

The True Witness.

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

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MONTREAL, FRIDAY, APRIL 20.

ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR.

APRIL—1866.

Friday, 20—Of the Feria.
Saturday, 21—St. Anselm, B. D.
Sunday, 22—Third after Easter. Patronage of St. Joseph.
Monday, 23—St. George, M.
Tuesday, 24—St. Fidelis de Sig., B. M.
Wednesday, 25—St. MARK, Ev.
Thursday, 26—SS. Cletus and Marcellus, P. M.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

The report of a threatened raid of Fenian filibusters upon Canada and the other British North American Provinces, and of the consequent vigorous action of the authorities on this side of the Atlantic, has excited much interest in England; and we may expect that soon after the opening of the navigation a considerable addition will be made to the military and naval defences of the menaced Provinces. Several gun-boats are being fitted out for the St. Lawrence.

In Ireland the Fenian excitement has greatly subsided. A few, but a very few arrests are made occasionally; and the rush of intending emigrants to the sea ports, to take shipping for the United States and Australia, is a strong proof that an armed insurrection is no longer seriously contemplated.

Trouble seems to be brewing on the Continent of Europe. France, which for about seventeen years has been without a Revolution, is becoming restive again under the stiff rule of Louis Napoleon, and is clamoring, not very loudly indeed as yet, for a relaxation of the system that he has imposed upon the country. This is but the first muttering of the storm; yet it may well be believed that if the Emperor despise the warning, his name may very soon be added to those of the other monarchs who of late years have retired from business. Queen Marie Antoinette, wife of Louis Philippe, died a few days ago at Claremont in the 84th year of her age. She was the daughter of Ferdinand, King of Naples, by Marie Caroline, who was an Austrian Archduchess, sister of the lovely Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, whom the Revolution murdered, and daughter of Maria Theresa of "moriamur pro rege nostro" memory.

War betwixt Austria and Prussia has not yet actually blazed out; and indeed the former must be aware that the moment hostilities commence, a Revolution, backed by the whole force that Victor Emmanuel can bring into play, will break out in Venetia. This may perhaps tend to induce the Emperor, whose troubles with Hungary are not quite assuaged as yet, to listen to any suggestion for the preservation of peace that European diplomacy can offer.

During the past week, there have been gatherings of Fenians towards Eastport, and menaces of an attack on New Brunswick. What may be the meaning of all these displays; whether they are intended as a blind, to conceal their hostile designs on some other point, or as a dodge for encouraging the Fenian excitement in the United States, and keeping up the profitable transfer of dollars from the pockets of poor servant girls to those of Messrs. Sweeney, Roberts, & Co., we cannot pretend to tell.

Murphy, the man who was arrested at Cornwall, with several others, on a charge of Fenianism, has undergone several preliminary examinations. As yet no proof of any overt treasonable acts on his part, or that of his companions, has been published, but we must give the Government credit for acting on good information. We may be pardoned, however, for expressing a doubt whether it be worth while expending good powder and shot upon such very small game. It gives them a fictitious importance, to which neither by their social position, nor by their capacity for evil, they are entitled. To have sent them across the frontier, with a glass of whiskey for going, and hint of something else should they ever return, would have been about the best way of dealing with these silly creatures. It is a pity to make martyrs of them.

Another person calling himself Lieut. Col. Wheeler, from the United States, has also been

arrested. He is said to be a respectable looking man, very different altogether in his appearance from Murphy, Sweeney, and the Canadian prisoners. On him were found a commission from Sweeney to raise a Fenian regiment, and other papers.

The United States Government has at last, so we are informed by telegram, determined to take steps to prevent any infractions of its neutrality laws. If so the Fenian game is played out, for it is only the firm belief amongst the Fenians, both on this Continent and in Ireland, that the United States Government encourages the projected raids upon the British North American Provinces, that sustains the hopes and courage of the filibusters. Jefferson Davis, ex-President of the Confederate States is, we are told, about to be brought to trial on the charge of high treason, before the Circuit Court in Richmond, next month. Negotiations are on foot for a renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty, and an amicable arrangement of the Fishery question.

