

MOUNT ST. BERNARD, CHARNWOOD.—THE IMPOSTOR JEFFERYS.—The complete expose of the wretched man who has lately been calumniating the good Monks of Mount St. Bernard is so instructive, that we need not apologise for occupying a considerable part of our space with some documents which have been forwarded to us upon the subject. The first is an extract from a letter addressed by a layman present at the investigation, to the *Leicestershire Mercury* of June 30th:

"Many of your readers are perhaps aware, that no small excitement has been raised in the neighbourhood of Ashby de la-Zouch and of Loughborough, in this country, in consequence of a publication which has recently issued from a printer's shop at Birmingham, entitled 'Narrative of Six Years' Captivity and Sufferings among the Monks of Mount St. Bernard, Charnwood Forest, Leicestershire.'

The facts on which this narrative is founded, were stated to have been furnished by one 'William Thomas Jefferys,' who professed to have been the sufferer in question. The compilation of the work is apparently to be ascribed to Mr. Naylor, Churchwarden of Wednesbury, near Birmingham, who had taken Jefferys under his protection—shown him kind treatment,—and having heard his story, had given it to the world. It is now about three weeks or a month since this publication appeared; it was forwarded immediately to the Monastery of Mount St. Bernard by many persons—one of whom, the Rev. Mr. Crewe, Catholic Priest of Bilston, having procured the Abbot's denial of the truth of any one statement in the book, published an address, to that effect to the inhabitants of Wednesbury. But nothing was of any avail: a book of this nature gains ready credence, and those who were willing to believe such a statement, were not easily to be convinced of its falsehood. It was therefore deemed advisable that one of the Brothers of the community should go to Wednesbury—see the impostor—and, if possible undeceive Mr. Naylor. The Brother who went was the Guest Master of the house, who from various circumstances had every reason to believe that this Jefferys was a person who had been relieved at the Monastery about three months ago and entertained there for two days, stating himself to be the son of a well-known gentleman of fortune, and anxious to be instructed in the Catholic Faith. The mere appearance of the wretched man and his method of expressing himself were sufficient at once to condemn him as an impostor—and as such he was considered during his two days' stay at the Monastery. But his indigence was considered a title to relief, and, having been fed and lodged, the gentleman whose son he professed to be was addressed immediately by letter—the reply to which stated how glad the reputed father would be to punish him as he deserved. Jefferys then went off to Loughborough, representing himself as a monk escaped from the duration of the Monastery, and from thence to Leicester, having procured money on all sides from those who were deceived by him. His plans, however, did not thoroughly take effect until he went to Wednesbury and fell in with Mr. Naylor.

"The Guest Master being at Birmingham on his way to Wednesbury, called upon the printer, Mr. Ragg, who stated himself entirely convinced that an imposition had been practised upon him. The Guest Master then went with Mr. Mayer, the Catholic bookseller of Birmingham, to the house of Mr. Naylor, and having seen the man Jefferys, at once identified him, as the same impostor who had been at the Monastery in the winter. Mr. Naylor, being still incredulous, it was agreed that he should come on the following days to Mount St. Bernard with Jefferys, and Mr. Ragg, the printer."

An investigation followed which we shall allow Mr. Ragg to relate in his own words, although the narrative is necessarily interrupted by the preliminary but very interesting matter which he communicates. The letter which we now produce is addressed by him to the editor of the *Protestant Watchman*, a paper published by himself.

To the Editor of the "Protestant Watchman."

"Sir—As I have been accused of cowardice for the part I took in the case of Wm Thomas Jefferys, I claim your indulgence for the opportunity of explanation. I claim it also on much higher grounds, those of reparation to a community who have been mischievously and undeservedly maligned; and as the narrative form is most interesting, and that which interests is most likely to leave a lasting impression on the mind, I will throw

it into the form of a 'Narrative of twelve days' anxiety and watchfulness, in unmasking and securing one of the most finished and abandoned hypocrites that ever walked the earth, or drew the breath of heaven.'

