

The True Witness AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE, PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY BY THE EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR, GEORGE E. CLERK, At No. 223, Notre Dame Street.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JAN. 17, 1862

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

There is little of interest to report. In the U. States, a simultaneous advance of the Northern army is announced as to take place in the course of a few days.

European news are dull. We see it reported that General Borge is yet alive, and that the circumstantial reports of his death are a tissue of Piedmontese forgeries.

We copy from the Montreal Witness of the 8th inst.:

THE "TRUE WITNESS" ON ITALY. It would be a long and wearisome affair to follow the organs of Lower Romanism through all the crooked ways it takes in order to hide the fact that a great movement toward civil and religious liberty is going forward in Italy.

For example, what are we to think of a journal which felicitates itself and its readers on their rights and privileges as subjects of Great Britain, and yet seeks to consign the Italians to the political institutions of Bomba and Pio Nono? Will our contemporary argue that the people of Italy are unfit for a larger measure of that freedom of which he is so enamored and proud in Canada?

Then we find the True Witness laboring hard to show that the Italians are drifting into downright infidelity,—that the watchword of those who would liberate their country is that of Voltaire, "Ecrasez l'infame!" and that the present movement in Italy is but the counterpart of the French Revolution of 1789.

Romanism is not the synonyme of Christianity, as the True Witness wishes to make out; nor can anything be more unfair than the position it takes in deliberately using such language as "Protestantism, or in other words, denudism." Little as the advocates of the Papacy may like to admit the fact, there is to all discerning minds, a vast difference between "an infallible Church" or "an infallible Pope," and "an infallible Book."

A startling sentence in the article, whose general tone has suggested these observations, shows very forcibly the contempt for the Word of God, which comes of removing its crown of supremacy, that it may share the throne with tradition and Pontifical infallibility. That sentence is as follows:—"There is no better historical testimony for the miracles recorded in the general biographies of the person called Christ—the Incarnation, to-wit,—than can be adduced for many a Romish miracle!"

The gist of this long tirade is—that the TRUE WITNESS denounces the invasion, and attempted conquest of the Kingdom of Naples, by the King of Sardinia and his foreign mercenaries, as an outrage upon all recognised international law, and upon all political morality; that we condemn revolution and disloyalty in Italy, as well as in Canada and in the British Islands; that we assert the right of Pius IX. to the allegiance of his temporal subjects, as we assert the right of Queen Victoria to the allegiance of her subjects; and that, in controversy with Protestants, we show how protesting principles, if carried out logically and consistently, lead inevitably to blank infidelity.

It is as the friends of civil liberty, that we protest against the invasion of the Kingdom of Naples, and the atrocities of the Piedmontese committed on a brave, loyal, and high-spirited people, whose only offence is that they will not submit to a detested alien rule.

submit to a detested alien rule. It is as the friends of "religious liberty," which consists essentially in the emancipation of the Church, or spiritual order from all secular control—that we protest against the sacrileges, and the despotism of Victor Emmanuel; who has plundered the Church of her property, who has exiled and incarcerated her Pastors, because they refused to pray to God at his bidding, and to offer up thanks in the way of his appointment.

That "Popery drives logical and keen witted people into scepticism," is true, in so far only, as it accustoms its votaries to look upon the want of logical coherence in any system, as an infallible proof of falsehood; and therefore leaves to them no alternative betwixt Popery, which is logically coherent throughout, and blank infidelity. Protestantism, as a religious system, is a bundle of inconsistencies; and in all its aspects, except that of ultra-Protestantism, or infidelity, presents to the mind trained to Popish habits of thought self-evident proofs of a non-divine origin.

There is "a vast difference," says the Witness, "betwixt 'an infallible Church' or 'an infallible Pope,' and 'an infallible Book.'" Granted—though the one does not require a greater exercise of Divine Power than does the other, and both are equally possible to Omnipotence. But the question is, which of these means—that of "an infallible Church," or body of oral teachers, or that of "an infallible Book"—did Christ Himself appoint as the means for perpetuating and pronouncing the knowledge of divine things by Him revealed to man? This is a simple historical question; and if the Witness asserts "an infallible Book," as the means by which Christ Himself appointed for preserving and pronouncing the Christian religion, we call upon our contemporary to give the historical proof of his assertion.

