were the Jesuits, who by their opposition drew down upon themselves the wrath of the leaders of the Protestant party in England.

Our cotemporary is guilty also of gross misrepresentation in speaking of the Austrian government as "most abject in its slavery to the Holy See;" whilst the truth is that, until the accession to the present Emperor, the hostility, or constant opposition of the Austrian Government to the Holy See, was a matter of notoriety of which it is impossible that any one acquainted with the history of modern Europe could have been ignorant. With as much of truth might the Gazette speak of the present government of Sardinia as "most abject in its slavery to Rome."

of the people in the revolted Central Italian States are themselves the victims of a cruel tyranny; and that they neither participate in, nor approve of, the acts of the leaders of the revolutionary party. The disgraceful acts to which we alluded—the spoliation and persecution of the Religious Orders—the arbitrary interference with the press and the pulpit—and the other measures resorted to by the Liberals of Italy to establish their power—are facts which cannot be called in question; for they have been all duly chronicled in the columns of the Protestant press. That the people generally, sanction these atrocities is denied by high Protestant authority; but destitute of organisation, and kept in awe by the menace of Sardinian armed interference, it is no wonder that the dispersed rural populations of Central Italy are unable, at present, to cope with, or successfully to contend against, the concentrated, highly organised, but thoroughly demoralised urban populations, amongst whom the revolution has hitherto found its most strenuous, we may say its sole, supporters.

And the Gazette should remember that the changes in their government sought after by the latter, or Italian Revolutionary party, are organic changes; and not, as were the changes for which the chiefs of the Canadian Liberal party long and nobly contended, mere functional changes, or changes in the method of administration.—In asking for "self-government" and the control over their local taxation and expenditure, the Canadians asked only for an extension, or application to themselves, of the fundamental principles of the British Constitution, and were therefore seeking to develop and preserve, not to overthrow or destroy their political organism. The Italian revolutionists on the contrary aim essentially at organic changes; and, there is no fact better established than this—That in the moral, as in the physical, order such changes are impossible, and that any attempt to introduce them must result in a "cultus generale." So the revolutionists of France in '92, not content with reforming, or rather restoring and developing their ancient constitution, and laboring under the extraordinary hallucination that "constitutions might be made"—(they might as rationally have attempted to make a tree)—plunged headlong into an abyss, from which it is to be feared that they will never be able to recover themselves; but which the people of England, who constantly in all their revolutions have sought after functional or administrative changes merely, have hitherto had the good fortune to escape. We attribute therefore the disorders which now undoubtedly prevail in the revolted Italian States, neither to the "unfitness of the Latin race for self-government," nor to the fact that "the government of the Popes has been such as to unfit men for self-government"—but to the designs of the leaders of the Italian revolutionary party, whose object is, not reform, but organic change; a process which it is as impossible to apply with safety to social or political organisms, as to animal or vegetable organisms.

We do not blame the British Government because it does not apply to its subjects in India the same principles as those which it applies to its subjects at home; because it has not conferred upon the dwellers by the banks of the Ganges the same political powers or privileges as are enjoyed by the dwellers on the banks of the Thames. Reform Bills, Household Suffrage, and Vote by Ballot, may be excellent things in their way in the opinion of certain politicians of England; but we doubt much if the latter would seriously propose to confer them upon the citizens of Delhi, or to initiate the people of Central India into the mysteries of a contested election. For the same reasons, we can readily conceive that political institutions well-suited to the citizens of Montreal and Toronto might be altogether out of place in Florence, Ancona, or Rome; and thus, without attributing any moral superiority to the people of Canada, over the people of Central Italy, we may recognise the fact, that a form of government under which the former thrive, might be very prejudicial to the moral and material interests of the other. In short, either the law that all people are entitled to certain political privileges—to a representative form of government with a responsible Ministry, is of universal application, or it is not. If it is—why are those political privileges, why is that form of Government withheld from the millions of British subjects in India? If it is not—then the argument in behalf of the Italian Liberals drawn by the Gazette from the political aspect of Canada, crumbles to dust.

