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THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, OCT. 7, 1853.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The rapid spread of Asiatic Cholera, of a very malignant type, in England—the deficient harvest—and the dark war-cloud long gathering in the East, and which now threatens at every moment to burst in a storm of blood—are the all-engrossing topics of the day, in whose dread presence the voice of religious discord is for the moment hushed. The No-Popery agitation of the past Session has subsided; Maynooth and Nunery Inspection are clean forgotten; and even the assembly of the Catholic Prelates of Ireland, in solemn Synod, seems scarcely to attract the notice of the Protestant world. Perhaps the people of England have, by this time, got so accustomed to see the provisions of their Ecclesiastical Titles Bill set at defiance, and openly violated, that they are ready to desist from a hopeless struggle with the Church of God, and think it best to cease from their impotent, and imbecile attempts to prevent the re-establishment of the old Catholic Hierarchy, with all its ancient splendor, throughout the British dominions; but be that as it may, it is certain that the late Synod has attracted little attention, or abuse, from the Protestant press. Only the *Dublin Evening Mail* pours forth his sorrows to the world, whilst noticing the disloyalty of the dignitaries of the Catholic Church during Her Majesty's late visit to Ireland. Scarce one of them was to be seen—"Their lord and master had summoned them to appear in his court at Thurles; and whilst the Queen of England was receiving the congratulations of her loyal subjects in Dublin, the Sovereign of Rome had assembled around the chair of one of his Satraps in Tipperary some of the most active and persevering foes to her authority." Happily unconscious, or indifferent to the strictures of the *Evening Mail*, the Bishops of Ireland have brought their deliberations to a close; though of course, until such time as they shall have been laid before, and ratified by the Sovereign Pontiff, the proceedings of the Synod will not be published to the world. It is said that the assembled Fathers have been pleased to decree that the College of Thurles, shall be for the future the Provincial College of Munster; this, it may be supposed, is intended to counteract the injurious effects of the Queen's, or Goddess, College at Cork.

The investigation into the Borough Gaol, at Birmingham, has brought to light, the existence of a system of cruelty and brutality in the prisons of England, unsurpassed even in the fertile imagination of the most rabid No-Popery denouncer of the inquisition, and which affords a fine commentary upon the invectives that a parcel of canting hypocrites are continually casting upon the Continental Governments for their ill treatment of their convicts. From these disclosures, it would appear that, in England, in the XIX century, torture is freely had recourse to, "rivaling in atrocity," says one journal, "any thing of which we read respecting the rack of the middle ages." "We shudder"—says the *Birmingham Journal*, in giving an account of these cruelties—"we shudder when we read of the comparatively humane treatment of political offenders in Neapolitan prisons; it is a mild despotism compared with this revolting cruelty." Of its nature, the reader may judge from the fact, that the prisoners seek refuge in suicide from the horrors of a gaol, in Protestant England. Some details will be found on our third page.

In Holland, the law depriving Catholics of all religious liberty, has been passed, chiefly through the connivance of the Minister of Catholic worship—one of those fellows who call themselves Catholics, but who, in reality, are the deadliest and most dangerous foes to the Church. The *Tablet* has some very appropriate remarks upon the occasion, which we cite, because their appropriateness is not confined to Holland—

"Catholics in office are, somehow or other, one of our plagues; and no Protestant government thinks it safe, or decent, to persecute the Church before it has made its bargain with Judas."

If the accounts given in *L'Ami de la Religion* of the persecutions to which Catholics in Russia are subjected on account of their religion, may be relied upon, war with the schismatics of the East, will not be unpopular with the Faithful throughout the west of Europe. The free exercise of their religion is forbidden to Catholics—their clergy are restricted in saying mass; and cruel tortures have been inflicted upon the Priests. We read in *L'Ami de la Religion*—

"Many Catholic Priests are subjected to a punishment which is called *plate*, and which has replaced the *knot*. They give blows by thousands. A Doctor assists at the execution, and it is he who, when the patient is nearly dead, causes the tortures to be sus-

pending. They let the victim breathe, and sometimes they even carry him to the hospital, but in order to recommence until the sentence be completely executed. One of the Priests thus martyred, is dead, after having received more than nine thousand blows at different repetitions."

Efforts are still being made by the French and British Governments to prevent a rupture betwixt Russia and Turkey, which will inevitably involve the whole of Europe in the horrors of war. This will be no easy task; somewhat of the old fever which, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, animated the hosts of Turkey, is again reviving in their descendants; and, to all appearances, there will be more difficulty in inducing the Turks to listen to terms of accommodation, than in satisfying the demands of the Czar. As yet all is uncertain; and though the hostile armies are confronting one another, and hostilities betwixt their out-posts are said to have occurred, the French journalists do not seem to have abandoned all hopes of an amicable settlement.