The Witness is startled because we contend that there is no better historical testimony for the fact of the Incarnation of Christ in the womb of the B. Virgin, than there is for many of what are called "Romish miracles." But would it not be better, and more to the point, for our startled contemporary to adduce his historical evidence of the miracle alluded to, and to carefully scrutinize that evidence, than to shriek out infidel, and to insinuate scepticism against the TRUE WITNESS. We, as Catholics, firmly believe in the doctrine of the Incarnation—not because we have any historical evidence worthy of the name; but solely because the Catholic Church believes and teaches that doctrine; and because we believe that Church to be "infallible," because appointed by Christ Himself as the ground and pillar of the faith, and as the means or medium by which the truths of His religion were to be preserved and handed down. But for our implicit faith in the infallibility of that Church, we should have no better reason for believing in the miraculous, and supernatural narrative of the circumstances connected with the birth of Christ, than we have for believing in the descent from Mars, of Romulus and Remus, or that the latter were suckled by a she wolf—stories which all boys get by rote in their youth, but which the ruthless criticisms of a Niebuhr teach them to despise as they grow in years and experience.—The Witness will therefore see exactly "how far we are from scepticism." We are far from it, the entire distance, but no more, that we are from Protestantism, or rejection of the infallible authority of the Catholic Church, as the living teacher of all divine truth.

Be not shocked or startled good Witness at what we say—but examine rather, coolly, critically and dispassionately the grounds for your belief in the doctrine of the Incarnation, so as to be able to give every man a "reason" for the faith that is in you. Remember, that if you reject the authority of the Church, that doctrine to be believed, must be supported by historical testimony; and that the rules for the acceptance or rejection of the historical evidence of the truth of miracles, or the supernatural, are laid down for you by Paley. An inspired witness, or witness in the supernatural order, is not required to prove the truth of a miracle; but it is requisite, that his testimony be the testimony of one who has had personal cognisance of the fact to which he deposes; of one who from his opportunities of observing, cannot have been deceived, and who at the same time cannot be suspected of intention to deceive. This is the test to which the Protestant Paley subjects the historical evidence in favor of the Resurrection; can any historical evidence in support of the facts asserted of the miraculous birth of Christ, which you can bring forward, bear the application of a similar test? If it cannot, then as historical evidence it is worthless.

You cannot cite as witnesses, either St. Luke or the author of the biographical treatise vulgarly called the "Gospel according to St. Matthew" for neither of these had, or could have had, any personal knowledge of the facts by

them related; and neither the one nor the other cites any authority for his assertions, or puts forward any pretensions, even, of having been inspired, or miraculously made acquainted therewith. Indeed St. Luke not only makes no pretension to inspiration, but he warns his readers in the preem to his work, that he proposes merely to set forth in order a declaration of those things which were already most surely believed amongst the early Christians; thus showing that their belief was not based upon Scriptures of any kind; and that therefore the Bible was not, and cannot be, the source of Christian knowledge or the rule of faith. If, however, the Witness argues that the statements of St. Luke, and of the author of the Gospel called "according to St. Matthew" were miraculously revealed to the writers, and must therefore be accepted as true, he imposes upon himself the burden of proving another miracle—i.e. the inspiration of the writers whom he adduces as his witnesses.

If the editor of the Witness is in possession of any better historical evidence for the truth of the doctrine of Incarnation, than that which we can adduce from Protestant writers for the truth of "Romish miracles," we respectfully call upon him to produce it in Court. In clarity he is bound to do so; for why should he keep to himself that which would be so profitable, if only made public. Hitherto, we confess it, we have never met amongst Protestants with the shadow even of historical evidence—properly so-called—for believing in the miraculous events recorded concerning the birth of Christ, by the first and third of the evangelists—though we have carefully consulted the writings of many Protestant divines upon the subject; and the perusal of Neander's Life of Christ, written expressly in refutation of Strauss, left us under the impression that evangelical Protestant Apologists were more dangerous enemies to Christianity, than ultra and avowed infidels.

