

The True Witness.

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DEC. 19, 1862.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

THE distress in the manufacturing districts of England is becoming daily more serious.—Typhus fever in an aggravated form has already declared itself, and the consequences must be very serious to all classes of the community.—From France there is little of interest to report; there have been rumors of designs upon the life of the Emperor, but it is very doubtful how far these are well authenticated. A general uprising of the Poles is said to be imminent.

The *Times* correspondent relates at great length the particulars of what it calls "a skirmish betwixt the Passaglia and the Papal clergy in this country." The City of Milan was selected as the battle field; and though this time the results have not been in favor of the anti-Catholic party, there can be no doubt that at no very remote day the battle will be renewed with greater vigor on the part of the Victor Emmanuel Government. The object of the latter is to establish what it calls, by way of a joke we suppose, a "Free Church in a Free State"; that is to say, in plain English, to make the Church the slave of the State; and to reduce her Pastors to the position of Government officers, exercising their spiritual authority in the name, and under the supervision, of a Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs. The firmness of the Bishop administering the Diocese of Milan has for the present prevented the realization of this Liberal scheme. The particulars, as we glean them from the *Times* correspondent, are as follows:

The unhappy Passaglia, whose apostasy has caused much scandal, but of which the motives are so well known, that it is incapable of doing any serious harm—was invited by the Provost of San Carlo del Corso, one of the largest Milanese parishes, to preach in his Church. Mgr. Caccia, the Bishop Administrator, interfered; and in the exercise of his legitimate, and purely spiritual functions, menaced the Provost with an interdict if he gave the use of his church to the renegade Passaglia. An angry correspondence ensued. Passaglia, and his friend the Provost, invoked the aid of the Prefect of Milan, and the Civil Power, against the Bishop; and as the Ricasoli Government had promised to make good to Passaglia and his friends—the lewd and disorderly priests and disaffected monks who have signed the petition for detroning the Pope—any losses which they might incur, Passaglia thought that he had good reasons for supposing that the Civil Power would warmly espouse his cause against the tyrannical Prelate. In this however he was mistaken. Either the Rattazzi Cabinet does not feel itself strong enough to come as yet to an open rupture with the still numerous Catholic party in the North of Italy, or it has some "deep state craft," as the *Times* correspondent insinuates; but whatever the cause, the civil authorities shrank from a collision with the Bishop upon a matter purely spiritual, and the meditated preachings of Passaglia were postponed, to a more convenient season. We expect however to hear shortly that a charge of treason has been trumped up against the brave Bishop Mgr. Caccia.

Another great battle, certainly, and to all appearance, another great victory for the Southerners or Confederates, and another great defeat for the arms of the Federals, have been the chief events of the past week in the United States, and in the vicinity of Frederickburg. On the morning of Saturday last the Northern army under the orders of General Burnside commenced a general attack upon the Confederate line. On the left, the Federals under General Franklin made, it is said, some trifling progress and gained half a mile of ground; but on the right and in the centre, the assaults though fighting bravely were repulsed with terrible slaughter. The exact truth is of course held back by the Northern authorities; but they confess to a loss of 5,932 killed and wounded in General Franklin's division alone—which was also the only one that was not hurled back in disorder by the Confederates. On Sunday the battle was not renewed, the Federals having apparently been too severely handled on the previous day to hazard another offensive movement: and though subsequently

joined by General Sigel, the Northerners fell back, and on Monday recrossed the Rappahannock river, thus bringing the third campaign against Richmond to a speedy and most inglorious termination. Amongst the names of Federal officers wounded, we find that of General Meagher.

What the next move on the great chess board will be it is impossible to predict. Probably the Confederates, satisfied with having successfully defended their own soil, and with having repulsed their invaders, will remain strictly on the defensive: but the political necessities of their position compel the Federals either to resume the offensive, or to acknowledge in the face of the world, their inability to conquer and subjugate the South. It may reasonably be expected that the tidings of this last disaster to the Federal arms will produce great excitement in Europe, and give additional impetus to the already very strong feeling in favor of recognition. Indeed, if the Confederates can hold their own for a few months longer, we see not how the European Powers can hesitate to apply to the practically independent Southern States, the same principles which they have applied in the case of the Republic of Southern America: and which in the case of Mexico and of Texas—the United States did not hesitate to apply, long before the former had successfully asserted their independence in the field.

