

REMITTANCES

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THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JAN. 11, 1856.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

After a long and stormy passage, the Canada, with dates up to the 22nd ult., arrived at Halifax on Tuesday last. We give a brief summary of her news.

In the Crimea, the Allies were inactive, whilst the Russians still kept up a warm fire from the North shore. The weather was stormy, and the troops were exposed to much inconvenience in consequence. The treaty betwixt Sweden and the Western Powers is concluded. Peace rumors are abundant; the present position of affairs is this.

Austria has communicated to the Allies certain suggestions—not published—as a probable basis for future negotiations. These suggestions, but considerably modified by the Allied Governments, having been sent back to Vienna, the Austrian Cabinet ultimately agreed to accept the so modified proposals. These were despatched on the 16th ult. to St. Petersburg; and, if refused there, France and England declare their determination to prosecute the war vigorously; and Austria menaces to cease diplomatic relations with Russia. The actual state of affairs is thus described:—

"France is less peaceful, and England less warlike than they seem."

Our relations with the United States are in a precarious position. The Washington Cabinet demands the immediate recall of Mr. Crampton; which, it is said, the British Government refuses. Then we have the misunderstanding arising out of two contrary interpretations put upon the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, giving rise to what is called the Central America question; so that, if inclined to quarrel, causes are not wanting. Let us hope however, that the good sense of the people will prevent such a misfortune as war betwixt Great Britain and the U. States.

"THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A WESLEYAN METHODIST (Formerly a Roman Catholic), containing an account of his Conversion from Romanism," &c. E. Pickup, Montreal.

The reasons why Catholics abandon their religion for Protestantism are so well known, and so generally appreciated, that it was hardly worth while for the Rev. Mr. Cooney, Methodist Minister, to enter upon the details which this little work contains. His case is a very common one; and we do not think that he has much improved his position by divulging the motives which prevailed with him to abandon the religion of his fathers. We will however let him speak for himself.

The author was, as he tells us, born in Dublin of Catholic parents, and was himself brought up a Catholic; though, by his own showing, either he must have been very ignorant of the teachings of the Catholic Church whilst in her communion, or be very regardless of truth now that he has abandoned it. Of this we will give an instance. Speaking of the piety of his Popish mother, and himself in his younger days, he says:—

"We both endeavored to walk uprightly in the sight of God—our great aim was to please God, in all we did; and in all we said. We were ignorant of the righteousness of God; and we sought to establish our own righteousness. Of the great doctrine of salvation by faith we knew nothing; we foolishly imagined we were to be saved by our own works."—p. 42.

Now if this be a true representation of Mr. Cooney's spiritual state whilst a Catholic, it only shows that he must have a very ignorant one indeed. But he tells us that, at one time he studied for the priesthood. He must then have read the Decrees of the Council of Trent, which expressly teach that "without faith it is impossible to please God;" that no work of ours, nothing we can say or do, can—except through the infinite merits of Christ—be in any sense meritorious of salvation, or a supernatural reward—and "that no one can be just, unless he to whom have been communicated the merits of the passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ."—Conc. Trid. Sess. VI., c. vii. Now we can hardly suppose that Mr. Cooney was ignorant of these things; we can hardly imagine that he does not know that the Catholic Church does condemn, and always has condemned, the proposition that man can "be saved by his own works" independent of the merits of the Redeemer; we can not suppose him never to have read the service of the Mass, wherein the priest—after praying in the name of all present, that the Lord will vouchsafe of His mercy to give to us sinners upon earth some part and fellowship with the Saints in bliss—adds:—"into whose company we beseech Thee to admit us, not in consideration of our merit, but of Thy own gra-

tuitous pardon—through Jesus Christ Our Lord."—Canon of the Mass. We say that we can hardly suppose one who had made his studies for the priesthood to have been ignorant of all these things; we must therefore conclude that what he tells us about his Popish ignorance of the "righteousness of God," and of "foolishly imagining to be saved by his own works" is—not to put too fine a point on it—a Protestant lie, for the purpose of palliating his apostasy, by attributing to the Church doctrines which she expressly repudiates, and formally condemns; as in the following canon, which is the first De Justificatione:

"Si quis dixerit hominem suis operibus, quae vel per humanam naturam, vel per legis doctrinam fieri, absque divina per Jesum Christum gratia, posse justificari coram Deo—anathema sit."—Conc. Trid. Sess. VI., Can. I.

