

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, FEB. 21, 1862.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE Northerners have at last shaken off their apparent lethargy, and rising in their strength, for the time seem to be carrying everything before them. They have captured Roanoke Island, where they also made prisoners 2,000 of the Confederate troops, who had been foolishly exposed, without any means of retreat open to them, to the attack of an enemy vastly superior in numbers. Fort Donelson has also, after a smart contest, fallen a prey to Northern arms; and here again a body of 15,000 Confederates, with an indefinite number of Confederate Generals, have helped to swell the triumph of the victors. But of worse omen to the cause of Southern independence, is the reception which the Federal troops are reported to have met with from the inhabitants of the districts which they have wrested from the Confederates. The ears of the victors have been greeted with cheers for the Union, and everywhere a strong Union sentiment is said to have displayed itself. These reports, coming to us, as they do, through Northern channels, must be received *cum grano salis*, or perhaps with an entire spoonful of the continent; but after making every allowance for Northern exaggeration, and Yankee braggadocio, it must, we think, be apparent, that the victories claimed by the Federalists are real substantial victories; and that amongst large masses of the population, hitherto claimed by the Confederates as favorable to their cause, a profound indifference, if not a warm Union sentiment, obtains. Upon either hypothesis, the prospects of the South are at present gloomy indeed.

Its Generals seem to have been much over-rated; and the stern determination of its inhabitants to assert their independence has been ludicrously exaggerated. The former leave their men to be cut off in detail, and expose small bodies of troops—as at Roanoke—to the attacks of overwhelming forces; whilst the latter do not fight as men who wish to conquer their independence, but fight, if they wish to succeed. Ten, eight, or six millions of armed men, determined to be free, cannot be conquered; but if they are not prepared to make every sacrifice, and to lay down their lives to the last man, they are unworthy of freedom, and if unworthy, will never conquer it. Still, though the military subjugation of the South seems now in a fair way of being accomplished, the political difficulties in the way of a restoration of the Union are as many, and as stubborn as ever. The real difficulty will only emerge when the last Southern soldier shall have been driven from the field, and when the Northerners remain military masters of the disputed territory. How is the conquered country to be governed? What is to be done with the slaves? If emancipated, are they to be admitted to the full privileges of American citizens? or are they still to be treated as an inferior race, and debarr'd from the exercise of those political functions which American citizens of a different colored skin, and with hair of a different texture, challenge as their inalienable possession, and as the birth-right of every man? These are some, but only a few, of the questions with which the victorious North will have to deal; and we doubt much if there be a statesman capable of grappling with such difficult questions. We do not believe that even amongst the most ardent of Boston Abolitionists the proposition to give the blacks, in the United States, a perfect equality of political rights with the children of European parents would be favorably entertained; and yet an emancipation which should not make of the emancipated, American citizens, but should still leave the millions of African origin on this Continent excluded from Congress, and therefore a politically inferior and subject race, would be so pregnant with incongruities, and so irreconcilable with the theory of American liberty, that it would be far better to leave the blacks still slaves, than to endow them with such an imperfect measure of freedom. In the Old World, with its feudalisms, and social hierarchy, the distinction between "active" and "passive" citizens—may be logically maintained; but in America the thing is impossible. There is therefore no alternative permanently possible betwixt maintaining the actual order of slaves, and the con-

ferring upon the African race all the privileges of American citizenship. The intense *negrophobia* of the North renders the adoption of the last named solution of the problem almost impossible; if, when victorious over the South, the Abolitionists do not redeem their pledges by immediate, unconditional, emancipation, they will become the laughing stock of Europe, in whose eyes they will appear as the active supporters of the very system which they took up arms to overthrow; and if they emancipate the blacks, without conferring on the latter a full equality of political rights with themselves, they will have established in America that very system of privilege, of invidious class legislation, and social inequality, on which, as manifested in Europe, American writers delight to lavish their ridicule and invective. Neither can it be credited that the emancipated Africans will be long content to remain in a state of political inferiority to their fairer-skinned fellow-citizens. Like the *tiers etats* of France in the days of Louis XVI, they will make their voice heard; and if that voice be not respectfully listened to, the American *villains* will take the administration into their own hands. Thus at every turn, the "Everlasting Negro" rises up to complicate the question; and yet the problem, apparently insoluble, must, on the hypothesis of the triumph of the North over the South, be by the former solved, and solved immediately; and as we do not believe that the most ardent of the Abolitionists are yet prepared to declare the "nigger" eligible to a seat in Congress or to the Presidential Chair, we do not believe that the victory of the North can result in anything except a monstrous social and political anomaly.