The merchants of New York have provided us with a very appropriate and conclusive commentary upon their complaints of the action, or rather inaction, of the British Government in the case of the now famous Confederate man-of-war steamer *Alabama*. They, the complainants, are furnishing the French army in Mexico with iron, machinery, and materials for railroads, and in a word with all kinds of military stores of which the army of invasion stands most in need. Lord Russell in his despatch to Mr. Seward insisted upon the fact, that the American Government has always, when war was raging in Europe, insisted both upon the right of its citizens to sell all sorts of merchandise, munitions of war included, to either or both of the belligerents—and upon the principle that a neutral is not bound to interfere for the prevention of a contraband trade betwixt its subjects, and those of a belligerent Power. This has always been the doctrine, and as we see by the unimpeded action of the New York merchants towards the French invaders of Mexico, is still the practice of the United States. With what face then can the Yankee Government pretend to find a grievance against Great Britain, in that the latter strictly follows the precedents established by its Trans-Atlantic censor, and one which the citizens of the latter are at this very moment faithfully following!

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM OF LOWER CANADA.—Whilst the Catholic minority of Upper Canada have long, but ineffectually been complaining of the injustice of allowing a Protestant majority to tax them for the support of Schools of which they do not approve, it would appear from the *Montreal Witness* of the 10th instant that, in Lower Canada, the Protestant minority in like manner complain of being subjected to similar injustice by a tyrant Catholic majority. Our contemporary says:—

"As to the Protestant part of the population, there is, we believe, always more or less dissatisfaction prevailing, in reference to the educational superintendent. The fault, however, does not lie with the department, but with the system adopted. . . . The Protestants in Lower Canada are too much scattered amongst the Catholics to be able to form many flourishing schools of their own. Yet their school taxes which, in proportion to their number, figure the largest sum, are forced from them by Roman Catholic school Commissioners, and applied to teach a religion which is not that of their children; and when trying to help themselves, by the formation of a dissentient school, every obstacle is generally thrown in their way by a majority which is afraid of losing their taxes."—*Witness*, 10th inst.

We are not going to take up the cudgels in defence of the Lower Canada School system, which very likely might be made to operate most tyrannically towards the Protestant minority, if the persons to whom its administration is confided were as dishonest, and as tyrannically disposed as are the administrators of the Upper Canadian School system; and which is, theoretically open to all the objections which we have constantly urged against the principle of State-Schoolism. The day must come, is perhaps not far distant, when a change of Ministry and an anti-Catholic Superintendent of Education, may make it incumbent upon the Catholics of the Lower Province to take strong and decided action against the actual School system, which in the hands of a hostile administrator might be made to work in a manner adverse to our interests as Catholics, and our sacred rights as parents. We shall therefore say nothing in its praise, as it is, we believe, open to many and serious objections; but as it is our rule not to complain of a system whose practical results are upon the whole beneficial, even though it may be theoretically very imperfect, we do not feel ourselves called upon to say one word against the school system of Lower Canada. It has, thanks to the zeal and honesty of those to whose hands its administration has hitherto been confided, and thanks above all to the incessant zeal of the Catholic clergy in the cause of education—worked upon the whole very well; and the complaints of our contem-

porary the *Montreal Witness* of injustice done to the Protestant minority, and of the wrongs by it inflicted upon them; are the first that have yet reached our ears.

With reference to those complaints, and without expressing any opinion as to their truth or falsity, we have no hesitation in saying, that, if general, they should be at once and impartially enquired into; and if proved upon enquiry to be well founded, that their cause should be at once and effectually removed. We have not, as have our Protestant fellow-citizens, two sets of weights and measures—with one whereof they mete out justice to themselves, and with the other whereof they mete out what they call "justice to Catholics." On the contrary, we recognise but one standard of right and wrong for all men alike, irrespective of national or religious differences; and as we contend in behalf of the Catholic minority of Upper Canada, that the State has no right to tax any man for the support of a School to which he, in the exercise of his supreme or sovereign rights as a parent, does not see fit to send his child; so also we admit that, if in Lower Canada Protestants are in any single instance compelled to pay for the support of schools to which they object to send their children, a grievous wrong has been perpetrated, and one which calls loudly for immediate redress. The rights of the parent over his own children, and that whether he be Catholic or Protestant, in a State which like ours has "no semblance even of connection with the Church," which has in short no distinctive religious character, should with the legislator be paramount to every other consideration.