Such then being the teachings of the Church, both in her Liturgy, and in the Decrees of her Councils, in all her catechisms, and public instructions, it is impossible for us to believe that Mr. Cooney, whilst a Catholic, was so ignorant as to imagine that he could be saved by his own works—that is—independent of the merits of Our Redeemer. It is therefore impossible for us to attach any credit to his other statements, or explanations of the motives by which he was induced to Protest against Catholicity. But let us see what were the events which immediately effected his conversion to Protestantism, as recorded at pages 61, 62, and 63 of the work before us.

After the death of his parents, Mr. Cooney emigrated to the Province of New Brunswick, where he resumed his clerical studies. A vacancy in the representation of the County of Northumberland having occurred, Mr. Cooney, contrary to the wishes of his Bishop, Dr. McTearin, used his influence—which he gives us to understand was great over his countrymen and coreligionists who "regarded him with great reverence"—in support of one of the candidates, Joseph Cunard, Esq. "His Lordship"—the writer goes on to say—"was highly displeased with my interference, and condemned it in no very measured terms. I could not endure this," [page 63]; and so the Church lost a valuable servant.

His ecclesiastical superiors were themselves, so he tells us, in the habit of exercising their influence for political purposes; and their "duplicity" in condemning similar conduct in him:—

"Induced a new train of thought and reflections; or rather aided the development of sentiments and feelings, that had already begun to exercise my mind. Previous to this, I had endured a good deal of anxiety.—I had begun to entertain doubts concerning the principles in which I had been educated. These often and sorely perplexed me; sometimes I thought they were temptations; and that the enemy was thus permitted to buffet me for my faults. These painful surmises occasioned me great distress; I prayed—weped—fasted; but all in vain. I found no relief; at other times, these suggestions seemed to come from another source, which I could neither understand, nor designate. It was, however, evident to myself, that my religious views, from some cause or other, had undergone a great change; and hence without a pang, or even a regret, I abjured the clerical office, at once, and for ever: and in a short time after, I withdrew myself from the Romish church altogether."—p. 64.

And thus Mr. Cooney became a Protestant; "but," he adds, "I had no religion." Therefore, by his own showing, it was not from religious motives, not with the aim of serving God in all he did—his "great aim" be it remembered, whilst he was a Catholic—that he abandoned the Catholic Church. His conversion to Methodism occurred some years subsequently to his becoming a Protestant, and is thus explained.

In 1831, he joined a Methodist society in Miramichi, but apparently without having "got religion," for he was still "a seeker." Whilst in this situation he went to Halifax, N.S.; when "the Lord was pleased to pour out His Holy Spirit upon the Wesleyan Society and Congregation." There was a great Revival Meeting, at which he attended. But we will let him speak for himself.

BROTHER COONEY ROARS—NO GO.

"I sought the Lord, but I found him not. On a Tuesday evening, I met in class; I went thither with a heavy heart. When it came to my turn to speak, I thought my heart would break. I wept aloud, nay I roared."—p. 83.

This may probably have proceeded from the state of his bowels; in which case ginger or peppermint might, if taken in time, have been of service. But whatever the cause, in spite of his "roaring," Mr. Cooney got no religion on Tuesday. On Wednesday he tried his hand at it again, and this time:—

BROTHER COONEY EXPERIENCES RELIGION.

"On Wednesday evening I went to the prayer meeting in the school room, determined to wrestle, and never to give up until my soul should be set at liberty by his victorious love. The meeting was a most gracious one. . . . I felt that we would witness signs and wonders. . . . I felt a hungering and thirsting after salvation—a most vehement desire, &c. "At length the time arrived that I so much longed for. The minister conducting the service invited any who were penitent to come forward."—p. 84.