THE MEETING OF THE IRISH CATHOLICS AT QUEBEC.

It was hardly to be expected that our Quebec friends should remain any longer mere passive spectators of the scandalous violations of law and justice, which late investigations have shown to occur in the Court of Queen's Bench; or that, whilst the most infamous means, to procure the condemnation of their countrymen, and co-religionists, are being resorted to by the first officers of our legal tribunals, they should stand by with arms folded, as if in no wise interested in frustrating such rascally proceedings. Extraordinary diseases call for extraordinary remedies; and when there is, as at present, so much reason to believe that corruption prevails, over right, equity and justice, in our Courts of Law, it is full time that the intended victims of such nefarious designs, should combine for self-defence.

Let us calmly review the events which the late proceedings at Quebec have divulged. We have seen Sheriffs, and Deputy Sheriffs, banded together to defeat the ends of justice—falsifying the Jury Lists, in order to wreak their malice upon the heads of innocent men—and then, endeavoring, by means of bribes—to conceal their guilt—and to corrupt the advocates of the accused. The very officers of that tribunal, which is invested with almost absolute control over the reputation, the property, the life, and liberty of the subject, have been detected in these most infamous crimes; and trial by Jury, which should be a safeguard to innocence, has been, by Mr. Sewell, and his tools, converted into an instrument for perpetrating, in the sacred name of justice, the most foul wrong. What must be the effect of these disclosures upon the minds of those against whom the plots thus timely brought to light, were principally directed? To destroy all confidence in, all respect for, our Courts of Law, as at present constituted; and to inspire a feeling of distrust against the laws of the country, as at present administered. For how can any honest man place any confidence in, or have any respect for, a Court, of which a Sewell, and a Von Exter, are the principal officers?

Feeling therefore, that it is in vain for them to expect justice from such tribunals—that in the words of the *London Times*—"there is no justice for Catholics in cases tending to arouse the Protestant feelings of Juries"—the Irish Catholics of Quebec on Sunday the 25th ult., acting upon the maxim "that when rogues conspire, honest men should unite"—met together for the purpose, of concerting means to counteract the vile artifices of Protestant—Sheriffs—Deputy Sheriffs—and Vigilance Committees; and for endeavoring to procure, in spite of Mr. Sewell, "a fair and impartial trial" for the Irish Catholics accused of having taken part in the Gavazzi Riots. Of this meeting, which was most numerously attended, and decorously conducted, we find the following report in the *Quebec Mercury*—

"On Sunday last, immediately after High Mass, a meeting of the Catholics, speaking the English language, was held in the yard adjoining St. Patrick's Church, in pursuance of a requisition to that effect most numerously and respectfully signed, for the purpose of devising such means as might be necessary to secure for the Irish Catholics, accused of the Gavazzi Riot in this city, a fair and impartial trial, and proper means of defence.

R. J. Alley, Esq., R.N., was unanimously called to the chair, and Mr. John O'Kane, Jr., requested to act as Secretary.

The chairman then gave a brief but lucid explanation of the objects of the meeting; when the following resolutions, on being duly moved and seconded, were unanimously adopted—

1st. Resolved, on motion of C. Alley, Esq., seconded by Mr. C. Gilbride,

That the misrepresentations of the press, and the obtrusive intolerance of certain individuals in this city, styling themselves "The Protestant Committee," force from the Irish Catholics of Quebec an expression of their opinion of the events connected with the disturbances at Chalmer's Free Church in this city, on the 6th June last.

2ndly. Resolved, on motion of John Doran, Esq., seconded by Mr. Francis Waters,

That the statement of the riot at Chalmer's Free Church being an attack, by the Irish Catholics of Quebec, on the religious and civil liberty of their fellow citizens, is without foundation, and is a gross slander on a people who have been taught, by the bitter experience of the history of their native land for centuries, the intility and the criminality of religious and civil persecution.

3rdly. Resolved on motion of W. Quinn, Esq., seconded by H. O'Connor, Esq.,

That the insinuations and declarations of the Protestant Committee, and others, against the integrity of Juries in general, is a most unjust imputation of the moral character of the yeomen and burgesses of this district.

4thly. Resolved, on motion of John O'Farrell, Esq., seconded by Mr. A. Gilmore,

That the judgment, rendered by the Judges of the

Court of Queen's Bench for Lower Canada, on the 24th instant, against the Sheriff of this District, respecting the composition of the Grand Jury in the Term of July last, has raised in this meeting grave doubts as to the security of property and person, and imposes on the Government the necessity of inquiring into the conduct of the Ministerial Officers of Criminal Justice within this District.