The *Witness* will however be pleased to take notice, that he has cited, as yet, no single instance of oppression; and has indicated no parish or township in which Protestant parents have been wronged, or have had obstacles in the way of forming dissentient schools, opposed to them by a Catholic majority. We do not say that such things are not; we admit that such things may be; but the *Witness* has not, hitherto, shown that they actually are. If, however, our contemporary will condescend to particulars, and will furnish us with attested facts—names, dates, and places—in support of his allegations, he will find that the *True Witness* will contend as earnestly for "Freedom of Education" for a Protestant minority in Lower Canada, as it has hitherto earnestly but ineffectually contended for "Freedom of Education" for the Catholic minority of Protestant Upper Canada.

Assuming that which he has not so much as attempted to establish, the *Witness* proceeds to discuss the remedy for the pretended grievances, under the which he alleges that the Protestant minority in Lower Canada suffer.

"For this oppressive state of things the Protestants of Lower Canada have but two remedies at hand; either to demand that all the schools in the receipt of the public taxes be made unsectarian; or else that education be made entirely free and independent of Government. The first alternative has no chance of success, and the second will probably have to be resorted to before long."—*Witness*, 10th instant.

Bearing in mind that the word "unsectarian" is a slang term which Protestants employ to designate non-Catholic and mixed Schools, we agree with him that there is not the most remote probability that the majority of Lower Canada will ever allow themselves to be taxed for the support of such Schools; and if there be indeed no other alternative than that suggested by the *Witness*, we have no hesitation in saying that we infinitely prefer the "Voluntary System" in Education, to that which our contemporary calls "unsectarian." Why should not every man be Chief Superintendent of Education in, and for his own family? He would do the business without a salary, which in the present hard times is a matter of no slight importance; and having a deep personal interest in the moral and material well-being of his own flesh and blood, he would do that duty well. If the *Witness* will come out on the "Voluntary" ticket he shall receive no opposition from us; and if he takes his stand upon the principle that education is the legitimate function, not of the State, or civil magistrate, but of the Family and of the Father, and will apply that principle, indifferently, to both sections of the Province, there will be one point at least upon which the *True Witness* and the other *Witness* shall cordially agree, even if differing on all else. For though we are by no means enamoured of "Voluntarism," either in religion or in education we would accept it as a far less evil than State-Schoolism, with mixed or common Schools.

In the meantime, and whilst waiting for an answer to our request for facts, we reply to the accusation urged by the *Witness*, to the effect, that the 'Roman Clergy of Canada were indifferent to education.' This is false, and the very opposite of the truth; for it is the zealous and constant support given by the 'Roman clergy' to the actual school system, imperfect though that system may be in some respects, that its success is mainly due. The *Witness* is incessantly complaining of the tremendous power of the clergy of Lower Canada; and he ought therefore to know that any system which that powerful and influential body opposed, or did not support, would have but little chance of making its way into

favor with their flocks. At the same time, it must not be understood that the support given by the Clergy to the actual school system implies an unqualified approbation of all the details of the system supported; they accept it, and like wise men who do the best with the tools at their disposal, they honestly and zealously endeavor to avail themselves of its provisions for the promotion of the education of their people. To this amount of credit they are justly entitled, and the *Witness* will not be able to defraud them of it, and of a people's gratitude.