Our European news by the *Asia* is of little general interest. The tone of the French Emperor's speech seems to have given satisfaction in England; and the promised reduction in the force of the French army is accepted as a pledge of peace, or at all events of a renunciation on the part of Louis Napoleon of any aggressive designs upon his neighbors. On the other hand his language towards the Sovereign Pontiff would seem to indicate the withdrawal of the French army of occupation from Rome. The Sovereign Pontiff, however, continues his undaunted and dignified attitude towards all his enemies, and firmly refuses to make any concessions towards the robber King and his unscrupulous allies. He gives a decided negative to the insidious proposals of Louis Napoleon; and at the same time informs the Russian Emperor that until the Catholic ecclesiastics confined in Warsaw, be released, and those exiled to Siberia be recalled, he will send no Nuncio to St. Petersburg. In the Kingdom of Naples the Piedmontese are making no progress. The *Times* correspondent writes complainingly on the subject that, "There are considerable bodies of brigands who weary out the soldiers"—and that unless "new tactics be adopted by the authorities, this game of fast and loose may be carried on for a long time." The Piedmontese succeed occasionally in dispersing a body of these "brigands" or loyalists; but as the *Times* correspondent despondingly admits, "these dispersed bands re-assemble, and so we go on in a circle." Which being interpreted, means that the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples is still a long way off.

CONDITION OF IRISH IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES.—Upon this point there is a wonderful unanimity of testimony, though the witnesses themselves are as different as can well be imagined. They all concur, however, in this. That the condition—moral and material—of the immigrant, and of the Irish Catholic immigrant especially, is by no means an enviable one; and that even the physical advantages which the United States, from their vast extent of unoccupied fertile territory, are able to offer to the laboring classes emigrating from Europe, have been much exaggerated; whilst on the other hand, it is scarce possible to exaggerate the moral and social grievances to which Irish Papists are exposed in the blessed land of democratic liberty, and self-government.

Upon these points we have before us the testimony of three witnesses—representing generally three distinct classes. We have the evidence of Dr. Brownson, a native American, of warm American and Union sentiments; whose tendency is rather to exaggerate than to depreciate, the beauties of Yankeeedom; and to exalt the civilization, the social and political institutions of his native land above these of all other countries past or present.

We have secondly the evidence of the *New York Citizen*, an Irish Protestant paper, established by Mr. Mitchell some years ago, and whose columns he continued to inspire long after he had withdrawn from its ostensible editorship.

And thirdly we have the testimony of Mr. Russell, the world-renowned "Special Correspondent" of the *London Times*. It upon any one point, we find these three witnesses agreeing; we think that we may accept that point as fully established.

Now what says the first witness, Dr. Brownson, to the condition of Catholics, of whom the

great mass of Irish immigration is composed in the United States? We quote from the *Review* of April, 1855—wherein the above-named witness deposes as follows:—

"That in the United States, Catholics are—
"What the Christians were under Diocletian, Galerius and Maximian"—that "their lives and property are insecure"—and that "their rights as Catholics, as citizens, as men are every day trampled upon with impunity."—*Brownson's Review*.

The same witness further deposes that,—
"Our Churches are blown up, burnt down, and desecrated."

That:—
"The sanctuary of our private schools and colleges is invaded."

That our—
"Dead all but denied a burial."

That our children,—
"Are kidnapped and placed in Protestant families to be brought up in damnable heresy."

And that the several State Legislatures,—
"Are devising ways and means to confiscate the funds given by Catholic charity for the support of divine worship, and feeding of the poor."

The next witness whom we shall call upon is one of a very different stamp—the *New York Citizen*—who, inspired by Mr. John Mitchell, a Protestant of Protestants, cannot be suspected of a bias in favor of Papists, or as likely to exaggerate the hardships of the Catholic immigrant in the United States. This witness deposes—
That:—

"From the founts of Maine, and the snows of Vermont, to the factories of Massachusetts and Rhode Island—from the field to the kitchen, and from the kitchen to the scullery they (the Irish Catholics) were but 'brewers of wood, and drawers of water'—ridiculed for their brogue, despised for their country, and blasphemed for their religion."—*New York Citizen*.

