



CONFESSION AS VIEWED BY MR. COPPÉE THE FRENCH WRITER AND BY THE EDITOR OF ONE OF OUR LOCAL NEWS-PAPERS.

One who calls himself an ex-Romish priest, but whom instead we have found to be an ex-convict from the Erie County Penitentiary, has of late been lecturing in the city of Winnipeg on the topic so cherished by birds of his own feather, viz.: "the priest, the woman and the confessional."

While this foaming slanderer of all that is most sacred in our Church is trying, in the vilest and most profane of language, to show the confessional box as a sink of iniquity and the Catholic priest as a monster of immorality, it may be refreshing for those who are still open to honest convictions to read the beautiful page written by Mr. Coppée, on this important subject of confession.

We give on another page a translation of the French writer's eulogy of the saving sacrament, and we invite the readers of the Review to show the article to their Protestant friends. Mr. Coppée, although one of the remarkable writers of our times, has not always been the practical Catholic that we find him today. But the grace of God made its way into his diseased heart and soon after was the penitent sinner found at the feet of a priest to unload the burdensome weight of his poor suffering soul. Behold what a contrast between the convert and the pervert! The one, Mr. Coppée, rising by the grace of God from the ditch of his iniquity to cast himself into the purifying laver of penance, has nothing too noble, too beautiful, to write in praise of sacramental confession; the other, on the contrary, from the loathsome prison of his depravity, where he still breathes hatred against every thing Catholic, has nothing but the vile and stinking twaddle of a most lewd heart to vomit forth before an audience of disgusted hearers.

This brings back to our mind what we had heard some months ago on the subject of the morality of the City of Winnipeg. Being a member of a committee of citizens called together to stay, if possible, the swelling threatening wave of immorality which is daily spreading destruction in the ranks of a certain class of our community, we had occasion to call upon the editor-in-chief of one of our leading local newspapers. As he was asked the granting of his endorsement of and hearty cooperation in the noble work just undertaken, here is the remark which he made to us: "Father, he said, you may be surprised at what I am going to tell you, but I have no hesitation to make the statement. Among the many things I admire in your Church, none commands my respect more than the practice of con-

fession. There the priest exercises over women in particular that holy and beneficent influence that will ensure to husbands loving and dutiful wives. Were that saving religious control more generally exercised, we would not have nearly so much to deplore that social evil which threatens the ruin of our community." The gentleman referred to, I need not say, is a staunch Protestant, but he is not loath to open his eyes to the amount of moral good accomplished by the priest in the sacred ministry of confession. And we defy any man of common sense and religious feeling to think otherwise. Unfortunately sacramental confession has been abolished amongst Protestants as being too much of a stumbling block in the free love way of such pious reformers as Luther, Henry VIII. and the like; so long as these shall have their followers so long shall the Catholic priest and the confessional have their bitter assailants.

POWER AND GRANDEUR OF THE CONFESSIONAL BY FRANÇOIS COPPÉE.

Translated for the Northwest Review.

Wretched one, who art staggering under the weight of a conscience burdened with impure and wicked remembrances, come and lay down all human respect. Thou hast not to fear that thou mayst inspire with horror or disgust the unknown, the anonymous one whom thou art to choose for a confidant. Moreover, to keep thy secret his lips are closed under the sacramental seal. He who listens to thee, from that little cell, will not even recognize thy countenance; he will not see thee blush. Speak! Confess to him all thy shameful deeds. He will answer thee only with paternal indulgence, to thee he will speak but words of mercy and forgiveness.

He will of course, exact that thou make amends for the evil thou hast done; but, if it be no longer possible to do so, he will be content with an outpouring of the heart, with a sincere repentance. Then will he enjoin upon thee as the sole and sweet punishment of thy crimes the perfuming of thy soul with beautiful prayers, and raising up his hand towards thy forehead, he will utter some few Latin words, and thou shalt depart from him consoled, absolved and feeling thy soul as light as if angelic wings were being added to it. "But, to enjoy all that," dost thou answer with a cry of anguish, "one must entertain no doubts as to the virtue of the sacrament, one must have faith." — "Aged child of the civilized world, is that after all so difficult? Dost thou not feel, seething in thee one single drop of the Christian blood which, for so many centuries back, has been flowing through the veins of thy people? Hearest thou not still

resounding the miraculous word which has healed the ancient world of its corruption and has overcome the ferocity of the barbarians? Hast thou not read and meditated upon the Gospel, the only book wherein there is an answer to all the pangs of the soul! Poor fellow! Heed not those who say to thee that faith is dead and that humanity got rid of all its past a century ago, that is, yesterday. In order to promulgate the new faith—granting that it be a well meant effort at improvement—France had to be covered with gibbets and Europe soaked with blood in long wars, and yet all this did not still the groans of those that suffer. Jesus Christ, on the contrary, in order to secure the triumph of his divine plan, has shed but his own blood, has willed to die the death of a criminal; and his work is still intact after nineteen hundred years; and wherever thou meetest men less wicked and less miserable, wherever hearts are beating for justice and goodness, lift up thine eyes, and thou shalt see outstretched above thee the memento which the Man-God has left of his passage amongst us, thou shalt see his sacred gibbet raised aloft.

For a long time had I been a poor sinner with a troubled soul, like thee, my brother! No more than thee was I a great culprit. But alone the hypocrite Pharisee has the impudence to say: "I am pure." And Joseph de Maistre is right: even the conscience of an honest man is something abominable. Like thee, therefore, was I most wretched and did I instinctively seek for a confidant full of clemency and tenderness. I have found him.

