

THE TRUE WITNESS

AND  
CATHOLIC CHRONICLE,  
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The True Witness.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, OCT. 23, 1857.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

There is still much speculation, and nothing positive, as to the results of the meeting at Stuttgart betwixt the Emperors; but it is hinted that the excuse of sickness set up for the Empress of Russia—some say as a pretence for avoiding an interview with the Empress Eugenie—has been duly appreciated by Louis Napoleon. At all events there seem no grounds for suspecting any hostile feelings on the part of either Sovereign towards Great Britain; whilst from several remarkable articles published in the *Bee*, a Russian organ supposed to express the sentiments of the Czar, it is evidently the desire at St. Petersburg to keep on good terms with St. James'. The *Bee* expressly disclaims all sympathy on the part of the Russian Government with the mutinous Sepoys, and denies that the overthrow of the British Indian Empire would be hailed with satisfaction by those to whose sentiments it professes to give utterance.

The labors of the Belfast Commissioners have at last come to an end, without however bringing forth anything of practical utility. One conclusion has nevertheless forced itself upon the minds of all parties—that Orangeism is an unmitigated curse, and a bar to the peace and prosperity of Ireland. "It is now plain"—sums up the *Northern Whig*—"that we have no chance of peace in Ireland on any condition short of Orangeism being placed in the same category as Ribandism;" and the same journal ridicules as worse than useless, all Government inquiries "if it is not prepared rigidly to revise the magistracy, erase the name of every individual that has any connexion with an Orange lodge, and for the future decline to confer such privileges on any gentleman who does not give a solemn pledge never to belong to, act with, or patronise any such society." Thus it would appear that in Ireland men of all parties, Protestants as well as Catholics, are waking up to a sense of the gross impropriety of extending support to a society which, wherever it has been allowed to raise its foul head, has never ceased to be a source of discord and bloodshed.

The stinginess and continued injustice of the British Government towards its Catholic soldiers by refusing to their clergy the funds necessary for defraying their travelling expenses, and by withholding all securities for the proper education of Catholic children, are serious obstacles to the efforts of the recruiting sergeant. Catholics will not enlist, and should not enlist, until their moderate demands be complied with, and the Catholic priest be placed, in so far as pay and allowances are concerned, on an equality with the Protestant minister. The gross injustice of which the children of the brave Catholic soldiers who fell in the Crimea, have been the victims, through the partial administration of the "Patriotic Fund," has been well shown up by His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin, in a letter by him addressed to the Reverend Dr. Yore. Of the above named Fund to which Catholics contributed, not one penny had been given for the education of Catholic children. These facts are fresh in the memories of the Catholics of Ireland, and are certainly not of a nature to induce them to come forward very zealously in defence of a Government which has treated them so scurvily. The *exodus* still continues, and according to the *Limerick Reporter*, "the people are flying out of the country in myriads." In England the recruiting sergeant is driving a somewhat brisker trade, than is the case on the other side of the Channel. The standard of height has been reduced for the line, and active measures are being taken for recruiting the army; a further body of 5,000 is ordered to be held in readiness for embarkation for India, and 10,000 more of the Militia are to be embodied, giving an actual Militia force of 25,000 men. By the end of the year, it is expected that there will be in India a European force of 85,000 men; but to fill up the gaps which battle and sickness will cause in this vast body will tax the strength of the British Empire to the utmost.

The tales of Sepoy atrocity are beginning to pall upon the ear, from their loathsome monotony. It is however some consolation to know that we must be near an end of the massacre, seeing that, except at Lucknow, there are few more women or children to be massacred. The last named place was, at last date, sore pressed by Nena Sahib, with a force under him variously estimated at from 30,000 to 50,000 men. The place still held out, and its brave garrison had profited by the

consternation into which the besiegers were thrown by the advance of Gen. Havelock and his gallant band, to increase their stock of provisions. The greatest anxiety however is still felt for the fate of its defenders, as at the present moment it seems to be impossible to give them any effective assistance from without. From before Delhi the news is more cheering. The health of the troops was better, the weather was improving, and reinforcements with some heavy siege artillery were arriving. Inside the doomed city the Sepoys were said to be quarrelling with one another, and the old grudge of the Moslem to the Hindoo was again manifesting itself, amongst the besieged. This, added to the blowing up of a magazine, and the scarcity of ammunition, had depressed their spirits, and revived those of their assailants, who were again discussing the chances of an attack during the month of August.