STATISTICAL FACTS FOR THE "ECHO." The Echo is the title of a weekly journal, lately transferred from Toronto to Montreal, and published in the interests of that portion of the Anglican sect known as the "Low Churchmen." Its tone therefore is not much, if at all, superior to that of the Montreal Witness, which is a fellow-worker with the Echo in (not the Lord's vineyard); and its mission is chiefly to re-echo the calumnies of Exeter Hall against the Church, and the morality of Catholic countries.

For this purpose, in its first Montreal issue—that of Friday last—it publishes under the heading of "CRIME IN EUROPE," a series of figures "furnished by the Lord's Day Celebration Society, at its recent Anniversary Meeting," with the object of showing the prevalence "of sin and crime in countries where Sabbath desecration is prevalent." These figures are very terrible no doubt; and but that they lack one thing—authenticity—they would establish the fact sought to be impressed upon the minds of the intelligent and discriminating readers of the Echo—to-wit—that chastity, sobriety, and respect for life and property are most conspicuous amongst those communities which are most notorious for their pharisaical observance of the Lord's Day.

The lack of authenticity is however a serious drawback; and though it is, no doubt, mighty convenient for Evangelical Societies to eschew the vulgar precept avert observing the truth, and to assume the liberty of making their own statistics, and of drawing upon the fertile imaginations of their members, for their facts and figures—the absence of references to authorities by which the accuracy of the latter might, if impugned, be satisfactorily established, cannot but strike every unprejudiced person as a very serious deficiency.

In offering therefore to the attentive consideration of the Echo a highly suggestive statistical phenomenon, which strongly militates against his theory of the superior moral excellence of rigid "Sabbatarian" communities, we would endeavor to avoid the error of which we complain on the part of our contemporary; and we premise our reproduction of our statistics, by the remark that we are indebted for them to the Official Report of the Registrar-General for Scotland, for the Summer Quarter of 1861, and that we copy them from the columns of the London Times. The important fact, as illustrative of the morality of the most rigidly Sabbatarian, and the most intensely Protestant community in Europe, is stated in the following terms:—"Illegitimate births continue in Scotland, and some of the local registrars write as if in despair; one says:—"If we are to have births at all here, illegitimate ones must form about half the number!"

This rather shakes our confidence in the Echo's theory that a puritanical, or Judaical observance of Sunday is conducive to chastity, and morality; and whilst the testimony of the Registrar-General for Scotland proves, incontestably, that illegitimacy is increasing in that country so rapidly, so steadily, and, apparently so incurably as to strike Government officials with despair, and to wring from them the shameful

avowal that "if we are to have births at all, illegitimate ones must form about half the number"—it is evident that the prohibition of all innocent and healthy amusements on the only day of the week upon which the great mass of the people can amuse themselves at all, must naturally force them to seek their gratifications in those vicious and sensual indulgences, whose results are before us in the startling fact that one half of the births in Scotland are "illegitimate."

It is not with any design of saying offensive things that we may make these remarks; but as a fair and honest reply to the false and insulting insinuations of our evangelical contemporaries.—God forbid that any Catholic should gloat over, or take delight in the immorality of any nominally Christian people; but when a Protestant appeals to anonymous, unofficial statistics to establish the immorality of Papists, we contend that the latter have the perfect right to appeal to the Official and authenticated Statistics of the Empire, to show that the greatest amount of vice and impurity is there prevalent where Protestantism is most triumphant, and where Sabbatarianism rules with undisputed sway.

Nor is the immorality of puritanical and Sabbatarian Scotland an isolated instance of the connexion betwixt vice and Protestantism.—Another such instance we have constantly before our eyes in this country, wherein Protestantism and Catholicity co-exist under precisely the same political, social, and material conditions; so that if any great and constant moral difference betwixt their respective professors be discernible, it must, according to all laws of logic, be attributed to the difference of their respective religious conditions. Now the Official Statistics of the Province show a great and constant difference betwixt the criminality of Upper and Lower Canada—of the Protestant and Catholic sections of the community respectively—and always to the moral disadvantage of Upper Canada, and of the Protestant section of the Canadian population. Of this the following extracts from the Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors for Asylums, Prisons, &c., in Canada, afford incontestable proof.