Why!—exclaims this witness in indignation at the sight of this foul wrong done to his fellow-countrymen, and at the constant, systematic suppression of the truth of which the so-called Irish press in the United States is guilty—why are these things not published to the world!—

"What is the reason the Catholic papers have never taken the trouble to point out these facts to the people of Ireland?" And he answers the question thus—"Their love of paltry gain and self-aggrandisement;" and because it would not do to tell the Irish at home the truth; as emigration might thereby be checked and their subscription lists injured in consequence. Our witness concludes with the following earnest appeal:—
"Would to God that at this moment of hope for Ireland, any priest would with his own hands post it"—(the above given testimony)—"up on the door of his church, that our men may see and feel what he has to hope for here."—*Id.*

The last witness whom we shall summon into Court is the Special Correspondent of the *London Times*. His depositions refer to the material or physical condition of the immigrant, and run as follows:—

"The papers of all the large cities are filled with 'appeals from the friends of various eleemosynary and benevolent societies and institutions for aid, in which the sufferings of orphans, widows, and children are set out in the most touching terms. Washington is filled with misery, nor have I ever been in any cities in the world in which the Irish and other poor populations appear to live in more squalor, or to endure greater privations than in the vile alleys of New York itself, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, New Orleans, and the other large towns of the Union. Food is cheap enough, no doubt, but clothes are dear; rents are high, and the accommodation inconceivably bad—miserable sheds and wooden houses, with glassless or plank and paper filled windows, admitting cold and wind and rain. No delusion can be greater than to suppose the poor emigrant at once attains a greater degree of physical comfort in the States than he has in his own country; it is long before his wages are high enough to enable him to advance himself in any way; and a mechanic or labourer in any of the large towns, though he may have higher wages, pays more for food, rent, and clothing than he does in Europe, and does not, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, improve his social position by the change. It is in the chances open to industry and perseverance, in the larger field for the strugglers in life, and in the ease with which a man may shift from one position to another and get higher and higher at every change, that the United States offer advantages superior to those possessed by the old country; and these will disappear as the population increases, and the great material resources of the country are absorbed at home by the native-born races.

If the New England States, of which I have seen nothing, be taken, there may be some reason for the boasts in which Americans are so apt to indulge regarding the effects of their institutions; but, so far as I can judge from the States I have seen, there is an absence even of that material comfort on which so much stress is laid by Americans, North and South, to a degree unknown in very rude communities in Europe. The habits of the people in their social life seem to me exceedingly uncivilized. Their houses are comfortless, their manner of existence comfortless, their meals and diet of gross plenty in pig and the like, but exceedingly squalid in all table apparatus and neatness. The large towns of America are as full of foul haunts, misery, and vile populations as the oldest cities in the world, and there is an increase in these ingredients every year. There is, so far as I can see—and I use this qualification in all these remarks—considerable intelligence among the people, but it extends only to their own country and affairs, and there is enormous ignorance of all matters outside the Great Republic."

To the above most ample and most conclusive evidence, we might add that afforded by the state of the School Question in the Northern States, which shows that the anti-Catholic bigotry of the Yankees is as strong as ever; though since the outbreak of the civil war, they have been less rude and offensive in their language towards the Irish, than they were when the services of those gallant men were not in such urgent request. As yet however not one of those barbarous and penal laws, of which Dr. Brownson complains, has been repealed or essentially modified. But a short time ago, a Catholic boy in a Boston school was cruelly flogged for refusing to read the Protestant Bible; and still in New York, Catholic

children are stolen from their parents, and in due process of law handed over to Protestant proselytising establishments to be brought up in what Dr. Brownson calls "damnable heresy." An instance of this occurred but a short time ago, and was reported in the columns of that able and excellent Catholic journal, the *New York Tablet*, from which we copied it.

We lay these facts before our readers; and in the words of the *N. Y. Citizen*, we wish that they could be posted up in every market place, on every church door in Ireland! in order that the people, duped and deceived as they have hitherto been by mercenary demagogues and dishonest journalists, might know what awaited them on this side of the Atlantic; and might learn to appreciate at their proper value, the benefits which their fellow-countrymen and kinsmen have received from the hands of the Yankees. The debt of gratitude from Ireland to the United States is small indeed; unless kicking and cuffing are to be esteemed as favors, and convent burning, and church desecration as marks of good will.