The probability that Prince Alfred is the choice of the Greeks to fill their throne, vacant by the flight of the contemptible Otho, has of course excited much political interest in the affairs of that most insignificant of Kingdoms. The Greeks are in favor of a British Prince, because they expect that he will bring with him the cession of the Ionian Islands to Greece, and that his acceptance of the throne will secure to them the sympathies, and perhaps the material aid, of the British Empire in carrying out their ambitious designs upon Turkey and the domains of the Sultan. France regards the election with jealousy, as likely, if accepted by Great Britain, to interfere materially with her views of making of the Mediterranean a French lake; and Russia—which has its own views upon Greece, as well as upon the territories of the "sick man"—invokes the terms of the original Treaty betwixt the Great Powers, by which the throne of the newly erected kingdom was expressly prohibited to the members of the Royal families of any of the contracting parties. There are thus considerable political difficulties in the way of the acceptance of the proffered crown by a son of the Queen of Great Britain; and if that crown be accepted it will lead probably to a reopening of the entire Eastern question, and to an *entente cordiale* thereupon betwixt France and Russia—both of whom are jealous of the additional influence which that acceptance would give to the British flag in the Levant.

The religious difficulties, though in the eyes of the moralist and of the consistent Christian still more serious than the merely political or diplomatic obstacles which interpose betwixt a son of the Supreme Head of the Church of England, and the Hellenic throne, are either quietly ignored by the Protestant press, or only casually alluded to as of secondary importance. The *Montreal Witness* is in fact almost the only journal that as yet has so much as taken this moral and religious obstacle into consideration at all—and even the *Witness* treats it as of far less consequence than the anticipated political obstacles which the united opposition of France and Russia may probably interpose:—

"It is not to be disguised, however, that his—Prince Alfred's—acceptance of the throne of Greece would be fraught with numerous and great difficulties. It would tend to league Russia and France against England, and it would be likely to involve England in trouble with Turkey. Besides, Prince Alfred could not consistently become a member of the Greek Church, and he may well be loath to give up such certain ease and dignity as he can enjoy in Britain, even for the crown of a turbulent, ambitious and warlike kingdom—which is the centre of half a dozen of the most dangerous questions that threaten the peace of Europe."—*Witness* 19th instant.

When we remember that the Greek Church—whose faith the King of Greece must himself profess, and of which his children must be brought up members—holds, with the exception of the Supremacy of the Roman Pontiff, all those doctrines which Protestantism in general, and Anglicanism in particular, denounce as soul-destroying, as damnable, and idolatrous: that it agrees with Rome on all those points whereon Protestant churches differ from the latter—such as, the Real Presence in the Eucharist—the Mass, the veritable sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ—the invocation and veneration of Saints, and of the B. Mother of God in particular—and Purgatory; and in a word, that with the one exception specified above, the Greek Church holds and teaches all the distinctive, and to Protestants the most offensive doctrines of Romanism; and that wherein, dogmatically, it differs from Rome, as upon the double procession of the Holy Spirit, it differs also and to the same extent from Lambeth—it would seem as if the term "not consistent" were rather too mild to apply to a change, dictated solely by worldly motives, from the faith of Anglicanism to that of the Greek Church. And yet upon such a change—infamous and blasphemous though it would undoubtedly be on the part of one not conscientiously persuaded that Anglicanism was a damnable heresy, and of the truth of the peculiar dogmas which the Latin and Greek churches hold in common—and which all Protestants sects agree in denouncing as damnable and idolatrous—we feel convinced that British Protestants would look with indifference, if not favor, provided only that it secured some additional profits to British commerce, some extension of British political influence in the East. Provided a man be not a Papist, he may be of what religion he pleases, or of no religion at all, and he will run no risk of forfeiting the good opinion of the Protestant world; and whilst it has no words too harsh to apply to him who from purely conscientious, even if mistaken, motives, and from a regard to what he believes to be duty and his eternal interests, becomes a Catholic, the rene-

gade, who from purely worldly motives adopts, or with his lips professes to believe, the faith of the schismatic Greek Church, is visited only with the trifling censure that his conduct is "not consistent." The idea that such a change—and from such motives—would be sacrilege of the worst description, a sin against God, an outrage to Christ, and blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, never seems to enter the imagination even of the most intensely evangelical Protestant.

This affords but another instance of the facility with which error can coalesce with error, and of the indifference of Protestantism to all religions, with the exception of the Catholic religion, which it hates with a hatred truly diabolical, and worthy of its Satanic origin. If a Mahometan throne were vacant, there would be no difficulty in finding amongst Protestants, hundreds of candidates for the regal dignity, and all ready to shout at the top of their breaths in honor of the prophet of Islam, if their subjects should require of them such a test.

