

The True Witness

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.  
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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23.

ECCLIASTICAL CALENDAR.  
DECEMBER—1864.

Friday, 23—FAST. Of the Peria.  
Saturday, 24—FAST. Christmas Eve.  
Sunday, 25—CHRISTMAS.  
Monday, 26—St. Stephen, Protomartyr.  
Tuesday, 27—St. John. Ev. Ap.  
Wednesday, 28—Holy Innocents.  
Thursday, 29—St. Thomas of Canterbury, B. M.  
The "Forty Hours" Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will commence as follows:—  
Friday, 23—Convent of Ste. Therese.  
Sunday, 25—Infant Jesus of Pointe aux Trembles.  
Tuesday, 27—Ste. Melanie.  
Thursday, 29—St. Constant.

NEWS OF THE WEEK

Our latest European dates are per *Hibernian* from Liverpool, 1st instant. The Continental news is quite unimportant, and we can find little of interest in the British items transmitted by telegraph. It seems that Lord Russell has replied to the Confederate Government, and that with his usual felicity he has replied in such a style as to give equal offence both to Northerners and to Southerners. Strict and impartial neutrality which he proposes as the policy of Her Majesty's Government, would be all very well were it not that it has constantly been violated in behalf of the North. True; we have nothing to do with the causes which led to the war between the States of New York, Massachusetts, Vermont and others, with the States of Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas; but unfortunately we have since the commencement of the war favored the former at the expense of the latter. Of this we had a signal instance in the case of the *Great Western*. This ship has been allowed to sail from Liverpool with a large body of Raiders raised in England by Federal agents with a view to making war upon the South—as the Law Officers of the Crown were unable to see sufficient grounds for legal proceedings; had the Raiders of the *Great Western*, however, been destined for the service of the Confederate States, the Law Officers of the Crown would no doubt have seen as in the case of the steam rams, abundance of grounds for taking legal action in the premises. "Strict and impartial neutrality" as interpreted by Lord Russell simply means full permission to the Northerners to obtain all munitions of war, and absolute prohibition to the Southerners. By this inconsistency, by this abject servility, the British Government has not mitigated one whit the feelings of intense hatred always entertained towards it by the Northerners; whilst it has deservedly earned the contempt of the Southerners for its hypocrisy, and their hatred because of the assistance which it has given to their enemies.

The discharge of the St. Alban Raiders has been the general topic of conversation during the past week. The decision of Judge Coursol has been severely criticised, and we are given to understand that it has been condemned by our Canadian Ministry. It puts us, we must admit it, in a painful and somewhat humiliating condition. If the law be as M. Coursol says it is, then have we failed to carry out the provisions of the Ashburton Treaty, for the surrender of criminals, and have given the Northern States a legitimate cause of complaint against us for negligence or disregard of Treaty obligations.—If on the other hand not the law itself, but the interpretation of that law by M. Coursol be defective, our neighbors are not without grounds for complaining that the law has been strained to their disadvantage. Not that we would insinuate anything against M. Coursol; his interpretation of the law may for all that has yet been shown to the contrary, be the correct interpretation; the counsel for the St. Alban's Bank insisted upon an immediate decision upon the points of law presented to him; and if that decision be as some pretend, erroneous, it was at worst an error of judgment. The giving up of the money in possession of the raiders, said to have been stolen, without authority from the Court, was however an act which we think cannot be defended, and the Chief of Police by whom the money was so given up, has tendered his resignation.

What has become of the raiders' meanwhile, nobody knows, but it seems that they have made their escape. We do not, we say, look upon all

this as matter for congratulation. We cannot approve of such acts as those of which the raiders stood accused; and though we doubt if their acts were criminal acts, in the sense of the Ashburton Treaty, and whether they did not rather constitute military and political, than civil offences—we cannot look upon the perpetrators as heroes worthy of the sympathy of gentlemen. We admire, we reverence General Lee as a patriot and a soldier pure and brave as Washington; but we have no great admiration for Lieut. Young, or his band of filibusters.

