

WAS LINCOLN A CATHOLIC

Editor Griffin in the July number of his American Catholic Researches prints the following letter from Archbishop Ireland:

My dear Mr. Griffin: I notice by the late number of The Researches that the question is again raised, "Was Abraham Lincoln a Catholic?" You report Rev. John W. Moore, C.M., as affirming on the authority of the pioneer missionary of Southern Illinois, Rev. J. M. J. St. Cyr, that Abraham Lincoln was, at one period of his life, a Catholic; and in rebuttal of Father Moore's statement you publish a letter from an intimate acquaintance of Mr. Lincoln, Miss Ida M. Tarbell, to the effect that Mr. Lincoln was never a Catholic. Miss Tarbell writes: "His Father, Thomas Lincoln, was a Baptist according to the best authorities, and Lincoln attended the church of that denomination in his early days in Indiana. In Springfield he attended the Presbyterian church, although he was never a member of any denomination."

I happen to be able to furnish a slight contribution to the discussion, by repeating, beyond peril of mistake, what the old missionary, Father St. Cyr was wont actually to say touching Catholicity in the Lincoln household.

Father St. Cyr was a priest of the Diocese of St. Louis, from which in early days the scattered Catholics of Southern Illinois received ministerial attention. He was a remarkable man, intelligent to a very high degree, most zealous in his work, most holy in life. I knew him when in later years he was chaplain to the Sisters of St. Joseph, of Carondelet. He held in vivid recollection the story of the Church in old times through Missouri and Illinois. It was a delight and a means of most valuable information to sit by and converse with him. In 1866, he spent a month visiting me in St. Paul. Here is his statement, as I then took it down in writing, regarding the Lincoln family. "I visited several times the Lincolns in their home in Southern Illinois. The father and the stepmother of Abraham Lincoln both were Catholics. How they became Catholics I do not know. They were not well instructed in their religion; but they were strong and sincere in their profession of it. I said Mass repeatedly in their house. Abraham was not a Catholic; he never had been one, and he never led me to believe that he would become one. At the time, Abraham was twenty years old or thereabouts, a thin, tall young fellow, kind and good natured. He used to assist me in preparing the altar for Mass. Once he made me a present of a half dozen of chairs. He had made those chairs with his own hands, expressly for me; they were simple in form and fashion as chairs used in country places then would be."

Those are Father St. Cyr's words. If Father St. Cyr is again referred to, let him be quoted for what he was wont to say—neither more nor less.

What reliance is to be put on the statement as made to me by Father St. Cyr and now repeated by me, the reader will decide as he thinks best. For my part I cannot allow myself to doubt its absolute correctness.

Is not the supposition permissible that the second wife of Thomas Lincoln, a Kentuckian, if not a Catholic from the first, brought with her to the West, tendencies which afterwards led her to become a Catholic, and that she drew her husband into the fold, without being able to influence her stepson, Abraham? And is not this other supposition equally permissible, in view of the religious conditions at the time in Southern Illinois, that Thomas Lincoln and his wife had been known to Father Cyr as Catholics without being afterwards known as such to other priests or at least without being ever reported as such by others, or even that they were remembered by some persons as attending afterwards now and then non-Catholic churches? Retiring from his labors in Illinois, Father Cyr returned to Missouri and lost sight of the people whom he had been attending in Illinois, among them the Lincoln family. When he spoke with me he was not able to say whether the parents of Abraham persevered or not until death in the Catholic Church.

†JOHN IRELAND

OBITUARY

MR. AIME CINQ-MARS

It was a great shock to all the best people in St. Boniface when they learned, last Tuesday morning, that Mr. Aime Cinq-Mars had just died in St. Boniface Hospital after a short final illness of four days at the early age of 28. He was for several years one of the most prom-

ising students of St. Boniface College, but towards the end of his course he was obliged, owing to symptoms of decline, to give up his studies and adopt a life of open air exercise as assistant to his father, Mr. Gedeon Cinq-Mars, the well known contractor, who is now building the new college wing. For a time this new life gave Aime heartiness and strength and the future seemed bright. Apart from his lucrative employment, he was a prime favorite and excelled as a reciter of French selections. A few years ago he married Miss Kittson and was blessed with a child who, however, was soon gathered into the angelic host. Of late Aime's health had been gradually failing, and when he went to the hospital last Saturday he prepared himself for the worst by a good confession. The last sacraments were administered by Father Messier on Tuesday morning.

All St. Boniface testified its grief by crowding the cathedral at the funeral on Thursday morning. The Very Rev. Vicar General received the body at the door of the church. Rev. Dr. Trudel celebrated the Requiem High Mass, assisted by Rev. Fathers Gerritsma and Janssen as deacon and subdeacon, and also read the prayers at the grave. The clergy present in the chancel were Very Rev. F. A. Dugas, V. G., Rev. J. Dugas, S. J., rector of St. Boniface College, Rev. Fathers Dufresne and Mireault, and the Rev. Messrs. Arseneault and Sevresque. The pallbearers, who were six college mates were, J. Arpin, G. Roacan, A. Duguay, Roger Goulet, Joseph Desourdis and J. L. Giroux.

The Review extends its deepest sympathy to the bereaved father, mother, brother, sister, and widow. R.I.P.

Father Vales, O. M. I., of Fort Alexander invites everybody to start for West Selkirk on Monday, July 24, take the steamboat there on Tuesday morning at 7 for Lake Winnipeg (Fort Alexander), and be present at the Confirmation and Blessing of a bell in his Church by His Grace the Archbishop. It will be a very pleasant excursion.

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There is a popular notion to the effect that rough diamonds are not bright, but this is a mistake. Even in that condition they are very bright with a peculiar "adamantine lustre," as it is called, which no other substance possesses. However, the crude diamond crystal is not transparent. One cannot see through it.

An extended report of the Silver Jubilee of Father J. W. Considine, of Minto, N. D., will appear in our next.

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