Stripped, however, of the plumes beneath which the Gazette seeks to disguise the more hideous features of the Italian revolutionary movement now in progress, these facts remain patent and incontestable. That in so far as the Papal States are concerned that movement is not the work of the people; that the so-called revolt of the Romagna, was the work of foreigners; who, taking advantage of the late war, the weakness in a military point of view of the Papal Government, the assurance of active assistance from Sardinia, and it is now but too clear, relying on the more secret, but well-known assurances of help from Louis Napoleon—by force wrested from the Sovereign Pontiff a portion of his dominions, and imposed upon his subjects their odious and impious tyranny. It is for the speedy overthrow of this tyranny, for the restoration of the Pope to his independent authority, and of his faithful subjects to liberty, that we, Catholics, pray—but certainly not "against the right of the people of the Romagna to have a voice in their own taxation and government." Nay! we believe, from his antecedents, that were the Pope restored to the plenitude of his political authority, and unhampered by foreign interference, he himself would be the first to propose, and the most active in carrying into execution, those political and financial reforms which circumstances require, and which would promote the happiness of all his subjects.

This is what we pray for: that the Pope may be left free and independent to pursue his designs of reform which were checked by the storm that burst over Europe in '48—this the extent of our interference. At its worst, it is, as the Gazette must admit, a less offensive form of interference than that in which the King of

Sardinia permits himself to indulge at the expense of his neighbors; and surely if the latter may invoke the demon of revolution against the legitimate temporal authority of the Pope, there can be no reason why we, Christians, should not be allowed to invoke the assistance of the Lord of Hosts in behalf of him, in whose person the rights of the Sovereign, and the dignity of the Pontiff are alike outraged and insulted by the disciples of Mazzini, and by Garibaldi's hired cut-throats.

Speaking of Protestant notions of prayer, and its effects, the Montreal Witness complains that:—

"practically the religious (i.e. the Protestant) world had to a great extent fallen into that most pernicious and illogical doctrine of the Unitarians, that prayer in no way affects the purposes of God, but only the minds of the persons who offer it—a doctrine which if believed, completely annihilates prayer, and as a consequence the benefit derived from it by the individual praying, or rather pretending to pray."

That the Witness correctly represents the belief of the vast majority of the Protestant or Non-Catholic world as to the effects of prayer there can be no doubt; but why our cotemporary calls that belief "illogical," seeing that it is the direct conclusion of human reason from the premise that God is impassible, unchangeable, and that in Him there can be neither change nor shadow of turning, we cannot understand. On the contrary, the "pernicious doctrine of the Unitarians," is the logical and necessary consequence of protesting principles; and of those very principles in particular which the Witness itself appeals to in its controversies with Catholics, and which it urges against the invocation of the prayers of the Saints. How it is that we are assisted by their prayers, how they hear us, and why God should grant to them and their prayers, what He withholds from us and our supplications, are mysteries which human reason cannot fully fathom; but neither can it explain how the purposes of God, Who, by His essence, is unchangeable, can be affected by our prayers. The charge of bad logic therefore comes with bad grace from the Montreal Witness, seeing that it employs the same weapons against the Catholic belief, that the majority of the Protestant world employ against that other section of the same world who still assert the objective value of prayer, that is who do not limit its influences to its effects upon the minds of the persons praying. As the Witness itself admits, "human philosophy" cannot reconcile its doctrine as to the efficacy of prayer, with what it professes to believe concerning the Divine attributes; this should teach it then to be more guarded in its attacks, whether upon Catholics or the members of other Protestant sects; who, more consistently, believe nothing which "human philosophy" cannot account for: and should serve as a lesson to convince him of the truth of what we have often endeavored to impress upon his somewhat dull intelligence—that there is no argument which the Protestant can urge against Catholicity, that the infidel cannot urge with as good effect against Christianity.