The Federals are of course much excited, but they aggravate the matter by assuming that the raiders stated from Canada on their predatory expedition. Of this no shadow of proof has yet been adduced; and, on the contrary, it seems that the whole affair had been got up, planned, and carried into execution on the other side of the frontier. In their excitement however our neighbors are not particular as to facts; and assuming, we say, that hostile expeditions are being prepared on Canadian soil, General Dix has issued orders for the invasion of Canada—orders however which the greater good sense and moderation of the Washington Government have considerably modified. Our authorities will, it is expected take precautions to prevent any violence on the frontier; and as the Legislature will meet in a few weeks, we trust that measures will soon be passed for giving full effect to the Ashburton Treaty, and for arming our Government with ample powers to prevent any infraction of our neutrality laws by aliens, whether from the South or from the North. It would be easier for us so to legislate were it not that even as we write, a raiding expedition against the Confederates has left the shores of England, with theftful knowledge, and connivance of the Imperial Government. Our neutrality is all on one side.

In the meantime it appears that the Confederates under General Hood have met with serious reverses, and that General Sherman has almost made himself master of Savannah. The cause of the Confederates has not looked so bad since the commencement of the war, as it does at the present moment.

We hasten to set the mind of our contemporary the *Kingston Whig* at rest, with respect to a matter about which he gives himself a deal of unnecessary trouble. We mean the ceremonies employed by the Catholic Church in the consecration or benediction of bells for the use of her sacred buildings. The distracted mental condition of our contemporary may be inferred from the following:—

"No churchman could possibly object to the consecration of the bells of a church, any more than to the consecration of the church. It is the appointment of godfathers and mothers, and the going through the ceremony of baptism that sticks in the crop of the *Echo*. Perhaps the *True Witness* will be for once ingenuous and explain the purport of this ceremony."

With much pleasure, goodmaster *Whig*. Neither "the ceremony of baptism," nor anything bearing the most remote analogy thereunto, is gone through with in the case of bells; and the term itself "baptism," as applied to the consecration or benediction of the latter, is utterly unknown to the Roman Catholic Church, in her liturgy, though as a form or vulgar figure of speech in certain localities, it is frequently used by the people. In the *Pontificale Romanum* however, which is the sole authority in the matter, and which contains the office, the ceremony is simply spoken of as the "Benediction of Bells;" and the "purport of the ceremony" is this: that all things animate or inanimate, employed in the service of God, from the corner stone, to the bells in the turrets of the church, should be solemnly consecrated and set apart to His service by a special benediction.

Our contemporary may be surprised at the lax use of the term "baptism;" but he should remember how much more loosely the same term is employed amongst Protestants, whom however we acquit of all intentional irreverence towards a Sacrament which many of them still retain in spite of their separation from the Catholic Church. The words to "baptize" to "christen" have to a great extent lost their strict sense in the Protestant vocabulary, and are vulgarly employed as synonyms of the verb "to name." Thus we read in the papers of a newly launched ship having been "baptized;" and a friend will tell us with the utmost gravity how he proposes to "christen" that new pointer pup of his, *Ponto*. Now assuredly because we read or hear such things, we are not so unjust as to suspect Protestants of going through the ceremony of "baptism" with ships, or of administering a sacrament to dogs. We recognise simply a *usus loquendi*, a laxity of speech which need not necessarily denote a contempt for religion, or the sacrilegious treatment of holy things.

Precisely so is it with the term "baptism" as loosely applied in some parts of the world to the ceremony which the Church herself styles simply "The Benediction of Bells." And for this laxity of speech this may be urged; that in one sense all washing may be termed "baptism"; and that the Church to signify that all things employed in the service of Her Divine Spouse should be pure, holy and of sweet savor, wash-

es, or sprinkles with holy water, anoints with oil and incenses, all material things by her employed in her sacred offices. This she does when she lays the corner stone of a church, when she consecrates that church and its several altars, and again when she blesses the bells which from its turrets are destined to summon her children to the solemn rites of religion.

