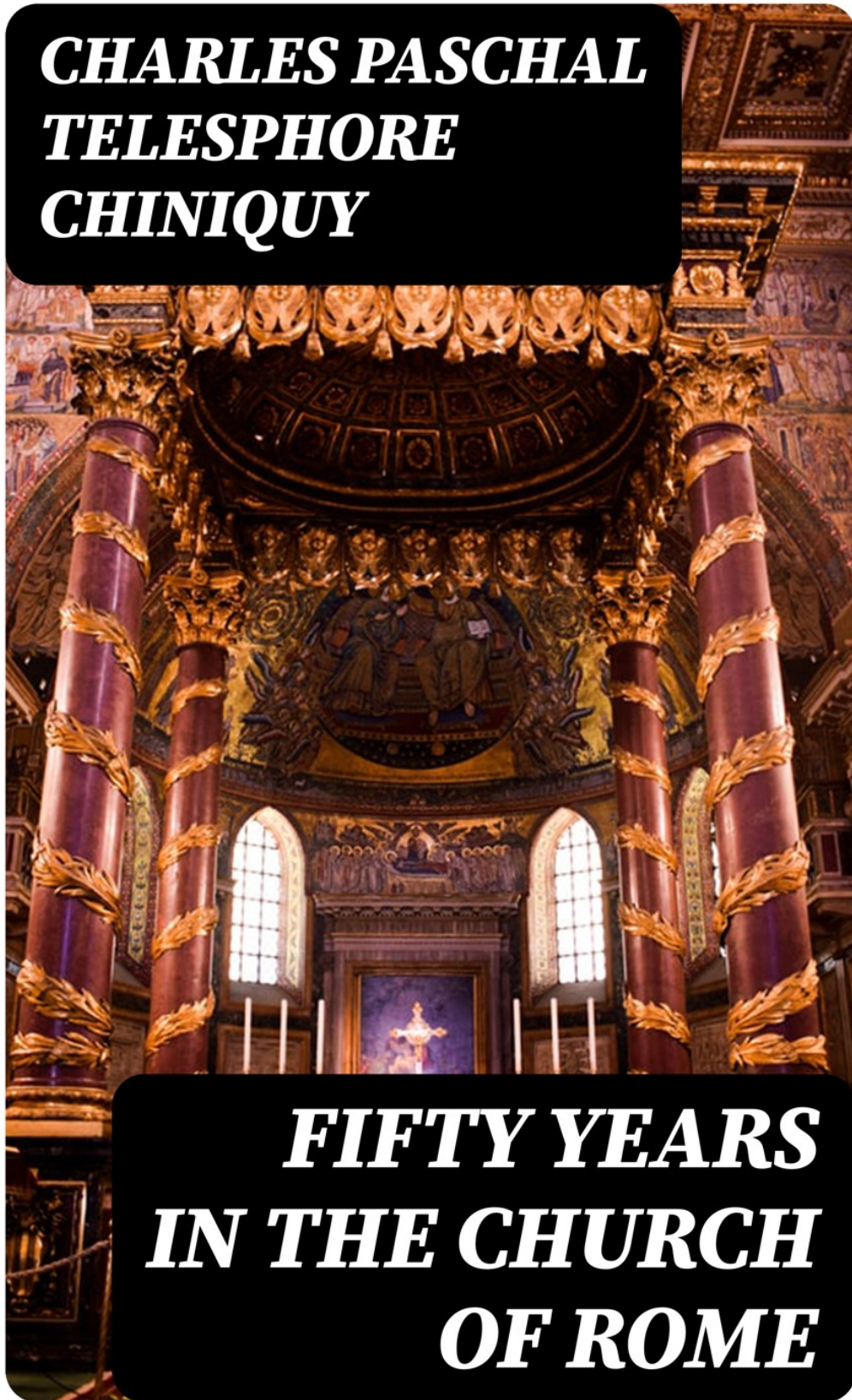


***CHARLES PASCHAL
TELESPHORE
CHINIQUY***

The image shows the interior of a grand church, likely St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The scene is dominated by four large, reddish-brown columns with intricate golden leaf-like carvings. Above the columns is a large, ornate dome with a complex geometric pattern. In the background, there are arched windows and a central altar area with a crucifix. The lighting is warm and dramatic, highlighting the architectural details.