According to this Report there were on the 21st of December, 1861, inmates of the Kingston Penitentiary:—

Table with 2 columns: Protestants, Catholics. Row 1: 529, 254. Row 2: Or in other words the Protestant criminals were to the Catholic as more than Two to One; though the Protestant and Catholic populations are, by the last census, very nearly equal.—

Of 784 convicts in the Penitentiary Upper, or Protestant, Canada furnishes... 586 Lower or Papist Canada... 198 In other words the criminality of Upper Canada is to that of Lower Canada, very nearly as Three to One.

And if we extend our investigations over a series of years, we find that from 1856 to 1861, the average criminality of the two sections of the Province, respectively, have been as under:—

Table with 2 columns: Upper Canada, Lower Canada. Row 1: 1,004, 289. Row 2: In other words, with a population little, if at all, exceeding that of Catholic Lower Canada, Protestant Upper Canada furnished on the average nearly four times as many criminals.—

And yet the Echo would no doubt tell us that Sabbath desecration is more prevalent in Romish Lower Canada with its 58 convicts per annum, than in Protestant Upper Canada which returns as its representatives to the Provincial Penitentiary, more than two hundred convicts per annum.

We respectfully invite the Echo to consider these statistics. He cannot impugn their authenticity, for they are derived from Official and Protestant sources; he may however deduce from them a very important and valuable lesson.

His Lordship the Bishop of Montreal, upon the receipt of the news of the death of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort, addressed the following letter of condolence to His Excellency the Governor-General:—

"Montreal, December 31st, 1861. My Lord—it is the duty of all Her Majesty's subjects to show whenever the occasion presents itself, their sentiments of respect and loyalty towards their august Sovereign and her worthy representative.

"The circumstance of the commencement of a New Year affords me such a precious occasion; and I take advantage of it, to lay at the feet of Your Excellency, my respectful homage, and that of the Chapter of your Cathedral, the Religious Communities, and all the Clergy of the Diocese of Montreal Day by day, we offer to God our humble supplications, that He will be pleased to shed upon our gracious Queen the abundance of His grace, comforting her in the reasonable grief which the unexpected loss of her worthy and well beloved husband has caused her, and giving His powerful aid to all who assist her in the Government of her vast empire, and particularly in the administration of the affairs of this Province. Above all, we pray, in these troublous times, for the preservation of peace, and public tranquillity, in this country and elsewhere, so that under the wise administration of Your Excellency, this Province may repose in peace, and may enjoy that true happiness which the people may expect from the observance of the divine and human laws, and from obedience to their Government. I have the honor to be, My Lord, with profound respect, Your Lordship's most humble and obedient servant. J. A. Bishop of Montreal. The Right Hon. C. S. Vicomte Monck, &c.

To this letter His Excellency was pleased to reply in the following terms:—

Quebec, 3rd January, 1862. Monseigneur—I thank you for the letter which you have written to me, and for the sentiments of respect and loyalty which you therein express towards Her Majesty, and towards myself, her representative in Canada.

"I beg of you also to convey my thanks to the Chapter of your Cathedral, to the Communities, and the Clergy of your Diocese.

"It is most gratifying to me to learn the sympathy which they feel for our beloved Sovereign, now so deeply afflicted, and to hear of the prayers which they address to God for her consolation. That your prayers may be answered, is the ardent desire of all her people.

"I take advantage of this occasion, Monseigneur, to assure you of the satisfaction which I have experienced in witnessing the attachment towards the Government, displayed by the Catholic Clergy of Canada at this exciting epoch, and the regard for the public weal with which they have shown themselves to be animated.

"I thank them personally, for their patriotism, and I will not fail to make Her Majesty's Government acquainted with it.

"Accept, Monseigneur, the assurance of my high consideration. MONTREAL. Monseigneur the Bishop of Montreal."

CIRCULAR TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF SANDWICH.