Do as I did. Open thy Gospel again and come back to the Cross. Divested of all pride, present thyself before the tribunal established by Jesus, wherein is seated a mercy that surpasseth even our most sublime dreams of justice. It was but yesterday that we stood amazed at the pity of those magistrates who excused a poor mother for having stolen a piece of bread for her child. The minister of God who waits for thee in the Confessional requires of thee on his part only a few tears to wash away all the stains of thy soul; for he holds his power of the Master of infinite goodness, of Him who on Calvary forgave the penitent thief and opened to him, over and above, the splendid path to heaven and to life everlasting.

UNFAMILIAR FACTS.

Spain produces more lead than all the other European countries put together. Its quicksilver mines at Almaden are remarkably rich, and, for many centuries supplied the whole world with mercury, but now those of New Almaden, in California, enter into successful competition with them. Spain was formerly the leading industrial country

of Europe, but long wars, violent revolutions and misgovernment by secret society emissaries have robbed the nation of most of its industrial energy and trading capital.

In the face of the general breakdown of the Spanish gunnery in the recent war it is curious to note that swords are still made at Toledo, in Spain, of as good quality as they were in the days when "a Toledo blade" was second only to "a Damascus Blade;" but the present Toledo manufacture employs less than a hundred hands.

It is a mistake to suppose that what are commonly called "The Great Lakes," i. e., Superior, Huron, Michigan, Erie and Ontario, are, each and all, the largest bodies of fresh water in the world. Lake Superior has, of course, an undisputed right to the first place; but, as will be seen from the subjoined table, the great African lake comes in between Superior and Huron; two African, one Russian and two Northern Canadian lakes intervene between Michigan and Erie, and one Northern Canadian lake between Erie and Ontario.

Lake Superior	32,000 square mis.
" Victoria Nyanza	26,500 " "
" Huron	23,000 " "
" Michigan	23,000 " "
" Tanganyika	15,000 " "
" Baikal	14,000 " "
" Nyassa	12,000 " "
" Winnipeg	8,500 " "
" Great Slave Lake	8,000 " "
" Erie	7,800 " "
" Great Bear Lake	7,500 " "
" Ontario	6,900 " "

The areas for Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake are an approximate but conservative estimate, which an accurate survey would probably increase. Lake Tanganyika is the longest lake in the world. In the rainy season Lake Chad, in the Soudan, has an area of perhaps 20,000 square miles; but in the dry season it is four or five times less and was therefore omitted from the foregoing table. The deepest lake in the world is Baikal, in Siberia; it is four thousand feet deep.

Few people seem to be aware that special newspaper and periodical stamps, for the exclusive use of postmasters, were current in the United States from 1874 to July 1st, 1898. On this latter date they were discontinued. The series comprised the one, two, five, ten, twenty-five and fifty cent, and the two, five, ten, twenty, fifty and one hundred dollar stamps. The figures are: for the denominations from 1 to 10, the statue of America by Crawford (father of F. Marion Crawford); for the 25 and 50 cent stamps, Astræa; \$2, Victory; \$5, Clio; \$10, Vesta; \$20, Peace; \$50, Commerce; and \$100, the Indian. Their discontinuance is great news for the stamp collectors.

The most popular saint of our age, the great wonder-worker

who is known everywhere else in Christendom as St. Anthony of Padua, is called in his own native Portugal either Anthony of Lisbon, his birthplace, or Anthony of Coimbra, where he first became a novice in a religious order.

The amusing blunder of the Free Press and other papers mistaking Mr. Curzon, the present Viceroy of India, for a commoner when he is, as everybody in England knows, the son of a lord and a bona fide descendant of the Norman conquerors, recalls the fact that there was in the thirteenth century a Cardinal Curzon who led the sixth crusade and who was probably connected with Mr. Curzon's ancestors. Curzon is an old French name represented in our own day by the celebrated painter Paul de Curzon.

A Catholic missionary in China, writing in the February of this year of a visit to Peking, says that the imperial astronomers, who draw up the rather complicated calendar every year, are still using and living up on the tables drawn up by the Jesuit Father Verbiest almost three centuries ago. Father Verbiest worked out his calculation of calendar phenomena, eclipses, etc. as far ahead as the twenty-first century. What will China be then?

PROVIDENCE ON THE YANKEE SIDE.

Western Watchman.

There would seem to be a sort of divine interposition in this war. We have won everywhere and all the time, when there was no place and no time when we should not have lost. We were about as ready to invade the Heavenly Jerusalem as we were to invade Cuba; but fortunately there was nothing to stop us. We caught Spain in swimming in Cuban waters and all her arms on the other side of the bay. We were presented with Santiago when we were packing up for retreat. We were presented with Cervera's navy when we were discussing the question of trying a less vulnerable point. We are now masters of Eastern Cuba and we are fighting with Toral's surrendered troops for the possession of the first ships to bring us out of the country. If Toral had held out just ten days longer we would have relieved him of the necessity of driving us from the island. Yes; the finger of God is in this war. It will redound to the benefit of His Church. We will not free the Cubans, nor the Philippines; but we shall free the Catholic Church. For this service God may bless us, and forgive us the hypocrisy and deceit of our humanitarian pretensions. We pray that it may be so.

Shall there be a God to swear by and none to pray to?—Hooker.