***FIFTY YEARS
IN THE CHURCH
OF ROME***

***CHARLES PASCHAL
TELESPHORE
CHINIQUY***



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OF ROME***

Charles Paschal Telesphore Chiniquy

Fifty Years in the Church of Rome

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Chapter I.

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THE BIBLE AND THE PRIEST OF ROME.

My father, Charles Chiniquy, born in Quebec, had studied in the Theological Seminary of that city, to prepare himself for the priesthood. But a few days before making his vows, having been the witness of a great iniquity in the high quarters of the church, he changed his mind, studied law and became a notary.

Married to Reine Perrault, daughter of Mitchel Perrault, in 1808, he settled at first in Kamoraska, where I was born on the 30th July, 1809.

About four or five years later, my parents emigrated to Murray Bay. That place was then in its infancy, and no school had yet been established. My mother was, therefore, my first teacher.

Before leaving the Seminary of Quebec my father had received from one of the Superiors, as a token of his esteem, a beautiful French and Latin Bible. That Bible was the first book, after the A B C, in which I was taught to read. My mother selected the chapters which she considered the most interesting for me; and I read them every day with the greatest attention and pleasure. I was even so much pleased with several chapters, that I read them over and over again till I knew them by heart.

When eight or nine years of age, I had learned by heart the history of the creation and the fall of man; the deluge; the sacrifice of Isaac; the history of Moses; the plagues of

Egypt; the sublime hymn of Moses after crossing the Red Sea; the history of Samson; the most interesting events of the life of David; several Psalms; all the speeches and parables of Christ; and the whole history of the sufferings and death of our Saviour as narrated by John.

I had two brothers, Louis and Achille; the first about four, the second about eight years younger than myself. When they were sleeping or playing together, how many delicious hours I have spent by my mother's side, in reading to her the sublime pages of the divine book.

Sometimes she interrupted me to see if I understood what I read; and when my answers had made her sure that I understood it, she used to kiss me and press me on her bosom as an expression of her joy.

One day, while I was reading the history of the sufferings of the Saviour, my young heart was so much impressed that I could hardly enunciate the words, and my voice trembled. My mother, perceiving my emotion, tried to say something on the love of Jesus for us, but she could not utter a word—her voice was suffocated by her sobs. She leaned her head on my forehead, and I felt two streams of tears falling from her eyes on my cheeks. I could not contain myself any longer. I wept also; and my tears were mixed with hers. The holy book fell from my hands, and I threw myself into my dear mother's arms.

No human words can express what was felt in her soul and in mine in that most blessed hour! No! I will never forget that solemn hour, when my mother's heart was perfectly blended with mine at the feet of our dying Saviour. There was a real perfume from heaven in those my mother's

tears which were flowing on me. It seemed then, as it does seem to me to-day, that there was a celestial harmony in the sound of her voice and in her sobs. Though more than half a century has passed since that solemn hour when Jesus, for the first time, revealed to me something of His suffering and of His love, my heart leaps with joy every time I think of it.

We were some distance from the church, and the roads, in the rainy days, were very bad. On the Sabbath days the neighboring farmers, unable to go to church, were accustomed to gather at our house in the evening. Then my parents used to put me up on a large table in the midst of the assembly, and I delivered to those good people the most beautiful parts of the Old and New Testaments. The breathless attention, the applause of our guests, and—may I tell it—often the tears of joy which my mother tried in vain to conceal, supported my strength and gave me the courage I wanted, to speak when so young before so many people. When my parents saw that I was growing tired, my mother, who had a fine voice, sang some of the beautiful French hymns with which her memory was filled.

Several times, when the fine weather allowed me to go to church with my parents, the farmers would take me into their *caleches* (buggies) at the door of the temple, and request me to give them some chapter of the Gospel. With a most perfect attention they listened to the voice of the child, whom the Good Master had chosen to give them the bread which comes from heaven. More than once, I remember, that when the bell called us to the church, they expressed their regret that they could not hear more.

On one of the beautiful spring days of 1818, my father was writing in his office, and my mother was working with her needle, singing one of her favorite hymns, and I was at the door, playing and talking to a fine robin which I had so perfectly trained that he followed me wherever I went. All of a sudden I saw the priest coming near the gate. The sight of him sent a thrill of uneasiness through my whole frame. It was his first visit to our home.