Rev. and Dear Sir,—His Excellency the Governor General, having made an appeal to the loyalty and patriotism of the people, with a view to place Canada in a posture of defence, I have deemed it proper to remind the faithful of their duty in the present emergency, as Catholics and citizens. Not that I entertain the slightest doubt of the loyalty of the Catholics of this Diocese, but because the circumstances are such that I think we cannot give too much publicity to the sincerity and earnestness of our sentiments as loyal subjects of the British Crown. Apart of all other considerations of an inferior order—and they are numerous—we are and must be loyal and devoted subjects, simply because disloyalty is absolutely repugnant to our Holy Faith. The Catholic Hierarchy, in every part of the world, under any form of government, in all circumstances, even during the most unjust and cruel persecutions, has always taught the moral obligation for all citizens of being faithful and obedient to all lawful authority.

The Catholic press of Canada has recently treated this important subject, and deserves our warmest commendation for its comprehensive and powerful advocacy of this Catholic principle.—The following quotation is so much to the point, that I cannot refrain from inserting it in this Circular:—

The Bishop of Galway, the Right Rev. Dr. MacEvilly, says:—

"We will yield to no other portion of our fellow-subjects in sentiments of undivided allegiance to the gracious Sovereign of these realms. From the dictates of duty we never fail to proclaim, with the Apostle, that obedience—voluntary, interior, hearty obedience was to be rendered to all persons who were placed in high authority over them, and this not only to those who wielded the supreme, but also the subordinate occupiers of authority, governors, and magistrates, so long as they inculcated nothing evil, and outstepped not the limits of their authority. For not only is the temporal power from God, but the different gradations, and species, and distribution of governing authority are also arranged by Him, and exist by His sanction and ordinance."—True Witness, Dec. 27.

I am confident, Rev. Sir, that you will have no difficulty to impress on your Parishioners their duties as Catholics and citizens; and in persuading them to give every assistance to all lawful authority in the efforts now being made, or to be made hereafter, towards raising the military forces necessary for all contingencies.

Hoping that the fearful scourge of war may eventually be averted from our peaceful and prosperous country, and wishing you and your Parishioners a "happy new year," and every blessing,

I remain, Rev. and Dear Sir, Most affectionately yours in Christ, ADOLPHE, Bishop of Sandwich.

Sandwich, January 6th, 1862. (Festival of the Epiphany.)

This Circular shall be read in all churches of the Diocese, and each priest will recite at Mass the collect pro pace, after the collect pro Papa, both collects being de mandato until new order.

By command of His Lordship, JOS. BAYARD, Secretary.

The Directors of the City District Savings Bank have distributed \$2,550 among the following charitable institutions of the city:—

Table with 2 columns: Institution Name, Amount. Row 1: St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum... \$400. Row 2: Ladies Benevolent Association... 400. Row 3: Providence Asylum—for old women, deaf and dumb girls and infant school... 350. Row 4: Protestant Orphan Asylum... 300. Row 5: Montreal General Hospital... 200. Row 6: Catholic Lying-in-Hospital... 200. Row 7: Catholic Magdalen Asylum... 200. Row 8: Infant Schools... 150. Row 9: Montreal Lying-in-Hospital... 100. Row 10: St. Joseph's Asylum—for orphan girls... 100. Row 11: Catholic Orphan Asylum—for boys... 100. Total: \$2,550.

The ladies of the Catholic Church in Cornwall have held a Bazaar at the Court House there for three days—which has been attended by the citizens generally. The fine variety of articles they offered to please the fancy and tempt the taste, accompanied by their own bewitching smiles and irrepressible efforts as saleswomen, resulted in obtaining about \$800, as the proceeds of their enterprise; which amount is to be appropriated towards the building of a new church edifice. Not the least of the benefits of this and similar enterprises, art the good will and kind feelings, thereby diffused through the community.—City paper.

Parliament is prorogued pro forma until the 19th of February, not then to meet for the despatch of business.

A MILITARY TELEGRAPH.—The St. John, N. B., Colonial Empire is informed that the military authorities have determined to establish forthwith a line of telegraph communications between Halifax and Quebec, because the lines in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are in the hands of an American company at fixed rentals, an arrangement which is open to very grave objections.