We need hardly pursue this blasphemous rignarole any further. Mr. Cooney "got religion" and went home "truly happy." His "earthen vessel was full."—Ibid.

Having thus followed Mr. Cooney from the Egypt of Romanism, through the desert of no-religion—at all Protestantism, to the Canaan of Methodism, we will proceed to give a few details of his experiences in that blessed land. In May 1837 he was ordained; and in June of the same year, he took unto himself a wife—an event "that almost invariably follows the ordination of a Wesleyan minister."—p. 97. He went on circuit, as it is called, or itinerant preaching holding forth, sometimes from an empty barrel, sometimes from an inverted pig trough. His skill as a controversialist was great, so that no man might stand against him. He utterly routed the Calvinists, and put to flight the Milltownites, the Millerites, and

* Our Devil's remarks upon Mr. Cooney's "earthen vessel" and that he should have emptied it are irrelevant, unscriptural, and betray a sad want of "sanctuary privileges."

other daring seceders from the true Zion. Indeed, about this time his eyes were opened; and it was given unto him to see the darkness in which all religious denominations save his own were plunged.—On the Millerites—a Protestant sect named after its founder Miller, as the Wesleyans are called after their founder Mr. Wesley—Mr. Cooney is very severe:—

"I have witnessed scenes myself that would disgrace dancing Derivishes, and make Harlequins blush with shame. Kicking, jumping, pounding each other, shrieking, and so forth, were among their common rites and ceremonies. They evinced their renunciation of the world, and attested the truth of their creed by selling everything at the highest price. Their charity consisted in getting for themselves all they could; and their meekness and gentleness were forcibly displayed in the manner in which they abused and denounced all who differed from them."—p. 119.

Of course Mr. Cooney was a model of propriety in the sanctuary; and the services of his meeting-house presented a marked contrast to those of the obnoxious Millerites. As witness the following:—

THE REV. MR. COONEY TRIES TO GET INTO A FLOUR BARREL.

"The late Rev. S.—B.—, then superintendent of Charlotte Town, and myself went to hold a missionary meeting a few miles from town, at a place I think called "Little York." The meeting was held in a barn half filled with hay, and with different kinds of grain lately gathered in. When we arrived, the building was crowded with people; some huddled together upon the hay and corn, and others on every kind and description of seats, arranged on the floor. The pulpit, a dilapidated flour barrel, stood in a corner, bottom up, and a Bible and hymn book, both the worse of wear, placed upon it. To this quarter we made our way as best we could, and at length gained our position. Mr.— then took the Bible and hymn book off the barrel; turned it upside down, and very gravely told me to get into it. I tried, but could not succeed; tried again, and down came barrel, preacher and all; some shouted, some cried glory, some one thing, and some another; the people seated on the hay and grain became excited, and came sliding and rolling down one after another, but in the midst of all this involuntary and harmless disorder, some one struck up a tune, and in a few minutes the troubled waters were assuaged, while several voices sung, as only English voices can sing, these defiant and animating words,

"We are soldiers fighting for our God,
Let trembling onwards fly,
We'll stand unshaken, firm, and fixed,
For Christ to live and die;
Let devils rage, and hell assail,
We'll fight our passage through;
Let foes unite, and friends desert,
We'll seize the crown, our due."

The service now commenced; God poured out his spirit in a very copious manner. The word fell with power on the whole congregation, some fainted and swooned away, others cried for mercy; some clapped their hands and shouted for joy; and the whole place seemed to be filled with the presence and glory of God."—pp. 213, 214.

THE LORD BLESSES THE REV. MR. COONEY ON A PIG TROUGH.