From other parts of the country the tidings are less favorable. A mutinous spirit has in one or two instances manifested itself amongst the soldiers of the Madras Presidency; and the Bombay army certainly cannot be relied upon. We hear too of risings in the Southern Provinces, and of a general uneasiness amongst the native population. There may be exaggeration, but it is more likely that the ugliest features of the case have been carefully concealed, and that unless the mutiny of the troops be speedily repressed in Bengal, we shall have the whole of India in arms against us. All depends upon the speedy arrival of the reinforcements now on their way. These landed, the reconquest of India will be an easy matter; the difficulty will be to keep it when reconquered. "*Hic labor, hoc opus est.*"

Assailed as we are on all sides, and by so many enemies, a controversy of a hostile character betwixt Catholic journalists is always to be deprecated; more especially when—as is the case with the *Toronto Mirror* and *TRUE WITNESS*—there is but little essential difference betwixt them. It is then, not with any design of prolonging such a controversy with our cotemporary, that we reply to his article of the 16th inst.; but in the hopes that a few words of explanation may suffice to put an end at once, and for ever, to all semblance even of discord betwixt those whom duty and interest should alike prompt to keep on friendly terms.

We therefore assure the *Mirror* that we have never listened "to the suggestions of common enemies" or allowed ourselves "to be swayed by the voice of those who are hostile alike to both journals;" neither are we conscious of having deserved the reproach of being "querulous," in our controversy with the *Mirror* on a subject in which our honor as Catholics is at stake. We thought—we hope that we may have been mistaken in so thinking—that in a previous article the *Mirror* had betrayed a disposition to palliate, if not defend, the unmentionable atrocities of the mutinous Sepoys, by representing them as little, if anything, worse than the military executions inflicted upon the mutineers by the British troops. This seemed to us highly unjust, and impolitic. Unjust, towards the brave men now fighting the battles of Great Britain in India, and who, as simple soldiers doing their duty, are not responsible for the gross misrule of the East India Company; and impolitic, as tending to foster the erroneous impression that Catholics generally sympathise with the Sepoys, and are indifferent to the brutalities exercised towards their fellow-countrywomen, and in many cases, their co-religionists, in the East. This accusation is constantly urged against us by Protestants; it is therefore, to say the least, very foolish and very mischievous for Catholic journalists to say or do anything calculated to impress the Protestant mind with a firm conviction of the truth of a charge, whose falsity is clearly manifested by the admirable Pastoral of His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, which we publish in another column; and which we have no doubt our Catholic cotemporary will hasten to lay before his readers.

In that document, so deserving of the respect of every true son of the Church, the Cardinal invokes "*the God of battles to arise, and scatter his enemies, the enemies of His name, the enemies of His faith, the enemies of His very unwritten law, the law of humanity, inscribed in every heart.*" Now assuredly, what the Church bids us pray for, that we should in our inmost hearts desire; and therefore it is clear that, if the Cardinal's Pastoral be not a mere empty verbiage, meaning nothing, we, Catholics, should earnestly desire the discomfiture of the Sepoys, and the triumph of British arms; and from the terms in which the Pastoral speaks of the Sepoys, as "*enemies of God—of His faith—and of the law of humanity,*" it is evident that the Cardinal at all events—a high authority with Catholics, subjects of the British Crown—does not believe the cause of the Sepoys to be a just one, or one to which the Christian can wish success. To the sentiments so nobly expressed by the head of the English Episcopacy, we have feebly and in our humble sphere, endeavored to give utterance.