From the Lower Provinces the statements as to the sentiments of the people with regard to the Quebec scheme of Union are still very confused, but the friends of that measure in Canada are confident that it is gaining ground in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Perhaps a measure less highly centralising, and one leaving to each separate Province more control over its internal affairs, than that agreed upon at Quebec, might find favor with a majority of the people in the maritime Provinces: but they do not even yet seem inclined to adopt a Union, of which the advantages appear to them very uncertain and remote, the evils, immediate and indubitable.

The mortality on board of the *England* is said to be on the decrease. One hundred and seventy persons are said to have already perished from a disease malignant as plague, and which has actually assumed many of the characteristics of plague. It is to be hoped in the interests of humanity that the owners of the vessel may be tried for murder; for to their infamous conduct in packing upwards of 1,200 persons in the hold of a vessel which would have been over-crowded with one half of the number, the out break of pestilence, and consequent destruction of human life, are clearly attributable. The occasional hanging of the owner, or master of an emigrant ship, *pour encourager les autres*, would have a very beneficial effect, and would be a great boon to emigrants.

We are happy to have it in our power to record a slight out-break—a very slight one indeed—of activity on the part of our civic authorities. Not only have some of the carcasses of the dead dogs, dead pigs, and other defunct animals with which the streets and vacant lots are usually infested, been removed, but several of the streets have been scraped, and the long accumulating filth has actually been carted away, instead of being merely gathered into heaps for the first strong breeze of wind to scatter abroad again. Still, until all the slaughter-houses and kindred abominations shall have been banished from the City; until all the stinking piggeries with which many districts are still polluted, shall have been cleared out, nothing of any importance can be said to have been accomplished. Two Health officers, with a salary of £200 apiece, have been appointed: of these one is Dr. Girdwood, the other Dr. Rottot, and we expect good things from the intelligence and activity of these officers. Their functions are to expire in July, but will we hope, be renewed, for not before the end of the warm weather will the necessity for their services be at an end.

No matter what the language of Mr. Seward to Sir Frederick Bruce, when replying to the representations of the latter as to the apparent countenance given, by the United States government to the Fenian organisation; no matter what the real intentions and feelings of that government, of this there can be no doubt, that the quiescence of that government is accepted by the Fenians themselves as an act of hostility towards Great Britain; and is looked upon by them as a violation of the laws of neutrality which all other nations, calling themselves civilised, are in the habit of observing and enforcing. This we say, in the view of the case taken by the friends of the U. States in Ireland; and it is therefore very pardonable if Her Majesty's loyal subjects in the Colonies, should have taken precisely the same view. Both may have been wrong; but it is strange indeed, if with no prejudices in common, nothing in common to warp or bias the judgment, both arguing from the same premises should both have come to the same erroneous conclusion.

As an instance of our meaning we will cite the language of the *Dublin Irishman*, a Fenian organ, and a great admirer of the Northern States, of the 31st ult. upon this subject

"Nothing would content them"—the people of the Northern States—"more than Mr. Seward's innocent little scheme of assuaging the discontents and dissensions at home by plunging into a 'foreign war.'"

"This explains why the Fenian Society has such full swing in the United States. Let us confess it, that in no other country in the world would such an organisation be possible."

This, be it remembered, is meant not for a re-

proach, but for a compliment from the Fenian paper, for it adds:—

"And this shows the vast power, and insouciance of the Americans."

And it adds:—

"If such an organisation, sworn to deadly hostility to England were attempted in France or Austria, it would be suppressed in an hour."