5thly—Resolved, on motion of D. McGuire, Sr., Esq., seconded by J. Nolan, Esq.,

That this meeting cannot too highly condemn the hints thrown out by a portion of the community of organizing "for protection;" a threat of the most dangerous description, and which, if carried into execution, would render it the duty of every Catholic in the province to unite as one man to vindicate the law, and put down such an illegal combination.

6thly. Resolved, on motion of John O'Kane, Sr., Esq., seconded by John Lane, Jr., Esq.,

That, as the Protestant Committee have collected monies, and retained Counsel to assist the Crown Officers in prosecuting the parties accused of the riot in question, and further have, by every means in their power, made it a religious and national question, and as the minds of men have been thus prejudiced and inflamed, it is the duty of this meeting to appoint a Committee, to be named the "Vigilance Committee," to secure for the accused a fair trial, and to see that no sinister influence be used to pervert the ends of justice.

7thly. Resolved, on the motion of L. Stafford, Esq., seconded by M. Mernagh, Esq.,

That the following persons do form the said Committee, with power to add to their numbers, namely: the Chairman, and Secretary, and the movers and seconders of the resolutions of this meeting, and that they be authorised to carry out the objects and intentions of this meeting.

The names of thirty four gentlemen were then added to the Committee.

The foregoing Resolutions were ably and energetically spoken to by the gentlemen who moved and seconded their adoption.

The venerable chairman having left the chair, John Doran, Esq., was, on motion duly seconded, temporarily called thereto, and a hearty vote of thanks passed to the Chairman, for his able and dignified conduct in the chair.

The Members of the Committee appointed by the 7th Resolution were requested to meet at the Rooms of the St. Patrick's Catholic Institute immediately after Vespers.

The meeting, which numbered three thousand men, then dispersed with the calm determination to assert their civil and religious rights, and to use every lawful means of securing for the accused a fair and impartial trial.

By order,
JOHN O'KANE, Jr., Secretary.
Quebec, 25th September, 1853."

Amongst all impartial men there can be but one opinion as to the propriety of this meeting, and the prudence with which the different resolutions were drawn up. The 6th resolution especially deserves great praise; and the only wonder is, that, seeing the infamous means which have been resorted to by the Protestant party at Quebec to procure the condemnation of innocent men, a Catholic Vigilance Committee has not been organised long ago, as a salutary precaution, as well against the corrupt artifices, the bribery, and perjury, which may well be expected, as against the falsifying of the Jury Lists, and the bribery, which have already been resorted to by the officers of the Court of Queen's Bench.

As conveying an expression of want of confidence in the legal tribunals of the country, we look upon this meeting as very important, and trust that its fourth resolution may convince the Executive, ere it be too late, of the impolicy, of retaining Mr. Sheriff Sewell in his present situation. His undignified and ungentlemanly conduct, on the occasion of the Gavazzi lectures, should of itself have led to his immediate dismissal; for public servants, and the officers of our Courts of Justice, have no right to act as political partisans, or to take any prominent part in sectarian squabbles. Whilst holding office, their duty is to maintain a dignified neutrality; though, as private citizens, they have a perfect right to make themselves as ridiculously, or disgustingly, conspicuous amongst the "Scum" as they please. Had a Catholic Sheriff, for instance, taken the chair at the meeting in the yard of St. Patrick's Church, Quebec, we should have considered him a very unfit person to hold such an office; but Gavazzi's public lectures partook far more of a party, or sectarian, character than did the meeting of the Irish Catholics of Quebec; the latter having been held merely to concert measures of self-defence, against a most infamous persecution; the other, consisting of exhortations to violence and aggression against Catholics, couched in the most insulting and blackguard language that the speaker could devise. Far more improper therefore was the attendance of a Protestant Government officer at the lectures of Gavazzi, than would have been the attendance of a Catholic official at the Irish Catholic meeting, where not an offensive word against the religion, or morals, of Protestants was uttered, nor an expression made use of unbecoming a meeting of gentlemen and Christians. Mr. Sewell's offensive display of bigotry, and his connexion with Gavazzi—a low ruffian in whose society no man, with the feelings of a gentleman, would willingly be seen—should therefore, irrespective of his subsequent infamous violation of the law, have procured for him, long ago, that summary dismissal from office, which the judgment of the Court, in inflicting punishment upon him for his misdeeds, now renders it impossible for the Government to withhold, if it wishes to restore confidence in, or to uphold the credit of, our Courts of Justice.

No one who has read Judge Rolland's address, when pronouncing judgment on the Sheriff, can doubt the propriety of this resolution. His Honor plainly told Mr. Sewell that his affidavits were not credible—that they were exculpatory, if true, but that he—the Judge—did not believe them. The Irish Catholics of Quebec may therefore be pardoned if they too do not feel inclined to attach any credit to Mr. Sheriff Sewell's oaths: they do not believe his affidavits, and neither did the Judges of the Court of Queen's Bench, or they would not have fined him in the extreme penalty.