In other respects we see, not that there is

much, if any difference of opinion betwixt the *Mirror* and the *TRUE WITNESS*. We both admit and condemn the wrongs perpetrated by, or at all events in the name, and with the sanction of—the East India Company on the native races of India; only we contend, that it is an exaggeration of British misrule, to assert that the use of torture was learnt from the English, and that the hellish cruelties of the Sepoys are not of Indian, but of British origin; and that it is unjust towards our brave soldiers in the East, to compare, even, the righteous military executions inflicted upon armed mutineers, with the cruel murders of women and children, which hitherto have been the chief feats of arms of the gallant Sepoys; who fleeing for the most part like scourged hounds before the soldier with a musket in his hands, and in the open field, have been bold only in the presence of helpless women, and unoffending babes.

As to attempting "to defend the blowing of men from the guns at Lucknow," we have done no such thing; as we consider that it needs no defence, being not only perfectly lawful, but under the circumstances, highly praiseworthy. It is indeed true as the *Mirror* says that the men thus treated "were not rebels in the ordinary acceptance of the term," and therefore not deserving of the ordinary treatment of rebels. These men were not rebels, but criminals of the blackest dye. They were not rebels, but soldiers who had mutined against their officers, and turned their arms against those whom they had voluntarily sworn to defend—against those who paid, fed, and clothed them. As mutineers therefore, and by the laws of every civilized nation, either in ancient or in modern times, they deserved death.

And that—not only as guilty of mutiny, the highest offence known to the military code to which they had of their own free will subjected themselves—but as guilty of crimes which in all civilised communities are punished with death. They had been guilty of murder, and murder is a capital crime in all countries; they had been guilty of rape, and rape also is in most countries a capital crime. The justice of punishing such infamous scoundrels with death therefore cannot be impugned, without calling in question the right of society to punish with death, the murderer, and the violator of female purity.

As to the mode of inflicting capital punishment—"blowing from guns"—we see not what objections can be raised to it on the score of humanity. That mode of inflicting capital punishment, is the most humane and the least barbarous, which most surely and speedily puts the sufferer out of pain. Now of all modes of execution, blowing from a gun is the surest and speediest. Death under such circumstances must be instantaneous, and attended with the minimum of physical suffering. It is also, according to the notions generally current amongst soldiers, less disgraceful, or morally painful, to be shot, or blown from a gun, than to be hung up by the neck like a dog; and therefore, under every aspect, we contend that that mode of inflicting death-punishment upon our mutinous soldiers was more humane, and less barbarous, than the hangings which in Canada, as well as in England, are occasionally inflicted upon criminals whom it would be a libel to compare even with the foul fiends who met their fate from the hands of Sir Henry Lawrence at Lucknow. Indeed, if one great object of capital punishment be to terrify by example, then must we admit that much judgment was displayed by the authorities in their selection of the peculiar mode of punishment which so deeply moves the indignation of the *Mirror*; for it combines a maximum of example well calculated to strike terror into the beholders, with a minimum of suffering to the individual culprit; and for our parts, we can only say that, though we have no strong predilection for either mode of death, if we were compelled to select between hanging—even with the advantages of a patent drop and the personal services of the accomplished Calcraft—and "blowing from a gun," we should without a moment's hesitation chose the latter, as less painful, and to the gentleman less degrading, though to the multitude perhaps more terrifying than the ordinary mode of execution. Our cotemporary will therefore see that we offer no apology for the "Lucknow executions;" believing as we do that they were not only lawful, but deserving of all commendation from those who admit that mutiny on the part of the soldier voluntarily enlisted, and murder and rape on the part of the simple citizen, are crimes which not merely may, but should always be punished with death.

But the *Mirror* denies that it is "a libel" to say that "both sides are massacring all they can lay hands on"—and here again we are at issue. The Sepoys "are massacring all native Europeans they can lay hands on—combatants, and non-combatants—Catholics and Protestants—men women and children—indiscriminately; but the British troops do not massacre all native Indians that they can lay hands on, and if they did they would justly merit the execration of all brave men. Here is the important distinction betwixt the conduct of the mutineers and that of the British troops, which we have endeavored, but it

