

Our Contributors.

A LETTER FROM FATHER CHINIQUEY.

To the venerable ministers of the Gospel and to the Christian people of Canada:

DEAR BRETHREN,—Allow me, at the beginning of this new year, to thank and bless you for the sacrifices you have made to give the Gospel of Christ to my dear countrymen.

More than ever, it has been my privilege, these last twelve months, to see some of the precious fruits of those sacrifices, and I consider it my duty to gladden your hearts by acquainting you with some of them.

Too many among you seem discouraged at the small results of the efforts made to convert the French-Canadians. This comes only from your want of knowing where to look for the fruits you expect from the seed so laboriously sown on the precious field you cultivate.

When in 1851, I laid the foundations of the grand French-Canadian colony the bishops of Rome wanted me to form in Illinois, one of the first things I did was to plant a great many acorns of the magnificent black walnut tree, around the beautiful hill I had selected for my garden and my humble house. To-day that spot, which was then a naked prairie land, is covered with a fine little forest. But in vain would you try to see the precious acorns grown every year, if you look in the little holes where I planted them some forty years ago. You must look up seventy, eighty and sometimes one hundred feet above the soil to see them.

The Great Master has so fixed his marvellous laws that there is always a distance, and sometimes a long distance, between the spot where you threw the seed and the one where you reap the fruit.

It is in the New England States, in Illinois, on the vast plains of Kansas, Oregon, California, Iowa, Washington Territory: it is in our great Ontario, Manitoba Province, as well as in Montreal and Quebec, you must go to find the precious wheat the Divine Husbandman has in store to repay your sacrifices and your labours.

To-day, as in the first days of Christianity, the merciless and cruel persecutions of the priests make it almost impossible for many of our dear converts to remain where they received the first rays of the Gospel lights.

These last twelve months, in spite of my eighty years of age, it has been my privilege to lecture in 160 cities, towns and villages of Ontario Province. Well there is not a single one of those cities, towns and villages where I have not found from one to ten or twenty (many times under English names) French-Canadian families who have left the Church of Rome and joined some of the evangelical churches of the place. Did not the short limits of this letter make it impossible for me to give you the details of those conversions, I would draw your tears of admiration and joy by relating them.

I will give you only one or two of those manifestations of the mercies of God, that you may bless Him for having granted you the honour of helping that great Gospel work.

A little more than two months ago, a zealous Presbyterian minister, not far from Ottawa, wrote me "A good number of Roman Catholic French-Canadians near my village have requested me to write you to come and address them; they want to see and hear you; please come." Having fixed that meeting in a large house of a rich Scotch farmer, I took the train to the nearest depot. But I reached that depot an hour later than I expected; the darkness was intense, the rain was falling as in the days of the deluge, and the wind was blowing a real hurricane. I said to the good minister who was waiting for me at the depot. "It is absolutely impossible to have any meeting in such a terribly stormy night. No carriage can take me there in such an awful darkness, the roads are impassable through the accumulation of snow in many places, and the mud in other places. Let us go at once to your parsonage where I will spend the night; to-morrow, D.V., if the storm is over, I will go and visit the friends who want to see and hear me." Though the parsonage was at a short distance, it proved to be a herculean task to reach it. As I was much tired by the last ten days' incessant work, at eight p.m. I wanted my bed to rest; but I had not reached my room when some one knocked at the door. I said to my host: "If the friend who is at your door wants to take me to the meeting, two or three miles distant through such a terrible storm, and in such darkness, please tell him that my eighty years of age make it a duty for me to decline." My last words had hardly fallen from my lips when the stranger had entered and said: "Is Father Chiniquy here? Please tell him that his countrymen are all arrived in spite of the storm and the dark night; some women have walked between five and six miles to see and hear him; the large room is too small to receive them all."

There is no need to tell you that at such unexpected news, my eighty years, the storm, the rain, the dark night were forgotten. Three minutes later I was sitting by the side of my intrepid driver, facing the rain and the storm, when the rapid wheels were covering me with mud from head to foot. How can I find words to express what I felt when I saw, not only the large parlour crowded, but all the adjoining rooms crammed with my dear country men! It was impossible to prevent the tears of joy and admiration from rolling on my cheeks when I learned that they had been waiting for me over an hour. In their midst was the admirable Mrs. Doré, a convert from Rome, who can be called the mother of that

young congregation, by her piety, her zeal and her wisdom in spreading the Gospel light all around her own town. The four hours I spent in the midst of those dear countrymen are among the most happy and the most blessed of my life. Though I spoke from eight to twelve o'clock it seemed to me that I had not been more than one hour with them. How sweet those hours were to them and to me! What delicious tears I saw rolling down every cheek when I explained to them that God had so loved them that He had sent His eternal son Jesus to SAVE them—that by shedding His blood and dying on the cross, he had not only paid their debts and paid them all, but that He had bought for everyone of them a crown and a throne in the kingdom of His Father; that that crown—that eternal life were gifts offered to all the poor sinners who would accept them, on the only condition that they would love the gift and the Giver!