"On Friday evening, June 15, Mr. Richard Cooper, of Brewery Street, who had formerly been in the Community of Mount St. Bernard, as Brother Vincent, called on me and asked if he could see Jefferys, 'the Author,' said he, laying his hand upon the Narrative 'of this tale.' I told him he was then in Birmingham, as I had seen him that day, and he promised to call on me before he returned; and that I would very soon procure him an interview. My efforts to do so having failed, impressed with the word *talé*, and the manner in which he pronounced it, I went up myself on Monday evening to have a conference with him. He then told me that though there was some truth in the account of the Monks' mode of life; and the death of Bonaventure, and perhaps, one or two other little incidents in the Narrative were true, the rest was fiction. After this interview my course, as an honest man, was clear. On Tuesday morning I withdrew the book, and refused to sell or deliver for sale any more copies till a full inquiry could be instituted. I wrote over at the same time to the Monastery, requesting that if the man was an impostor I might be furnished with evidence to detain him; and applied at the Police Station to have him apprehended—Providentially, as matters turned out, he had not committed himself enough with me to enable me to obtain a warrant, and Mr. Stephens told me I must open the eyes of his chief dupes, and get them to apply. This was no easy task. They were all convinced of the young man's integrity, whom they had benevolently fed and clothed for three months past. Indeed, I verily believe that there were then in South Staffordshire hundreds who would have staked their existence on his innocence, and defended him with their life's blood; so consistent had his whole conduct been with the Narrative he compiled. I set to work again, urging with all my might the interview between him and Cooper, which was promised, but, under various pretences, delayed; and requested, which was also assented to, that he would take us into the neighbourhood of the Monastery to find the Monk's habit for which he had obtained a change of clothes. On Friday I received a kind letter from the Monastery in reply to my application, enclosing what to me was a clear proof of Jefferys' imposture, and a document which convinced me that the villain had been hospitably entertained there for two or three days as Francis Augustus Arkwright, and had hence gone to Loughborough and Leicester, deceiving the people there with a similar tale, and levying contributions. I then sent over a personal description of Jefferys, to learn if it answered to the man, and got Mr. Naylor to appoint yesterday (Tuesday) for the investigation. On Monday, instead of my having a written reply to my second letter, I had a visit from the Guest Master, Brother Alexis, who brought over the book in which all the guests have to write their names, to compare this signature with his manuscript. That comparison convinced us all of the identity of the persons; and a Rev. gentleman, who happened to be in my shop at the time, pronounced it a moral certainty that the man who wrote the one wrote the other. Under his advice, I went over at once to Wednesbury, taking Brother Alexis, and Mr. Maher, who accompanied him, along with me, to see the Naylor's. By that kind, benevolent, and excellent family (all, save William himself) I was received with taunts and subdued reproaches, which, under the circumstances, were hard to bear, but which I bore more patiently under the conviction that a few days would turn them into blessings. We waited till nine before we could see the culprit. His writing in the Guest Book was placed before him, but with an unblanched countenance he declared he had never seen the book or the writing before. He was confronted with the Guest Master, who at once identified him, as Francis Augustus Arkwright, and whom he called Father Benedict. but as nothing could be there concluded, the young man protesting his innocence, and his readiness to go over and face them all, it was at once arranged that we should all meet at the railway station at seven in the morning, and Mr. Naylor promised to bring Jefferys in safe custody. I confess that during the journey I could scarcely restrain myself. The rallying of my companions on my having been yesterday in the camp of the enemy, and the sight of the hypocrite (who I learned had been twice making a mockery of private prayer that morning), studying, or

pretending to study, a copy of the New Testament all the way, was too much to bear. I managed, however, to swallow my bile, and go through the solemn mockery of pretending to seek for the house where he got his change of clothes.

"At length our projected visit to the Monastery could no longer be put off, and I think about one o'clock, followed and preceded by hundreds of people, we arrived at its gates. I requested admission for myself and companions, and a few witnesses from the immediate neighbourhood, who I knew had been most deluded. We were received with open arms, and promised (which promise was in the kindest manner literally fulfilled), that all the doors of the Monastery should be opened to us, and all brethren be at our command, for the purpose of the investigation I requested. A. L. Phillipp, Esq., who was invited to be present, was then called to the chair, and after a few preliminary explanations, which need not be detailed, the investigation really commenced. The first question I asked of the culprit blanched his cheek. I asked him what the bell was then ringing for, as if he had been six years in the community, he would certainly know. His reply, after a short silence, was, that he did not come to answer such questions as those.

"He was then fully identified by several servants and members of the community, and two gentlemen who were guests at the time, as the impostor, who in January last, had signed his name as Francis Augustus Arkwright. The next question I put was as to the food taken by the community. His answers I need not detail. They were as utterly repugnant as they well could be to the rules of the Order, read to us from a printed book. The next scene was one which deeply pained me, and made the Rev. Mr. Cole, of Wednesbury, who kindly accompanied us, express his deep sorrow that learned and excellent men should be put in so humiliating a position. It was that of bringing all the brethren in the Monastery before the wretch to see if he could identify any of them as his father, or tell their Monastic names. He could do neither.