"Shortly after this, while I was preaching in another part of the Charlotte Town Circuit, I experienced a very novel species of interruption. I cannot remember the name of the place; the meeting, however, was held in a very large room, in a farm house, and a kind of clothes line was drawn across the room, in a horizontal direction with where I stood. The apartment was rather long, and crowded with people; and as I stood on the floor, I suppose some at the extremity of the congregation could not see me. I observed a man in the congregation with his chin resting very composurely upon the clothes line. He appeared to listen very attentively, and as one that loved "the joyful sound" but still he would frequently withdraw his eyes from me, and look all through the apartment—then at me, as if he was measuring me; and at last he cried out, in a very earnest and impassioned manner, "that man is not tall enough to be a minister;" he is too short to preach the Gospel;" and without more ado, he forced his way through the crowd and went out, but soon returned, bearing a pig trough on his shoulder; and putting it down, inserted of course, very good naturedly and devoutly said, "there, Brother, stand on that, and may the Lord bless you." And the Lord did bless me, and bless his word and gave us a fruitful and a blessed season."—pp. 214, 215.

Like St. Paul, and other faithful preachers of the Gospel, Mr. Cooney has met with many hardships and privations. As specimens of what Methodist Ministers are sometimes called upon to undergo, we cite the following heartrending details:—

"On one occasion I was entertained by a zealous young brother, now in the Canada Conference. He occupied the house, previously the residence of a married preacher and his family; but as my host was a probationer, and dwelt alone, we had the whole mansion to ourselves. So, at least, I thought, but as the sequel proved, I was grievously mistaken. The rats and the mice maintained their right to a joint-proprietorship; and during the night these tenants in common, carried on their nocturnal revels in so obstreperous a manner, that we scarcely closed our eyes or got one moment's rest. We would not have been so wakeful, I suppose, if we had supped a little more substantially."—pp. 297, 298.

More harrowing is the following:—

"While on a missionary tour through the lower parts of Western Canada, I met with an adventure, such as I had never met with before. I had to seek repose, the best way I could, in a bed far too short for me. This was a serious grievance; and one, too, upon which I never reckoned. It is well known that I am not one of "the Anakim" not by any means unusually tall, and yet, in this instance, I could not obtain a bed long enough; there was no help for it. I thought upon Procrustes, and what he had to suffer, and this reconciled me to the inconvenience. The room was small too, but then I am not very large myself; and why should there not be small rooms as well as small men. It was not scrupulously neat either, but that is neither here nor there, what I felt most tried by was this: there was a very large tomb-stone, standing upright at the foot of the bed, with a very long and pathetic epigraph inscribed upon it, surmounted by a very lugubrious looking device, rudely executed. This was my first and last encounter with limited upholstery, and church-yard sculpture.

"In the morning I felt rather uncomfortable, and not much refreshed; but by the time I had breakfasted, all was right again; except a little unpleasant sensation that I felt, something like what is called growing pains, but of course not growing pains."—pp. 299, 300.

Well may the Rev. Mr. Cooney exclaim, when dwelling on the trials of the Missionary, "that the devoted herald of the cross has to pass through many vicissitudes and dangers." That he has "to endure perils in the wilderness, perils in the deep, and perils in the city."—p. 296.

From the above extracts, it will be seen that Mr. Cooney's experiences have been of an exciting, and deeply interesting kind. Some of his stories are a little deficient in point however—what the profane call "twaddle"—as for example the following, illustrative we suppose of the power of prayer:—

BROTHER MOSES PRAYS A TOM CAT INTO VITS.

"The other occurrence was as follows:—There lived in Montreal, some years ago, an old colored man named Moses: a member of the Methodist Church, and very pious withal. Like many of his class, he was a man of warm passions, and very easily excited, as the congregation, that then assembled in Griffintown chapel, could testify. Well, the Rev. Mr.—, then one of the Wesleyan Ministers in Montreal, in the course of his pastoral visitations, called on Brother Moses. After a little appropriate conversation, both repaired to a back room that communicated with the shop, in order to have prayer. The room had no windows in it, and was consequently very dark; and in the darkest corner of this dark room, Moses had his bed. At this bed the minister and he knelt down together, and while the former was pouring out his soul in fervent supplication, the sacred fire fell on both of them. Moses held in as long as he could, but it was no use; the fire burned within him so intensely that it must have vent, he shouted with all his might; when lo, a cat that had been lying on the bed, enjoying a comfortable nap, suddenly jumped up, and sprang out over their heads, and vanished away."—p. 300.