would appear in vain, to impress upon our cotemporary; and it is because he will not recognise this distinction, that he has been guilty of "libel" upon the brave men, whose conduct, and not that of the East India Company, we have endeavored to exonerate from the odious imputations of the *Toronto Mirror*. It is true that "not a single mutineer taken alive is spared;" but, we should like to know, in what age, or by what nation, mutineers taken in arms against their officers, and during the raging of the mutiny, were "spared?" Death, we repeat, is the doom awarded by the laws of every civilized country to the mutineer; and by none are those laws more rigorously enforced than by those which boast loudest of their civil liberties. It is not many years since a young gentleman, midshipman on board of a Yankee man of war, was by his commanding officer tried by drum-head court-martial, and hung at the yard arm; and though the deceased had powerful friends—being if we mistake not a near relative of a high government official—the Lieutenant who hanged him, was by a Court-Martial honorably acquitted, whilst his conduct was generally applauded by his fellow-citizens. Now in this case there was far less excuse, because far less necessity, for such extreme rigor, than there is in the case of the Indian mutinies. No actual violence had been resorted to, not a drop of blood, in so far as we remember, had been spilt; and yet on the plea that military discipline, and the safety of the ship, required the example, the life of a young officer who, at most, had meditated mutiny, "was not spared;" and the general verdict of the people of the United States admitted the validity of that plea. There is not, we say it with confidence, such an instance of rigorous infliction of martial law on record in the annals of the British Army or Navy, and yet the United States are held up as in an especial manner, the land of liberty.

So far then from blaming the military authorities for inflicting the extreme penalty of the law upon "all mutineers they can lay hands on," we should deem their conduct exceedingly reprehensible if they acted otherwise, until the mutiny be suppressed. Then indeed, when the necessity for such severe measures shall have passed away, will it be time to listen to the voice of mercy; but whilst the conflict rages, and until the mutineers lay down their arms, there is no other course open, than that which is now being pursued. Mutineers, when captured, are not entitled to, and in no civilised community ever receive, the treatment of ordinary prisoners of war. They cannot be exchanged, for there are none with whom to exchange them—as the Sepoys put to death all of our people who fall into their hands; they cannot be released upon parole, because mutineers are men who, having once proved false to the most sacred engagements—engagements which even a Dugald Dalgetty respected—are for ever unworthy of being trusted. To set them at liberty, unconditionally, would be to send them back to swell the ranks of the foe; to detain them as prisoners, is, with our small body of troops, simply impossible, because we have not men to furnish the necessary guards and escorts. There remains then no other mode of dealing with them than that which has been adopted—that mode which the military code of every nation enjoins, and without which the discipline of an army can not be maintained. If the *Mirror* would but remember that in dealing with the Sepoys, we are dealing, not with "rebels in the ordinary acceptance of the term," but with our own hired soldiers, who have voluntarily enlisted in our service, and who therefore, by their own act, have transferred their allegiance to those against whom they are now in arms, and deliberately subjected themselves to our military code, he would see no reasons for complaining because the provisions of that code have been rigorously applied to them.

Were we disposed to be "querulous," we might complain of the injustice done us by the *Mirror*, in representing us as "whitewashing the iniquities of English misrule" in India, and seeking "to advance the rule of the East India Company." He knows that in so representing us, he has willfully, and without the shadow of an excuse, misrepresented us; he knows that, throughout the article at which he has taken offence, we have fully admitted the evils of British rule in India, and disclaimed all design of apologising for those evils; and he knows that we have spoken of the East India Company as more intent upon squeezing the rupees out of the unhappy ryots, than upon promoting their material or moral welfare. But we forbear—remembering that, as we have hitherto said nothing at which he should take offence, so should we carefully abstain from saying anything calculated to prolong an unpleasant controversy.

For, on all the other points touched upon by the *Mirror*, we fully agree with him. With him we agree in denouncing the massacre at Drogheda by Cromwell, as, at least, as atrocious as that of Cawnpore. In our eyes, as in his, Nena Sahib, brute though he be, compares favorably with Dutch Billy, the hero of Glencoe, or with "butcher" Cumberland, whose cruelties towards the gallant Highlanders, after the fatal