As to the origin of the custom of naming what in French are called *sparrains* and *marraines*, to the bells about to be blessed, we confess ourselves profoundly ignorant. It is purely a local custom, and one of which no trace can be found in the only authority upon the matter, to wit, the *Pontificale Romanum*, which alone prescribes what forms or ceremonies are to be made use of in all the offices of the Church. It is a custom, in short, for which the Church is no more responsible than she is for the presence of Volunteer Corps in uniform, or the Firemen, at her religious ceremonies. As however the particular custom complained of by the *Whig* is not provided for by the standards of the Roman Catholic Church, it is one which has no religious significance or value whatsoever. Perhaps it may have originated in this manner: that it is customary when a bell is blessed or consecrated to assign to it a name in honor of some Saint; as is also done in the case of altars, and of the material building of the Church itself, which is very commonly named after some particular saint, as for instance St. George, or St. Andrew, or St. Patrick, or of some other saint in whose honor the church is named; and so, to the persons or persons who gave the bell, and to whom as donors was granted the right of determining by what name it should be styled, it became the custom in vulgar parlance to give the name *parrains* or *marraines* from a fancied analogy betwixt their position with regard to the bell, and that of Sponsors at a Baptism with regard to the child. We do not defend this lax use of language, or vulgar error, because it has nothing to do with the doctrine or discipline of the Church.

We trust that this explanation will set the mind of the *Whig* at rest: and that henceforward he will believe that the Church does not desecrate her own sacraments by administering them either to brutes or to inanimate objects. Into this strange error the *Whig* could not have fallen were it not that he knows not wherein the "ceremony of baptism" as he styles it, essentially consists, and what is the doctrine of the Catholic Church as to the object and sole legitimate use of baptism as a sacrament. A slight preliminary study of the Catechism would in a moment have solved all his scruples, and have spared us the trouble of writing, and our readers of wading, though these long explanations. In excuse for our prolixity we can only plead this: that even a *Whig* can ask in a minute, questions to which it may take us an hour to give a full answer.

We have before us the Annual Reports, as published in the *Montreal Witness*, of the *Grande Ligne*, and of the French Canadian Missionary Societies. The objects of both are the same, that is to say they both seek to persuade the poorer and more ignorant classes of French Canadians to renounce the Catholic Faith; but whether they have as yet agreed amongst themselves as to what is to be substituted in lieu thereof, we cannot pretend to say.—We shall content ourselves for the present by laying before our readers what have been the results, according to their own showing, of the labors of these two Societies during the year now drawing to a close.

We think that we may safely assume that, upon all occasions when they present themselves before the public with fresh demands for "more cash," and to render an account of their stewardship, the speakers, and office-bearers of the several proselytising societies "put," as the saying is, "the best leg foremost;" in other words they give the most glowing account of their successes, omit or smooth over as much as possible their failures, and suppress nothing that is calculated to promote thankfulness for the past, or to encourage lively hopes for the future. If this be the case, the several proselytising societies have indeed but little to boast of, and the Catholic Church has nothing to dread for her children from their efforts. Let us see first, what at the Annual Soiree of the "Ladies Grande Ligne Mission Association," the speakers had to say for themselves, what signs they adduced of the presence of the Lord with them, and of His blessing on their labors. We copy from the *Montreal Witness* of the 23rd Nov., and if we omit any item which our contemporary deems of importance, we will, upon his pointing out to us our error, hasten to rectify it.

The Report for the year was read by the Secretary a Rev. M. Lafleur. It contents are summed up by the *Witness*, and the subjoined is the result:—

"The Report—presented both cause of encouragement and incentive to increased efforts, not only in the way of pecuniary aid, but in the matter of the entrance of new laborers into the mission field which had now been cultivated during a quarter of a century, by this association."—*Witness*, 23rd November, 1864.

Condescending to particulars as to the res-

turns of that cultivation, the *Witness* informs us that:—

"Thirty members had during the past year been added to the Mission churches by profession of faith."

This is the sum total. During the course of the year, Thirty Catholics have been induced to renounce the faith!