"One other matter only now was needed to convict him fully; and I demanded of him to lead us to the room where he had been placed in solitary confinement, and the room in which he slept. For the first he showed us a room which had evidently never had a lock upon it, or any other outside fastening; and to look for his chamber he wandered about in vain. To and fro the villain turned his steps, and at last came back self-convicted into the open square. The scene which followed was a solemn and impressive one. There stood among the mountain forest fastnesses of nature shut in by the simple walls of the Monastic buildings, with the blue heaven above us. There the Rev. Superior with mild benignity upon his calm and placid face appealed to the criminal to confess his sins before God, and the community around would freely forgive the injury he had done. All eyes were turned upon him and every breath seemed stilled; but unbent, unchanged, the unmasked impostor bore the gaze of all. At length Mr. Naylor could bear it no longer. He burst out in a fervid and passionate appeal to him, by all the kindness he had shown him, and all the injury with which he had returned it, to kneel down before the Rev. Superior, and ask his forgiveness. Still unbent, the villain stood; and another appeal from the kind and gentle Abbot, and another from Mr. Naylor, backed by the Rev. Mr. Cole, was needed to bring him on his knees, upon which he fell, and, taking the hand that was extended to him, covered it with tears.

"This scene was the climax of the day, and I will add but little more. Mr. Naylor, myself, and Wilkins, addressed the crowd outside from the window of the Lodge; and after partaking of the hospitality of the brethren, received what was still more grateful, the thanks of those we had been the innocent means of injuring; and came back to fulfil our duty to society in spreading far and wide a true statement of the case, and preventing such a monster, at least for the present, from practising again his vocation in the world. He is now safely lodged in gaol.—I am, &c., yours truly, THOMAS RAGG.

June 27, 1849.

"P.S.—It should be noted that there was a Monk in the Monastery greatly resembling Jefferys, which doubtless misled those who testified to his identity."

On Sunday, 15th inst. the Right Reverend Bishop of the Diocese, administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to seventy-six persons in Newburyport, in this State.—*Boston Observer*.

For the Propagation of the Faith,

Established in Halifax 22d January, 1843.

"This pious and truly charitable" Institution of the Propagation of the Faith was founded at Lyons, in the year 1822, it is now established throughout France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Portugal, Ireland, England &c. Its object is to assist, by Prayers and Alms, the Catholic Missionaries who are engaged in preaching the Gospel in distant and especially idolatrous Nations.

To become a MEMBER of this Institution, two conditions only are requisite, viz:—

1st.—To subscribe the small sum of one Half-penny per week.

2nd.—To recite every day a *Pater* and *Ave* for the Propagation of the Faith—or it is sufficient to offer, with this intention, the *Pater* and *Eve* of our daily Morning or Evening Prayers, adding each time, "St. Francis Xavier, pray for us."

The following Indulgences are granted to the Members of the Association throughout the world, who are in communication with the parent institution in France, viz:

1st.—A Plenary Indulgence on the 3d May, the Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross, on the 3d Dec., the Feast of St. Francis Xavier, the Patron of the Institution; and once a month, on any day, at the choice of each Subscriber, provided he say, every day within the month, the appointed prayer.

To gain the Indulgence he must be sorry for his sins, go to confession, receive the Holy Communion, and visit devoutly the Parish Church or Chapel, and there offer up his prayers for the prosperity of the Church, and for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff. In case of sickness or infirmity, subscribers are dispensed from the visit to the Parish Church, provided they fulfil to the best of their power, and with the advice of their Confessor, the other necessary conditions.

2nd.—An Indulgence of an hundred days, each time that the prescribed prayer will, with at least a contrite heart, be repeated, or a donation made to the Missions, or any other pious or charitable works performed.

All these Indulgences, whether plenary or partial, are applicable to the souls in purgatory.

THE ANNALS OF THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH, published once every second month, communicate the intelligence received through the several Missions throughout the world, and a return of the receipts from each diocese and their distribution, is given once a year.

Meetings of the Halifax Association are held in the Cathedral Vestry four times a year, under the presidency of the Bishop.

Donations or subscriptions from the country may be remitted to any of the Rev. gentlemen at St. Mary's. July 21.

Young Ladies' Academy.

Under the direction of the Ladies of the Sacre Cœur.

Brookside, Halifax, Nova Scotia

THE Public are respectfully informed that an Academy for Young Ladies has been opened at Brookside, where a solid and refined Education will be given to Day Pupils and Boarders.

The healthy situation and beautiful grounds of Brookside are so well known to the citizens of Halifax as to require no special description. Music, the Modern Languages, and every branch of a polite Education will be taught.

The formation of the hearts of the Young Ladies to virtue, and the culture of their minds by the study of those subjects, which are intended to constitute a superior education, being the great object which the Ladies of the Sacre Cœur have in view, no pains will be spared to attain the desired end.

The system pursued is strictly parental, and the mild influence of virtue is the guiding principle which enforces their regulations.

The terms, which are moderate, may be known on application to Madame Peacock, Superioress, either personally or by letter.

It is unnecessary to point out to Parents at a distance, the central position of Halifax, its many advantages as a place of Education, and the facility of communication both by land and sea at all seasons of the year.

Every opportunity is afforded to those Pupils who wish to learn the French language without any extra charge. There is at present a vacancy for a few Boarders.

Halifax, July 14, 1849.