A MARE'S NEST.—The Montreal Witness congratulating its readers upon the hostility of Louis Napoleon to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, makes the startling announcement that that Society "is a branch or auxiliary of the tremendous Society of Jesus!" What the silly creature means we know not; but it is satisfactory to see that there are Protestants who, as the following letter addressed to the Montreal Gazette by a Protestant gentleman formerly of the City Council proves—cheerfully do justice to the members of the St. Vincent de Paul, and acknowledge their services to society:—

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.

(To the Editor of the Montreal Gazette.) Sir,—In your notice of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul the other day, you call it "A Society which only relieves the Catholic Poor." This is an error into which, I presume, you have been innocently drawn, for I know your liberal spirit too well in matters of religion to suppose you would have intentionally lent yourself to misrepresenting this commendable institution.

Whilst in the City Council I had occasion to investigate deeply into its practices, and found that the exemplary almoners of the poor were indiscriminate in the exercise of their charities. In a word, that Protestants as well as Catholics were the recipients of their bounties, and I have reason to know that they still make no distinction of creed in the bestowment of their liberalities. My attention having been directed to this error in your inestimable journal, I have felt it my duty, although not of the same faith as our friends of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, to render them this justice, upon the principle that neither you nor I would, I am sure, desire to restrict our charities to any religious sect; and because, from my knowledge of the excellent and judicious management of this Society, in the distribution of the means at their disposal, I feel that we might, with much benefit, imitate their example. Yours truly, D.

February 8th, 1860.

"There must be some hidden cause acting on the American people and producing in them a certain savageness of temper, which, increasing year by year, threatens to become the most marked feature of their character. Their forefathers in the first days of the Republic do not seem to have possessed it, nor had it a few years ago risen to the height which it has now attained. Ferocious duels and assassinations at home, and deeds of still more revolting violence on helpless subordinates at sea, are ever being recounted of Americans who seem to be taken as a fair specimen of their countrymen; and, however accounted for, there seems, happily, little doubt of the fact that a people sprung mainly from the same stock as ourselves are becoming singularly addicted to violence and cruelty."—Times.

"HORRE INANES," OR THE "OMNIUM GATHERUM."

(COMMUNICATED.) A Dialogue "de omnibus rebus" between Preceptor and Discipulus.

(Continued.)

Discipulus.—They have indeed a most sublime teaching. But prithes most venerable Preceptor, does not Holy Church use burning tapers during the celebration of the Mass in order to give additional solemnity to that tremendous and august sacrifice? Preceptor.—Undoubtedly, most worthy disciple, she does. The Christian Emperor Constantine, on the night preceding Easter Sunday, in order to express his appreciation of that great festival, besides illuminating the Churches, caused the streets and squares of the Imperial city to be illuminated with so great a number of torches and lamps, that he is said to have rendered the night more resplendent than the day. And in like manner acts our Holy Church. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, she knows full well, is an act not surpassed even by the Creation of the world; and she feels, therefore, that she needs must summon all things to her aid to do honor to it. Thus what Constantine did in honor of the Feast of Easter, she would do for the High Priest and Victim of that Feast; she would, in fact, by adding the light of torches to the light of the Sun, endeavor to emulate the brightness of the celestial Halls. Nor is that the only intention of Holy Church. She has yet another and even a far higher teaching. Her burning candles with their shining light are emblems (humble ones it is true) of God the Son Himself—emblems of that great light that came into the world to illumine the darkness—emblems of Him of whom the Evangelist says "The Light shineth in darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it."—What wonder then, if the darkness did not comprehend the Light of God Himself, that ignorant men should not understand that which is the emblem only of Him?

Dis.—But have not some, most worthy master, endeavored to explain this custom of burning candles in open day, as a continuation merely in after ages, of a practice which was absolutely necessary to the Church of the catacombs?