What hymns of joy were sung by the angels when at twelve o'clock at night I asked those who wanted to accept the Gift to rise up and raise their hands towards heaven. All the hands were lifted up towards the throne of mercy and all the faces were beaming with such a joy as I had never seen on men's or women's faces! Every one felt so rich, so happy, when in the full possession of the gift.

In that small village and a few miles around, the Church of Rome has lost, and the Church of Christ has gained fifty precious souls.

Protestants of Canada, this is not my work,—no! But this is the Lord's work; this is rather Mrs. Doré's work; this is your work; as I am myself the fruit of your prayers.

But this is not an isolated fact. I could write a most interesting volume filled with such admirable manifestations of the blessings of God on the sacrifices you make to spread the Gospel among my dear countrymen.

However, do not think it is my intention to tell you that all that might and could have been done to spread the light of the Gospel among the French-Canadians has been done. No! For it is with sadness that we see so many doing absolutely nothing, when great numbers do so little that it looks more like a mockery than anything else.

Many ignore that, not only as Christians, but as patriots, one of their most sacred duties is to throw the light of the Gospel into the dark night with which Popery is covering Canada. As soldiers of Christ do you not see that you must pull down those walls of the modern Babylon which are there, standing, day and night, not only as an insolent menace, but as an unsurmountable obstacle to your onward march towards the regions of progress, civilization, prosperity and liberty? When I consider the strange (not to say childish) way you attack Rome, I am forcibly reminded of the awful blunder of the charge of the 600 cavalymen, at the battle of Balaclava. One of the English generals, seeing a Russian battery of some thirty guns pouring her terrible bullets on the British files and ranks, ordered a battalion of 600 horsemen to attack and take them, when 10,000 would hardly have been strong enough to do it. What was the result? Many of the Russian cannoners fell under the terrible blows of the English heroes, and the batteries were silenced for a moment. Yes, but the nine-tenths of those admirable soldiers fell dead or wounded on that bloody field, and the Russians remained masters of their cannons.

Protestants of Canada! remember that when you attack Rome you attack a giant. It is only when you use giant, mighty efforts that you will gain the day. You are blundering, losing your trouble, your money and your time, so long as you try to have only 600 men (even when every one is a hero) to silence and take the thirty Russian guns.

Surely you do something with the small efforts you make—our God, whose mercies are infinite, does bless in a marvellous way the little you do—but He will give you a real, a great, a lasting, a complete victory, only when you will do your duty as true men and true Christian soldiers. You look with complacency on the few young boys and girls to whom you give a Christian education in your colleges of La Pointe-aux-Trembles, La Grande Ligue, Sabrevois, and Methodist Institution, etc. But you forget too easily that there are hundreds of others every year, knocking at your doors and asking for the bread of life, who are refused and turned away to starve and perish. Think of it! Hundreds, and even thousands, who very soon will be fathers and mothers of large families, refused, rebuked, turned away by you, to starve and perish at your door!

If Christ was saying the truth, when he told you how the rich man was punished and sent to hell because he did not care about the starving Lazarus who was perishing, starving at his door, how do you not see that there is a terrible judgment waiting after you? For what have you done to prevent that starving Lazarus, the French-Canadian people, from perishing at your door?

When some 150 years ago, the British Parliament and the king of England determined to conquer Canada and wrench this magnificent and vast territory from the hands of their natural enemy, the king of France, it is said that there was a thrill of joy through every breast in England, Scotland and Ireland—all the echoes of Great Britain repeated the cry. "We must conquer Canada at any cost." Many said, "It will cost much money!" Others cried out, "It will cost a great deal of blood!" But the noble British people had only one voice to answer; "Let the money go, let the blood flow; we must conquer Canada." And Canada has been conquered. The heroes who fought on the Plains of Abraham fought as British men only can fight. Many fell wounded or dead on the battlefield. But the God who rules the world planted