As in India the Protestant Government of Great Britain for years, and till of late, officially took part in, and defrayed the expenses of the obscene and idolatrous rites of its heathen subjects, it can scarcely be expected that any foolish or conscientious scruples will interpose to prevent its acceptance of the crown which the people of Greece seem about to tender to a British Prince. Political considerations, however, the fear of driving France entirely into the arms of Russia, the dread of another Eastern Question, may probably so operate on the public mind as to induce the British Government to decline the proffered honor, if indeed there can be any honor in accepting a crown already worn by that poor miserable creature Otho I. The decision of the British Cabinet is looked forward to, therefore, with much anxiety—an anxiety not at all diminished by the appearance of an article in the *Post*, the reputed organ of Lord Palmerston, to the effect that Greece had a perfect right to offer its crown to an English Prince; and that in the existing treaties betwixt the Great Powers, regulating the affairs of the East, there was nothing to prevent the acceptance of that offer by any one of them.

AN EFFLUVIUM.—Every day brings additional evidence of the failure of the "common" school system of Upper Canada, and even its most ardent champions are compelled to adopt its opposite, or contradictory, that is to say the "separate" school system. Conscientious scruples interfere to prevent the education in common of Catholic and Protestant children; social scruples, or prejudices, render impossible the education in common of the children of well-to-do parents, and the Arabs of the streets; and a third cause has now been discovered, and set forth by the Board of School Trustees of the city of London for allowing, nay enforcing 'separate' schools. This cause, which has at last converted such an enlightened body to the separate system which they have so long opposed is, as our readers may well suppose, very serious indeed; it is, in fact, nothing else than an *effluvium*, or not to put too fine a point on it, what the vulgar call 'a stink.'—There is indeed a 'stink' in the London common schools, in more senses than one.

The particulars of this affair are given by the *Toronto Leader*, whose article on the subject, and comments upon the action of the Board of School Trustees we lay before our readers:—

THE COLORED POPULATION AND THE COMMON SCHOOLS.—The Board of School Trustees of the neighboring city of London is the first to take up a subject which has attracted more or less attention in different parts of the Province—the mingling together of colored and white children in the Common Schools. The Board has not acted hastily in the matter. The subject has been under consideration for several months; and it is only within the last few days that the Board came to a final determination. Their report is one which does them credit. It goes over the whole question, suggests difficulties, and meets objections in a way which shows that they have not acted in a hasty manner or in an ungenerous spirit; but, on the contrary, that they have brought a careful study, and calm deliberation to bear upon the various points which came before them. As the subject is one of provincial importance, we shall state as briefly as possible the views taken by the Board, and the recommendations they make in their report.

Let it be premised that the number of colored children of school age in London is 96. Of these 50 attended school on an average during the past year, and as many as 80 attended at various times. It is upon such data as this that the Board had to work. They set out by stating that a feeling exists in the community that, from climatic reasons or organic causes, there is a repugnance in the minds of the white population to a close or intimate relation between their children and those of colored parents. The children themselves sympathize in this feeling or prejudice, whichever one may wish to call it; and the result is not unfrequently a bandying of offensive epithets, embittered acrimonious feelings, and juvenile quarrels. In these petty disputes the parents frequently take part, complaints are made, and will continue to be made by both parties, that their children have been insulted; and by the colored parents, that theirs have been harshly and perhaps unjustly treated. The Board then touch upon another point, which they think a false delicacy should not prevent them from noticing; and this is, that during the summer months an 'effluvium' arises from these children, which is highly offensive to many of the children, and still more so to many of the teachers. Then, there is naturally a want of sympathy between the colored children and the teachers. It is possible that the teachers endeavor to avoid the appearance of acting toward one scholar in a different manner from another; but there is nevertheless a want of sympathy, to use no harsher term, between the white teacher and the colored child, which the latter, with the natural shrewdness of its race, is not slow to perceive. This feeling of estrangement between teacher and scholar, the Board think cannot be the best means of elevating the negro; as the jealousy called into play in childhood must result in mutual dislike in later years. When educated apart, they will