The Report was of course the substantial dish, the *piece de resistance* of the evening; and from its flimsy, unsubstantial character we may judge of what flummery the side-dishes, or *extremes*, that is to say the speeches, were composed.

The first in order of these vapid *plats* was served up by a Rev. M. Normandeau, a *Grande Ligne* Missionary and a merry man withal; for these evangelical assemblages have their light, jocular, or comic speakers, to say the funny things and make the young ladies giggle, just as they must have their heavy solemn orators, portentous in mien, and unctuous of speech, who take the more serious parts, and who much perspiring, with much rolling of eyes, and with many fervent appeals to heaven, make the more elderly females of either sex, groan over those poor Popish souls for whom they entertain a tender compassion—oh, so tender. But to return to our Rev. Mr. Normandeau who does the low comedy business of the evening. He, we are told by the *Witness*:—

"After some pleasant observations remarked upon the vicissitudes which the mission had undergone, in the death of some of its former promoters or its desertion by others; but though they had lost some friends Montreal had always stood by them."

He also informed his enraptured audience,

1st "That an interesting work was going on at Quebec;

Though,—

"it might not be visible to every eye."

This is somewhat in the style of those precious humbugs the Davenport Brothers; they too do their best to persuade their audience, that an interesting work is going on in the boxes wherein they are tied up, though, it may not be visible to every eye seeing that they take the precaution to put out the gas. Like the Davenport Brothers, our funny friend the Rev. Mr. Normandeau, draws largely upon the faith, or shall we say credulity of hearers. Nor is this great but invisible work going on at Quebec the only thing for which to sing an "Oh be joyful!"—for:

"many of the people showed great eagerness to hear the Scriptures read?"

So that on the whole,—

"though the missionaries had many reasons to be humble—(very many no doubt)—yet they had none really to discourage them."

And as an instance of this he observed that,—

"He had recently visited Eli to be present at the organisation of a church of 30 members, seven of whom had been baptized on profession of their faith the previous day."

We are not told whether these seven were in whole, or in part, persons who had previously renounced the Catholic faith; or if so, what was the faith which they did not possess as Catholics, but upon profession of which they were admitted to baptism in that church of which our funny friend M. Normandeau is a chief pastor.

He was succeeded by the Rev. Dr. Wilkes, who made the following striking and original remarks:—

1st "That they were now sowing."

2nd "That the sowing part of the process was done with weeping."

3rd "That they that sowed in tears should reap in joy."

Upon the whole he guessed that though the Mission was "no great shakes" as yet, it was going to do great things in a generation or two, and that "all would eventually be for the glory of God."

Then a collection was taken up; then the saints victualled and liquored promiscuously, or as the *Witness* expresses it, "refreshment was partaken of;" for particulars as to eating and drinking see Report of Brick Lane Branch of Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association.

Having filled themselves with good things, and being refreshed, Mr. John Dougall stood up, and modestly—as becometh a well informed and highly educated man—expressed his astonishment at the intelligence of the converts of the *Grande Ligne* Mission, at which he was the more astonished "as he had been so much accustomed to the ignorance on divine things by the French Canadians." A Rev. Mr. Alexander advocated the work of the mission on political grounds, and in view of Confederation, as the apostate Catholic will always be a traitor to his nationality.—Mr. D. P. James expressed a "belief that God would yet do great things;" Mr. J. Milne told his friends not to be discouraged; a Rev. Mr. Riedeau related "some of his experiences;" and the Rev. M. Lafleur drew a touching picture of the inpecuniosity of the Society—of the "crushing feeling sometimes experienced by the missionary" when begging from house to house; and in a vein of "mingled humor and eloquence" he took—Lord knows why—a hopeful view of the position. Then after a few more words from the Rev. Mr. Bonar, a little palmody, and the usual shawling and buttoning up, mingled with exclamations of "Oh my! what a gracious evening! Ain't he a sweet man? &c. &c., the meeting separated: when the Report of the French Canadian Mission-