Which no doubt is true; for no European nation, not being openly at war, would for one hour tolerate within its jurisdiction such an organisation against a neighbor as that which, without interruption of any kind from the authorities, has openly and ostentatiously been carried on for some years past in the Northern States, against Great Britain and her North American Provinces. "Accordingly," concludes the *Dublin Irishman*—

"half a million of Irishmen are allowed to organise themselves into a military association, with the most hostile intent openly proclaimed against England. They are suffered to raise large sums of money, and openly purchase munitions of war. Yea, they actually issue bonds to raise a loan in the States, as if they were an independent nation. A section of them proclaim their intention of invading and 'annexing' Canada, and make preparations according. . . . These men hold interviews with the President, and are kindly received."

Now if from these data—coupled with the fact that the organisation itself, the armaments, the raising money and men, the issuing bonds and collecting munitions of war, are all in flagrant violation of the express provisions of the municipal laws of the United States—a journal most favorable to the government of that country, most anxious to represent it and all its acts in a favorable light, arrives at conclusions so discreditable to its good faith, it is not strange if, from the same data, others arrive at the same conclusion; even if that conclusion, be, as we hope it may be, erroneous. In short, we contend that it is clear from the above given extracts from the *Dublin Irishman*, that to attribute to the U. States Government connivance with, and approval of, the Fenian military organisation, and its hostile designs upon Canada and New Brunswick, by no means implies prejudice against that government: since its friends, and most enthusiastic admirers are guilty of the same error, if error it be.

BRECHES' POCKET CONSTITUTIONS.—The intellectual calibre, and political fitness of the Fenian leaders in the U. States for the work of revolutionising and regenerating Ireland, may be estimated from the language of the *Irish People* of New York, the ablest organ of the party.—The writer argues that, because England has no written Constitution, such as the soul of a Sieyès loved, a Constitution which a man may fold up, and carry about with him in his breeches' pockets, therefore England has no constitution at all.—Incredible as it may appear that such balderdash could be published in the intelligent nineteenth century, by any one above the grade of a young school boy, yet it is a fact. Here are the very words:—

"England has no written constitution, and therefore no fixed or certain supreme law whatever, and consequently she has no constitution in reality at all."

Remembering that the most common and the best founded charge against England is, her almost slavish adherence to law, and to fixed customs, and her horror of, some call it prejudice against, innovation; remembering the extreme difficulty there is in effecting any change in the laws and customs of a country which delights in precedent, and cannot without supreme effort, be induced to move one inch out of the ancient ruts, this charge against her, that she has no "fixed or certain supreme law," has the merit of novelty, if of nothing else. Why the remark, or almost the complaint of foreigners visiting England, especially of foreigners from the U. States, is that the customs, laws and manners of the first named are stereotyped: and the critic invariably concludes with contrasting English rigidity, adherence to old forms, and old laws, and old customs, because they are old, because there are precedents for them, with the mobility, and as it were the plasticity of form, laws, and customs in the U. States.

True: England has no written constitution, thank God for it! and it is in this respect that she enjoys one great advantage over many other countries which have fallen a prey to constitution-mongers, and constitution-tinkers. The greater part, by far the better and more important part of the Constitution of the U. States, that to which they are indebted for all that is good in their political life, is essentially an "unwritten constitution": consisting of the "common law" of England, which the founders of the several States brought with them as their Palladium across the Atlantic. What of "written constitution" the U. States possessed has been torn to shreds, and scattered to the four winds of heaven in the late civil conflict: that only which was "unwritten remains," and alone promises them any defence against that democratic absolutism with which they are menaced: for all absolutism is based upon, and has its roots in democracy.

Elsewhere the writer in the *Irish People*, who has apparently been stuffing himself with *Jean Jacques*, and other unwholesome trash which he is not able to digest, and which brings on consequently mere flatulency very distressing to witness, defines a Constitution as "a kind of

compact between peoples, and those in authority," and asks, why in the case of England the terms of that compact have not been written out and defined? There is but this one answer to such a silly question: That no such compact has been entered into: and that all that a written constitution, at its best, can do, is to take note of, inventory, and set down as in a catalogue, the relations which do actually exist betwixt governors and governed, and mutually, betwixt the several members of the political organism called people. These relations are not created by the constitution, but do themselves determine the character of the Constitution; and every attempt that has ever yet been made to reverse this order, and to determine these relations by means of a written constitution, has resulted in revolution, anarchy, and absolutism; the three stages through which all nations must pass when they break with their past, and attempt to create a new political life for themselves, by means of a "written Constitution."