HOUSES OF REFUGE.—A plain unvarnished tale of the working of these institutions in the United States, and of the manner in which, by a Protestant majority, they are perverted into *Swaddling* shops, may we hope be of service in putting the Catholics of Canada upon their guard. The details which we are about to lay before our Catholic readers are also valuable, as showing how their co-religionists in the United States are treated, even during the present crisis, when it is the obvious interest of the Protestant majority to manifest a scrupulous regard for the civil and religious liberties of their Catholic fellow-citizens. The story originally appeared in a Protestant paper; and its allegations cannot therefore be impugned on the pretext that they are Romish forgeries.

In Allegheny City there is a House of Refuge supported by public funds, and to which Catholic, as well as Protestant children are consigned. Some years ago, the Rev. T. Mullen, Pastor of the Catholic Church of that city, made application to the Directors of the public institution in question to be allowed to give religious instruction to Catholic children therein confined, at such times as should not interfere with the routine, and the internal regulations of the House. This modest application was taken into consideration by the authorities, and "after mature deliberation" was refused.

Nor did the injustice of the authorities end here. A short time ago, a Catholic girl, an inmate of the House, was taken dangerously ill; and being, as she believed, about to die, she earnestly implored the authorities to be allowed to receive the visit of a clergyman of her faith, in order that she might make her confession, and receive from his hands the consolations and last Sacraments of her Church. This request in like manner was positively refused; and by way of adding insult and mockery to their brutality, the Protestant authorities replied to the agonised entreaties of the trembling sinner before them, that she should not be allowed to make her confession to the priest, unless she would consent to do so in the presence and hearing of one of the guardians, or "police" of the establishment.—Thus, in the United States, the curse of Protestant Ascendancy pursues its victims to the grave; and when it has the power, refuses to them even the permission at their last moment, to make their peace with God. These facts, are given in the Protestant press, and are corroborated by the correspondence upon the subject which has passed between the President of the House of Refuge, and the Rev. Mr. Mullen, and which is published *in extenso* by our able and zealous contemporary the *Pittsburgh Catholic* of the 8th instant. Its perusal should make the Catholics of Canada thankful that they are not Yankee citizens.

The first letter of the series is addressed by a gentleman named James P. Barr, to John T. Logan, President of the House of Refuge. In it the writer directs the attention of the latter to the statements emanating from "a respectable source" which appeared in the columns of the *Despatch*, a Protestant journal. Mr. Logan, as President of the House of Refuge, had defended his conduct, and that of his fellow-officials, in refusing the last consolations of her religion to a dying Catholic girl, by the plea, that "the moment a child is received into the House of Refuge, all authority and control of the parents, guardians and friends, over such children is suspended"—and that therefore the State authorities have the right to do what they please. To this monstrous plea, J. P. Barr replies as follows:—

"It is unnecessary for the Managers to remind the public (that the moment a child is received into the House of Refuge all authority and control of the parents, guardians and friends over such children is suspended). The public has long since been convinced of that fact by the awful disclosures made in open Court; when it was proved that the young women consigned to the guardianship of the Refuge, would have been far safer in the vilest den in the city;—in the latter, resistance, rescue or flight would have been easy; in the former they had no choice but submission to the brutal instincts of an unscrupulous ruffian.

"This same individual, who prostituted to his own purposes the daughters and sisters of our citizens, was defended to the last by an indulgent Board, who

might have discovered long before his unworthiness, had they faithfully fulfilled their duty. Yes, Mr. Logan, we all know to our cost and our shame, that by the rules of the Managers the control of the parent ceases when the child is received into the Refuge.

"Had this rule been less rigidly enforced—had the parents, the brothers or sisters of some of those girls, who perhaps took their first step in a career of misery and disgrace under the guardianship of him who had sole control over their bodies and souls, been allowed a private interview while visiting the Refuge; had this privilege been accorded to any respectable Catholic or Protestant clergyman in either city, the infamous proceedings of the Managers' pet, would have been soon arrested; and an institution which, if properly conducted, might be a blessing to the community, saved from public infamy."