We have left ourselves barely room to notice the language of the Protestant press of Quebec in speaking of this Irish Catholic meeting. Of course our cotemporaries, are very indignant at it, and abuse it in no measured terms; for which the Catholics of Quebec should feel grateful. For they may be very sure that, as their meeting was not held to please Protestants, so, if it had given pleasure to the latter, or had been by them well spoken of, it would have been a sure sign that it had failed in its objects; and that its proceedings had been conducted in a manner quite unbecoming Irishmen, and Catholics. Our Quebec friends may rest assured that their conduct has won for them the respectful sympathy of their Catholic brethren throughout the Province; and that, whilst we offer no defence for rioting, fighting, or window smashing, we view with far greater disgust and abhorrence the vile practices which have been unscrupulously resorted to by their opponents, in order to procure, *per fas aut nefas*, the conviction of the accused. Rioting we look upon as bad; but upon Jury-packing, and bribery, as far worse.

In justice to the Catholics of Quebec, implicated in the Chalmer's church row, we must add, that the first acts of violence on that occasion were exercised by Protestants against Catholics. A most brutal assault having been made upon the person who rashly cried out to Gavazzi, "that is a lie," a number of Catholics, attracted by the noise, rushed to his rescue; and but for their opportune interference, he would have been seriously injured by the ruffians, in whose hands he was. The excesses that subsequently occurred, we condemn and deplore, as do all Catholics; and deeply regret that, in a moment of excitement, a few hot-headed men should have smashed a few panes of glass, and inflicted other trifling injuries upon the body of the church. But, after all, what is this compared with the unprovoked violence which Protestants, whenever they dare, exercise against Catholic property? How trivial does it not appear, when compared with the Stockport Riots in England, or the burning of Convents in the United States! When Protestants shall have re-built the Charlestown Convent, by them, ruthlessly, and without the least provocation, destroyed, they will have the right to lift up their eyes in horror at the paltry smashing of a few panes of glass, in a moment of great and sudden excitement, and in the midst of a row which they themselves had provoked. Till then, we can but address them in the words of Holy Writ—Out upon you ye hypocrites—who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel!

THE GAVAZZI RIOT TRIALS AT QUEBEC.

The extraordinary Session of the Court of Queen's Bench has been brought to a close, and the persons accused of rioting have been admitted to bail, to stand their trial in January next. In the case of Terence McHugh, indicted for unlawfully rescuing John Hearn from the custody of a policeman, the Jury were unable to agree upon a verdict; a Juror was consequently withdrawn, and the accused was bound over to appear on the first day of next term. The Grand Jury brought in True Bills against the Deputy Sheriff, for attempting to bribe, and against Mr. O'Farrell, for receiving a bribe; they also handed in a Presentment, in which the Police authorities of Quebec are severely censured for their inefficiency, and neglect of duty.

His Honor the Judge having inquired of the Solicitor-General, whether he had anything further to lay before them, Mr. Ross replied—that no indictment had as yet been prepared against a public officer (Mr. Maguire, the Inspector of Police, for neglect of duty; the Attorney-General was engaged in holding an investigation into the facts, in order to ascertain whether there was sufficient evidence to support a prosecution; The Grand Jury having presented all the civic authorities of Quebec, it was necessary that their conduct should be investigated, so that, if guilty of any offence, they might be prosecuted for it. Mr. Justice Aylwin stated that the reasons assigned by the Crown Officers for not having acted upon the Presentment of the Grand Jury, were satisfactory. The Deputy Sheriff, and Mr. O'Farrell, were admitted to bail, and the term was declared closed.

Mr. Russell, Chief of Police at Quebec, has made an affidavit, which goes a long way to clear Mr. Maguire of the charge of neglect of duty, on the evening of the Chalmer's church row. The Police were on the ground, and did their duty to the best of their abilities, as is proved, not only by this affidavit, but by the trivial nature of the riots, and the small amount of damage done to the church itself. A glazier with a few panes of glass, a little putty, and a dab of paint, could put it all to rights in a few hours' work. As it is certain that the row was quite unprovoked, it is no wonder if the police were at first taken by surprise; and it seems as unjust to blame them for what took place, as it would be to hold the Civic force responsible for every paltry row that occurs in the galleries of a "cheap and nasty" theatre; or to tax the whole Corporation of Montreal with neglect of duty on account of the late brutal assault upon the Grey Nuns of this city, by the champions of "civil and religious liberty."

The Irish Bazaar has just closed; and we are happy to hear that it has "gone off" most successfully, having we understand realised over £500. This amount is far above what might have been expected, considering the many calls that have been recently made on the generosity of the people of Montreal. But who could resist the claims of the orphan? Not certainly the good people of this city, as the grand result of our Bazaar clearly testifies.