your glorious banners over the impregnable citadel of Quebec. Have you ever regretted the blood shed or the millions of pounds expended in that conquest? No. Well, soldiers of Christ: English, Scotch and Irish Christians who, in Canada, are enrolled under the banners of the great Captain of our Salvation, do you not hear him telling you, "You must conquer Canada to my Gospel. You must bring your great Dominion under my yoke! Let every one of you enroll himself under my banners, I will lead you to the most glorious victory! Wrench Canada from the hands of the most implacable enemy of your people and of your Gospel, the Pope. Let the bright and shining light of the Gospel pour its shining rays over your already giant, though so young country." Let all the echoes of Canada repeat the command from heaven: "Let us conquer Canada to the Lamb who was slain for us. Let the Gospel reign from one end to the other of our dear and great Dominion!"

Ah! If every son and daughter of Canada would fight Rome with the same pluck and the same heroic determination to conquer, as their ancestors fought on the Plains of Abraham, what a speedy and glorious victory would soon be the price of their united efforts and sacrifices. I know that many hearts are discouraged, many hands are paralyzed among you Protestants of Canada by the so little and so small results of the past efforts made to convert the French-Canadian people. But let me tell you again that it is to your want of unanimity, your want of energy as well as your want of knowing the tactics of that war, that this is due. Be more unanimous, energetic, liberal in preparing the weapons of war—and above all, think, study with more wisdom and attention how to direct the means you have in hand. Do not continue the blunder of the 600 warriors of Balaclava hurled against a battery of thirty guns, supported by 50,000 men; and you will soon see the most glorious results from your united and wise efforts. However, I repeat again, that though our successes have not been so great as we all desire, they have been much greater than you suspect—they have been really marvellous when compared with the small means we had at our disposal. That success has been great enough to spread terror in the ranks of the enemy. Listen to the cry of distress from the camp of the Pope. These are the words of one of the Roman Catholic papers *Le Sud*, of Sorrel, of last week.

Speaking of the dangers which are threatening the very existence of the Church of Rome in Canada, that faithful Roman Catholic paper says. "Calvin and Luther were never taken seriously during their life time, and their contemporaries would never have believed any who said that after three centuries their adepts would be as numerous as the Roman Catholics. Where is the rational man who could have believed that the religion founded by the polygamist Henry VIII, for the requirements of his debauchery, would remain the religion of the British nation? Even in our country we see the astonishing ease with which the apostate Chiniquy got followers, Priests, monks, members of liberal professions, mechanics, have accepted his doctrines, and who knows how many they will number in a century hence? We wish now to point out a terrible evil which threatens our society and we will do it frankly and in outspoken terms."

And if you like to know the number of those numbers of "liberal professions, mechanics, monks and priests who have accepted," not the doctrines of the apostate Chiniquy, but of our Saviour Jesus Christ since the thirty years my eyes have been opened to the Light, the lowest statistics give more than forty thousand.

Yes! Forty thousand converts from Rome is the grand, marvellous result of your sacrifices in supporting the evangelical societies with whom I am working and who are working with me, for thirty years.

Now if such work has been done when so many of you, my dear Christian brethren and sisters, have refused to help us, and when so many others have done so little to strengthen our hands and cheer up our hearts on the glorious battle-field, what grand and marvellous work would have been done if you had united yourselves to us and fought with your British pluck, your British indomitable energy as well as with all the resources of the wealth and intelligence which the God of the Gospel has entrusted to your Christian hands; let not a single one of you refuse now his hearty help to the different societies organized to fight Rome in Canada; let those who used to give only their miserable ten cents, when they could give their dollar, offer that dollar to the Lord; and let those who used to give a dollar, offer their pounds to-day; and those who used to give their £1 give their £5 or £10 for the year 1890—and your leading men will have the means to prepare an army of Christian warriors so strong and so numerous that with the help of God they will carry everything before them.

Let me present you a fact which no doubt will interest your faith and your piety, before I finish this letter. You know that from 1874 to 1878, when working in Montreal, it was my unspeakable joy to persuade 7,000 Roman Catholics to give up their errors in order to follow the Gospel of Christ. Several congregations were formed with those converts, which still exist in your midst. The first congregation which was formed then has remained very dear to me. They worship in a place called Russell Hall, which is absolutely unfit—it is a real shame to gather a Christian people into such a dwelling, particularly when they are new converts and accustomed to meet in the splendid churches of Rome. They must have a decent church but they have not the means to build it. Many of those converts have lost much of the goods of this world by leaving the church in which they were born. Will you not