The chief object we have in noticing the crudities or flatulencies of the chief Fenian organ in America, is to show how completely the leaders of that organisation are imbued with the shallow but dangerous principles of the men of the first French Revolution. This is more than accidental: and though we are apt to flatter ourselves that, so great is the intellectual progress of the age, there is no danger that the anti-social, and anti-Christian sophisms which found credence in the latter half of the eighteenth century shall ever again find acceptance with the public, it may well turn out that our boastings are premature, and our confidence misplaced. When there are to be found men silly enough, and so regardless of the facts of history as to teach that political salvation is to be found in written Constitutions, and that these Constitutions can be made, it is to be feared that there plenty of others weak enough, and silly enough, to give ear to those teachings, and prepared to try and reduce them to practice.

PRECARIOUS CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY.—The country, the constitution of Great Britain must be indeed in a "perilous" state, if the statements of the old women in the House of Commons, whose business it is to watch over the interests of the Holy Protestant Faith, may be relied upon. Repeat a few insulting oaths, against the Catholic faith; allow Papists to take their seats in Parliament, without having been first subjected to an insulting ordeal—and the settlement of the country, so we are assured by our zealous champions of the Reformation, will be destroyed. So when, the other day, in the House of Commons, Sir C. O'Loughlin moved the first reading of a Bill for abolishing certain blasphemous and mendacious oaths respecting the Catholic doctrines of the Real Presence, the Mass, and the Invocation of Saints, and to render it unnecessary to take these wicked oaths as a qualification for the exercise of certain civil functions, a tremulous and easily alarmed gentleman, a Mr. Ker, started up in intense alarm, to oppose the motion, as threatening the stability of the British Constitution, and as the harbinger of death to that noble, but ill-used animal the British Lion. "If," he urged in a paroxysm of terror, "if the Lord Chancellor was to be freed from the obligation of taking the oath, he did not know what was to become of the settlement of the country." Poor Mr. Ker! We wonder whether he be fat and able to sleep o' nights; surely he cannot relish his food, or take any delight in his wine after dinner, when he deems his country so close to political destruction, and national annihilation; when in his eyes all that interposes betwixt England, and ruin, is an oath against Transubstantiation and the Sacrifice of the Mass, taken by the Lord Chancellor. Poor man, he is greatly to be pitied as a political hypochondriac!

CLERICAL CHANGES.—The Rev. J. Michel has been appointed Pastor of Adala by His Lordship the Bishop of Toronto, in room of the late lamented Revd. Father Synnot. Father Michel is a zealous and good priest, and has succeeded well in the missions over which he has had charge. The Rev. Kenneth A. Campbell succeeds Father Michel in Mara and Orillia.—*Freeman*.

DEATH OF GRAND VICAR MOUSSEAU.—Our French contemporaries notice with regret the death on Saturday last week of Grand Vicar Mousseau, formerly Cure of Joliette. The deceased had retired some years ago to St. Joseph's Hospital, Montreal. He was 79 years of age, having entered the Order of Priesthood in 1814.

DEATH OF THE CURE OF THE ISLAND OF ORLEANS.—The Quebec papers announce the death, on the 5th inst., of M. l'abbé Thomas Ferruce des Troisrains dit Picard, Cure of St. Francois, of the Island of Orleans. He was born Jan. 12, 1796, and ordained Priest in 1819. He was Vicar of St. Hyacinthe, and was afterwards sent as Missionary to the Red River. On his return in 1827 he became Cure of St. Urbain, where he remained six years. In 1833 he was transferred to St. Germain de Rimouski. Since 1850 he had charge of the Parish of St. Francois.