day of Culloden, have not been surpassed by the savage mutineers of Delhi and Meerut. Of the diabolical atrocities perpetrated upon the Catholic people of Ireland in '98, there can be but one opinion; and whilst, as British subjects, we blush with shame to think that such atrocities were committed in the name of a British Government, it is some consolation to reflect that they were at the time loudly and indignantly protested against by British gentlemen, and British officers—like General Sir Ralph Abercromby, who, as Commander-in-Chief, not being able to put a stop to those enormities, threw up his appointment with disgust. It is also but just to state that the worst of those enormities were the acts, not of British troops, but of the Hessian mercenaries, and of the Irish Protestant yeomanry; whose cruelty towards their Catholic fellow-countrymen, British officers, like Abercromby, witnessed with surprise and disgust, but were unable to prevent, so omnipotent were the Orangemen at the Castle of Dublin. This is admitted by an Irish Protestant, Sir Jonah Barrington, who, speaking of the Irish Protestant gentry of Wexford, remarks that—"they acted as if under the impression that burning every cottage, and torturing every cottager, were a meritorious proof of their faith and loyalty."

And this brings us to one great reason why no Irishman, worthy of the name, should manifest the slightest leaning towards the Sepoys, or directly or indirectly seek to institute any comparison betwixt them, and the brave, but unfortunate insurgents of '98. It is on record, to the eternal honor of those Irishmen—and on record by Sir Jonah Barrington, a political opponent—"as a singular fact that in all the ferocity of the conflict, the storming of towns and of villages, women were uniformly respected by the insurgents. Though numerous ladies fell occasionally into their power, they never experienced any incivility or misconduct."—*Rise and Fall of the Irish Nation*. We know of no people, either ancient or modern, of whom such honorable testimony can be given.—For the purity of her daughters, and the noble chivalry of her sons even in their moments of wildest ferocity, Ireland stands unrivalled. How then can the sons and daughters of that country sympathise with the filthy Sepoys, who spare not infancy in their fury, and in their brutal lusts regard not the honor of the sex?—how then can any Irishman pretend that there is any, the slightest, resemblance betwixt the cause of the mutineers, and that of the brave insurgents who uniformly respected the women of their enemies, even "in all the ferocity" of a most savage conflict? "Oh!"—would we say in conclusion to the *Mirror*—"if you really love your country, and honor the memory of her martyrs, do not insult her and slander them, by sympathising with wretches from whom the men of '98 would have recoiled with loathing. If you are a true Catholic Irishman, do not let it be suspected even that you are at heart a Sepoy."

THAT the people of Great Britain are a great people, a moral people, and essentially a religious people, is one of those facts which to doubt is sin, and to deny is rank blasphemy. That their Protestantism is the cause of the greatness, morality, and righteousness of the people of Great Britain is, of course, another fact of the same order, and constitutes perhaps the one article of faith of the Great Briton.

Some disagreeable truths will however persist in leaking out, which do seem to detract somewhat from the excellent character which Great Britons generally give of themselves. The rapid spread of Mormonism, for instance, amongst the people of England, Scotland, and Wales, is a cause of great concern to the *Times*; who, in an excess of candor, blurts out the unsavory truth, "that the majority of the Mormon community—Mr. Carvallo says nine-tenths—are English, Scotch, and Welsh." Startled at this unexpected, but conclusive refutation of the morality and righteousness of his Protestant fellow-countrymen and countrywomen, the *Times*, in piteous accents, exclaims—"How is this? Who is responsible for this? What have our orthodox parish priests been doing, and what have our orthodox Dissenting ministers been doing, that their own congregations have been the feeders of such an enormity as this?" Alas! our orthodox parish priests and orthodox Dissenting ministers have been busy for the last three centuries preaching the right of "private judgment" against the Catholic Church; and now their congregations assert the same right against "our orthodox parish priests, and our orthodox Dissenting ministers." The opinion, in fact, is gaining ground amongst the congregations, that Joe Smith was as much a man of God as Luther, and that the gospel of Brigham Young is as good an article as that furnished by the rival house of Calvin, John Knox & Co. The consequent loss of custom may be very painful to the keepers of the older heresy shop, but should not excite our surprise, or be looked upon as in any respect an abandonment of the fundamental principle of the great Protestant Reformation of the XVI. century. On the contrary; the simple fact, that Mor-