The next letter furnishes us with a copy of the request preferred to the Committee of the House of Refuge by the Rev. Mr. Mullen, to be allowed, at convenient times, to give religious instruction to the children. This request was couched in the following terms:—

"Being desirous of imparting religious instruction to the Catholic children inmates of the House of Refuge, I called at the institution for the purpose of ascertaining when such instruction could be given without interfering with their other duties. The Superintendent informed me that any application such as I made should be presented to your Committee, as he did not consider himself warranted to act in the case without instructions from you. I therefore very respectfully solicit from you permission to instruct the Catholic children at the Institution in their religion, while I disclaim all intention of interfering in any way whatever with those of any other denomination. I feel I state a fact well known to all, that while many Catholic parents would be anxious to place their children under the protection of the House of Refuge, few of them would regard that protection in any other light than that of a calamity, were their children deprived of all means of instruction in that religion which they themselves profess. Hoping that the Committee will make such arrangements as may enable me to concede my ministrations to such as may require them at the Institution, and in such a way as to secure effectually what their parents prize above anything else, their religion.

I am respectfully, &c.,
[Signed] T. MULLEN,
Pastor of St. Peter's."

To this modest request the Committee replied at length, positively refusing to grant its prayer; basing their right to refuse religious instruction and consolation to Catholic children confined in their institution, upon the "Rules and Regulations for the Government of the House of Refuge," which enjoined that all "religious services take place on Sunday under the immediate charge of the Committee, and that the American Sunday School Hymn Book—a Protestant compilation—be used."

This answer not being considered satisfactory, another effort was made by the Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. O'Connor, to obtain occasional access to Catholic children; which the authorities met again with a positive refusal—justifying their refusal by the action and legislation of the several States of the American Union with reference to schools. They said:—

"The several States of the Union have uniformly opposed the introduction of separate moral and religious instruction into any public institution for the education of children; and as Houses of Refuge in their efforts to enlighten and instruct those who have been so sadly neglected, are in fact but a progressive development of the Public School System, therefore the Managers of this institution cannot feel at liberty to adopt any rule, that as a precedent, would interfere with the generally expressed will of the public."

Again, the Rev. Mr. Mullen came to the charge; and confining himself to the question, whether he would be allowed by the authorities to administer, when called upon to do so, the last rites of the Church to young persons dying in the said House of Refuge, he again wrote to the authorities in the following terms:—

"Should I, when called upon, be allowed to administer at the Refuge to any of the Catholic inmates, the rites of the Church, including as a necessary part, those of hearing confession in such a way that secrecy desired by the penitent shall be respected?"

But still the answer was No! The Papist inmate of the House of Refuge, even when dying shall not be allowed to make his peace with God according to the rites of his religion, the dictates of conscience, and the precepts of his Church.—To the last request of the Rev. Mr. Mullen, the President of the Committee replied as under:—

"Section 8 of the Act establishing this House of Refuge authorises the transfer of the parental authority over such infant to the managers of said House of Refuge; and Section 5 requires them to provide for the religious and moral education of the inmates in such a way as they may deem expedient and proper.

It follows, therefore, that the moment a child is received into the House of Refuge all authority and control of parents, guardians or friends over such child is suspended. The very fact of a child being so committed presupposes either inability or unwillingness on the part of such parent or guardian to discharge the natural or legal duties such parent or guardian owed to such child.

This being admitted, all right to interfere with the moral or religious instruction of such child is taken away.

Your Committee are of the opinion that to grant the privilege asked for by the Rev. Mr. Mullen, would involve the violation of the rule just spoken of. He asks that "the secrecy desired by the penitent shall be respected." This of course excludes the officer of the institution, whose duty it is to take cognizance of all that passes between the confessor and the penitent so far as the ear is concerned, the only organ of sense of any importance in the case.

And, finally, whatever denominational distinctions may have existed in the families of the inmates previous to their admission, the committee are of opinion that it would be a great error to recognize them within the walls. A uniform system of religious truth is there taught, embracing the fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, well adapted, as they believe, to reform the morals, regulate the life, and save the souls of those whose vicious practices brought them within the institution."

JOHN T. LOGAN.
The intrinsic importance of the subject, and its immediate bearing upon several social questions which may be expected shortly to come up for discussion in this country, will, we hope, excuse us for the length of our extracts from the above correspondence. From them we may see how