GREAT TRIUMPH OF PROTESTANTISM IN ITALY.—The evangelicals are in raptures.—Italy is in a fair way of becoming a very land of Gospel privileges. Popery is utterly discomfited, and the "man of sin" is tottering on the brink of the grave. So Exeter Hall prepares itself to sing *Te Deum* in its way, and in its own version of the Ambrosian hymn; which, however might, we think, be addressed more appropriately to the other party. It might run, "*Te diabolum*," or "*te Belial*," or "*te Satanaz*," any way in short except "*Te Deum*."

But what is all this shouting about? some will ask. What great victory has the evangelical cause in Italy gained, that its friends in England should be going on at this rate, raising their shouts of "*lo Paan*," and carrying on, generally, regardless of expense? Well 'tis no great matter after all, if we come to consider it, nor is it by any means without a precedent. The fact is simply this: That, according to the Italian papers, a frail nun named Maria Pisani, has violated her vows of chastity, and acted foolishly. She has moreover, and herein lies the glory of the victory, made public profession of her weakness and her shame, by making appearance before a Civil Court; from which very competent tribunal she has obtained release from her oaths of chastity, and permission to cohabit with a barrister, for whose embraces she has abandoned her profession, and renounced her glorious privileges as the allied spouse of Christ.—This is the whole story—a little perjury and a little impurity; this is all; but by the evangelical world it is hailed as one of the most gratifying symptoms that has as yet occurred of the progress of Protestantism in Italy. Perhaps it is.

It is asserted that Mr. George Brown is about to apply to Parliament, at its next Session, for an act of incorporation for the *Globe* newspaper, his organ: hereupon the *Courier du Canada* makes some very pertinent remarks, strongly opposing, and calling upon Catholics to oppose, the demand.

The grounds assigned by our excellent Quebec contemporary for its opposition are these:—That the *Globe* has ever been the fanatical journal *par excellence*; "that since its beginning it has never missed an opportunity to outrage Catholics, and to throw insults in their teeth; and that its political programme has always been the annihilation of the French race; its religious programme, the destruction of the Catholic religion."

We need scarcely add that we altogether coincide with the *Courier du Canada* in its estimate of Mr. George Brown and the *Globe*. The man has always been, ever is, and ever will be the enemy, of French Canadians, and the Catholic Church. Hence his incessant agitation for Representation by Population, as a means to his end, to wit, the gratification of his national and religious antipathies; hence too his warm advocacy and support of the Quebec scheme of Union as a means for the same end, scarcely, if at all, less promising than Representation by Population, from which it differs mainly in name.—Any scheme of political reconstruction that is advocated by, or which finds favor in the eyes of George Brown, should for that simple reason, and without further inquiry, be looked upon with suspicion, by every friend to the French race, and French nationality; by every one who is sincerely attached to the Church which Mr. Geo. Brown hates.

The *Courier du Canada* insists strongly upon the inconsistency of which Mr. G. Brown is guilty, in that he who has hitherto always opposed the incorporation of Catholic bodies for purposes purely religious, charitable, and educational, should be himself, to-day, a claimant for an act of incorporation for a Protestant body exclusively political. We would not have Catholics imitate the dishonesty of Mr. G. Brown, or oppose his demand simply because he is an enemy; but because it is not wise, because it is not just to give to the *Globe* a position of superiority over other journals; and to augment by direct legislative action, and perpetuate, the political influence of a party paper, and moreover of the anti-Catholic party which it represents, and in whose name it speaks.

THE PEST SHIP.—The *England* steamer, whose advent at Halifax we announced last week with Cholera, had 1,200 passengers on board.—What the tonnage of this vessel may be we do not know; but this we know, that there is no merchant ship plying between Europe and this Continent with sufficient room for even half such a number of passengers as the *England* had on board. The poor creatures must have been packed like slaves in the hold of a slaver; and the wonder is, not that disease broke out amongst them, but that the disease did not assume the form of malignant plague. The owners and masters of the *England* should be indicted for wilful murder.

To comply with the request of some esteemed friends, we publish in an abridged form Earl Grey's speech in the House of Lords, on the state of Ireland.