Pre.—They have; but with more of plausibility, than solid argument. And here most sapient disciple I would warn the against the errors of the Schoolmen, for I must warn thee that on either hand thou wilt find an error. On the one, that of the Materialist, or those who seek for the origin of all our religious ceremonies and practices in some material use or necessity; and on the other that of the Mystic, or those who seek for their origin in some mystic meaning, without regard to any outward necessity. Each is a dangerous error. Amongst so many and divers ceremonies, it needs must be that some have had their origin in necessity; others on account of their evident spiritual significance; whilst not a few have had their origin in both. Hence to seek an explanation for each and every ceremony with Claude de Vert and the Materialists in the material sense alone—were greatly to err. And I would warn thee the more, most youthful Discipulus, because from thy youth and inexperience, as well as the rashness peculiar to thy age, thou art especially liable to be led astray by these specious theories, which will not stand the test of calm and dispassionate investigation. How inadequate any one of these theories is of itself, to explain the origin of all our religious ceremonies, will be apparent to thee by one example. Claude de Vert in his anxiety to explain the use of incense from some material or physical necessity, would wish to make it appear that it had arisen from the necessity of correcting unpleasant odors in a crowded church. Now it surely does not require profound study to discover the falsity of these pretended physical reasons; a moment's attention will show their absurdity. For, as he pretends, incense was burnt to correct bad odors, this would surely have been done in small braziers dispersed throughout the Church—not by one of God's ministers. It is a duty belonging surely to the attendants of the church to purify the atmosphere, not to the officiating Bishop or Priest. But enough of this. Forewarned is forearmed. Let us now return to the resolution of thy difficulty. It is very evident, most erudite disciple, that long before lights were used by Holy Church in broad day, they had been used and honored by her numbers as expressions of joy. For St. Luke tells us, that in a place where St. Paul had made a long discourse "there was a great number of lamps;" now it is evident from this expression, that the lamps were there, for some other end than that of illumination, else would the Saint not have called them "a great number." They were great only from their superabundance. But why this superabundance, if not for some mystic meaning? Again, as we have said, the Emperor Constantine used them as emblems of joy in his Paschal illumination of the Imperial city. And that this custom of using lights in full day was not a continuation merely of a custom arising from necessity—the necessity of the Catacombs—is further evident from the fact, that for sometime after the necessity was removed, candles were not used at the solemn offices. About the time of St. Cyprian, Mass was said publicly and in broad day light, and that undoubtedly without candles. Nor as late as the year 400, had they yet become general, as is evident from the words of St. Jerome, against Vigilantius who had had the boldness to reproach as superstitious, certain pious persons who had placed lights in full day around the tombs of the holy martyrs. "We do not," says the Saint, addressing Vigilantius, "burn candles in broad day, as you falsely assert. We burn them only that we may mingle joy with the darkness of the night, and may watch until day break, lest we should sleep like you in blindness and darkness." Now no one, most worthy disciple, had better means of knowing the custom of the different churches than this saintly Doctor, who had visited the whole of Gaul, and passed over the whole Western as well as the Eastern Church. Hence it is evident that the custom of burning candles was not a mere continuation of a practice that was of necessity in the Catacombs.

(To be continued.)

A DECIDED CASE OF SOUPERISM.—The Presbyterian confirms the statement that Chiniquy has joined the Presbyterian sect for the present. Our cotemporary attributes this resolution on the part of M. Chiniquy and his followers to the fact that, whilst other sects sent them books, Bibles and Tracts only, the Presbyterians "abstained from all such work, and contented themselves with making prompt and generous contributions for their relief." That is to say, knowing that the belly is the tender point of converts from Romanism, the Presbyterians wisely appealed to the bellies of Chiniquy's crew; and thus, oatmeal and pork did what the Bibles and Tracts failed to accomplish. We never yet met with a more unblushing avowal of the means by which the sects of Protestantism beat up for recruits.

AN IMPORTANT DECISION.—By the Thames Police Court, it has been ruled that it is not lawful for one person to apply the term "Puseyite" to another; and the Court has sentenced a Mr. Daniel Stoken, an evangelical Oil and Colourman, to a fine of forty shillings for applying the offensive epithet to the Rev. Mr. Bryan King, one of the ministers of St. George's-in-the-East.

Mr. H. F. Brownson, son of the Dr. Brownson, has gone to France to enter the novitiate of the Jesuits at Anger.