After the above specimens of Mr. Cooney's style and principles, we need scarcely add that he has a great compassion for Romanists, a lively abhorrence of Puseyites, and a profound contempt for all sects save his own. He is fully convinced of the validity of Wesleyan ordination; and upon the subject of Baptism, prefers sprinkling to immersion, as "more convenient." In illustration of this, he instances the case of a "Baptist minister incapable of performing the service, being liable to be seized by cramp, when in the water. He has been inefficient in this particular for many years."—p. 282. In consequence, many persons had been kept waiting to be baptised "for nearly three months."—Ib. This, it must be admitted, places the peculiar tenets of the Baptists in a novel light. Souls might be lost, because the minister was rheumatic or subject to cramps.

But really we fear that we are inflicting too much of the Rev. Mr. Cooney on our readers. Now the rest of his nets, are they not written in the book of his Autobiography?—which may be had for the sum of one dollar from Mr. Pickup, by any one who has more money than brains; and is willing to throw away his cash upon such a contemptible farrago of egotism, twaddle and ankle drivelling.

TRAVELS IN ENGLAND, FRANCE, ITALY AND IRELAND, by the Rev. G. F. Haskins. Boston, P. Donahoe. Sadlier & Co., Montreal.

We took up this work with the expectation of finding therein a true and impartial picture, as far as it goes, of the countries visited by the author; and we were not disappointed. Neither biased by prejudice, nor blinded by passion, the accomplished author describes what came under his observation with the clearest accuracy, and in the most graphic style. His work is the first step towards supplying a desideratum long felt by Catholics. His object in writing it he briefly states in the Preface. "I have not written this little book," says he "for the learned, nor to seek fame as an author; but to contribute a mite towards supplying a remarkable deficiency in our Catholic literature. The Catholics of this country, though for the most part poor, are fond of reading; many religious works, and some few histories, and tales, and political essays are the principal books within their reach. Books of travels they have none. With regard to the customs and doings of other nations, they have little means of obtaining information except from Protestant tourists. But these productions, even the best of them, are so well seasoned with sneers and misrepresentations, perhaps unintentional, of the practices, ceremonies, customs, &c., of Catholic countries, that, instead of being instructive, they are pernicious and dangerous. As an offset to some of these journals and tours, I have prepared the following pages, as the impressions and experiences of a Catholic traveller, and nothing more."

Such being the object which the writer had in view, it will easily be understood that he has "naught extenuated, nor set down nught in malice." He has mainly applied himself to remove the mass of undeserved odium heaped for years and years on the Catholic nations of Europe by wilfully blind tourists—who, in their ignorance or malice (generally speaking both) contrived to deify the Protestant countries, at the expense of the faithful nations and people of Catholic unity. With regard to the latter, Mr. Haskins has simply removed the veil which has long hid their virtues and their merits from the bulk of the reading community; showing them, as well instructed Catholics have always known them to be, far ahead of their Protestant neighbors in all the concomitants of real civilization. Of Protestant England—Protestant by excellence—he gives the good as well as the bad—willingly acknowledges anything commendable which he there saw, and skims lightly over the painful subject of its festering vices. After visiting some of the principal cities of France and Italy—giving a graphic and touching description of the countless religious and charitable institutions existing in each, and devoting, as in duty bound, a large space to the glorious centre of Catholic unity—the Eternal Rome—the seven throned Queen of modern, as of ancient civilization—he returns to England on his way to Ireland. Lastly he describes that fairest and most unfortunate but most venerable island—venerable in the truest acceptance of the word. And here let us pause with him on the threshold of the glorious temple built by the blessed St. Patrick, fourteen hundred years ago; while we thank him in the name of Catholic Ireland and her widely scattered children, for the generous meed of justice he has so freely rendered to that much despised, much calumniated, and little known country. For there are few, who like this noble-hearted stranger, visit poor Ireland with a determination to find out the moral greatness of her Christian population, beneath the cheerless aspect of desolation which every where meets the eye: For there are few amongst the hords of tourists who annually explore the beautiful recesses of the country, who have a head and a heart capable of estimating Ireland's real and most distinctive beauties; or of fathoming the won-