ary Society is more meagre than that of the *Grand Ligne* Mission, but in revenge it abounds more in the backed conventionalities of the meeting house. The Society has distributed an immense amount of books, which no doubt may have done good to the paper makers, printers, book-binders, and to others of the trade, but which it does not appear has had any palpable effects on the recipients. Twelve Colporteurs and Catechists have been employed in the work, and these have "pounded the Word," besides conversing with families and groupes of people as opportunities presented themselves. A church has been built at Montreal, and at three other stations there are commodious places of worship. Over 100 pupils "of whom half were Romanists" have been received into the Society's Schools at Pointe aux Trembles, and "were hopefully indoctrinated with evangelical truth;" and the Report reckons that since its establishment in 1846, some 1,500 pupils or about 83 per annum, of whom most have renounced Catholicity have passed through the School. The harvest has not quite commenced indeed, but,

"the fields are white already to the harvest."

This novel announcement is followed by the financial part of the Report. From this it appears that the Society is some \$7,000 in debt, and that the sources of its income are drying up, owing to the war, and other causes which it would be tedious to narrate at length. The Report thus concludes:—

"An important crisis is taking place in the history of this Lower Province. The surest means to secure its prosperity, and the harmonious working of its political institutions, is to give the Gospel to our French Canadian fellow subjects. This inestimable boon, while rescuing them from the spiritual tyranny and soul-destroying errors of Romanism, will cement them with ourselves in the common faith as it is in Jesus, and harmonize those discordant elements of religion and race, which will otherwise render real union impossible, whatever constitutional changes may be introduced."

That certain political advantages to the Anglo-Saxon population might accrue from the destruction of Popery and French Canadian nationality we will for the sake of argument admit; but we will take the liberty of asking of the *Witness* one question, to which however we do not expect that he or any of his brethren will return a straight forward answer. It is this:

You talk of the "soul-destroying errors of Romanism." Do you then really believe that every man who lives and dies, firmly believing all that the Roman Catholic Church believes and teaches, and who to the utmost of his ability, and with a humble reliance on divine aid, faithfully obeys all her precepts, is damned? that his soul is destroyed? If you believe this, be so good as to tell us what it is in his faith or practice that inevitably damns him; if you do not believe it, do you not think, good Mr. Protestant Missionary to the Romanists who may be saved by a faithful adherence to their own religion, that you are yourself a bit of a humbug? We pause for a reply.

THE POINT OF LAW.—The grounds upon which Judge Coursol ordered the liberation of the St. Alban Raiders were these, that he had no legal jurisdiction in the premises; the warrant for the arrest of the accused not having been signed by the proper authorities, according to the terms of the Imperial Act for giving effect to the provisions of the Ashburton Treaty—which Act the Judge decided was virtually in force in Canada.

The said Imperial Act may be superseded by a Colonial Act for the same purpose, on certain conditions—to wit. That the Colonial Act provide the machinery requisite for giving effect to the Ashburton Treaty; that it receive the Royal Assent; and that an "Order in Council" suspending the provisions of the Imperial Act be published.

The Act 12th Vict. fulfilled all these conditions: and so long as it remained in force—but no longer—the provisions of the Imperial Act were suspended, by virtue of a special "Order in Council."

The Act 24th Vict. repealed the Act 12th Vict., but contained also provisions for carrying out the intentions of the Ashburton Treaty. This Act received the assent of the Governor April 1861, but did not receive the Royal Assent until the 11th October of the same year. No "Order in Council" was published, however, again suspending the provisions of the Imperial Act, which had again revived, or come into force, in virtue of the repeal of the 12th Vict. by the 24th Vict. In default of this publication of the "Order in Council" suspending in so far as Canada is concerned the provisions of the Imperial Act, Judge Coursol decided that the first named Act was still in force, and that consequently the jurisdiction intended to be conferred upon him by the 24th Vict. was inchoate.

We do not presume to criticise the legal merits of the Judge's decision, as we are not lawyers; but we have no hesitation in saying that the honorable antecedents of the learned gentleman are a sufficient refutation of the vile insinuations which a section of the Yankee press, on both side of the Lines, have seen fit to throw out against him. He may have erred in judgment; but his integrity is beyond the reach of the shafts of his assailants.