The priest was a person below the common stature, and had an unpleasant appearance—his shoulders were large and he was very corpulent; his hair was long and uncombed, and his double chin seemed to groan under the weight of his flabby cheeks.

I hastily ran to the door, and whispered to my parents, “M. le cure arrive” (“Mr. Curate is coming”). The last sound was hardly out of my lips, when the Rev. Mr. Courtois was at the door, and my father, shaking hands with him, gave him a welcome.

That priest was born in France, where he had a narrow escape, having been condemned to death under the bloody administration of Robespierre. He had found a refuge, with many other French priests in England, whence he came to Quebec, and the bishop of that place had given him the charge of the parish of Murray Bay.

His conversation was animated and interesting for the first quarter of an hour. It was a real pleasure to hear him. But of a sudden his countenance changed as if a dark cloud had come over his mind, and he stopped talking. My parents had kept themselves on a respectful reserve with the priest. They seemed to have no other mind than to listen to him.

The silence which followed was exceedingly unpleasant for all the parties. It looked like the heavy hour which precedes a storm. At length the priest, addressing my father, said, "Mr. Chiniquy, is it true that you and your child read the Bible?"

"Yes, sir," was the quick reply, "my little boy and I read the Bible, and what is still better, he has learned by heart a great number of its most interesting chapters. If you will allow it, Mr. Curate, he will give you some of them."

"I did not come for that purpose," abruptly replied the priest; "but do you not know that you are forbidden by the holy Council of Trent to read the Bible in French?"

"It makes very little difference to me whether I read the Bible in French, Greek or Latin," answered my father, "for I understand these languages equally well."

"But are you ignorant of the fact that you cannot allow your child to read the Bible?" replied the priest.

"My wife directs her own child in the reading of the Bible, and I cannot see that we commit any sin by continuing to do in future what we have done till now in that matter."

"Mr. Chiniquy," rejoined the priest, "you have gone through a whole course of theology; you know the duties of a curate; you know it is my painful duty to come here, get the Bible from you and burn it."

My grandfather was a fearless Spanish sailor (our original name was Etchiniquia), and there was too much Spanish blood and pride in my father to hear such a sentence with patience in his own house. Quick as lightning he was on his feet. I pressed myself, trembling, near my mother, who trembled also.

At first I feared lest some very unfortunate and violent scene should occur; for my father's anger at that moment was really terrible.

But there was another thing which affected me. I feared lest the priest should lay his hands on my dear Bible, which was just before him on the table; for it was mine, as it had been given to me the last year as a Christmas gift.

Fortunately, my father had subdued himself after the first moment of his anger. He was pacing the room with a double-quick step; his lips were pale and trembling, and he was muttering between his teeth words which were unintelligible to any one of us.

The priest was closely watching all my father's movements; his hands were convulsively pressing his heavy cane, and his face was giving the sure evidence of a too well-grounded terror. It was clear that the ambassador of Rome did not find himself infallibly sure of his position on the ground he had so foolishly chosen to take; since his last words he had remained as silent as a tomb.

At last, after having paced the room for a considerable time, my father suddenly stopped before the priest, and said, "Sir, is that all you have to say here?"

"Yes, sir," said the trembling priest.

"Well, sir," added my father, "you know the door by which you entered my house; please take the same door and go away quickly."

The priest went out immediately. I felt an inexpressible joy when I saw that my Bible was safe. I ran to my father's neck, kissed and thanked him for his victory. And to pay him, in my childish way, I jumped upon the large table and

recited, in my best style, the fight between David and Goliath. Of course, in my mind, my father was David and the priest of Rome was the giant whom the little stone from the brook had stricken down.

Thou knowest, O God, that it is to that Bible, read on my mother's knees, I owe, by thy infinite mercy, the knowledge of the truth to-day; that Bible had sent, to my young heart and intelligence, rays of light which all the sophisms and dark errors of Rome could never completely extinguish.

Chapter II.

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MY FIRST SCHOOL-DAYS AT ST. THOMAS—THE MONK AND CELIBACY.

In the month of June, 1818, my parents sent me to an excellent school at St. Thomas. One of my mother's sisters resided there, who was the wife of an industrious miller, called Stephen Eschenbach. They had no children, and they received me as their own son.

The beautiful village of St. Thomas had already, at that time, a considerable population. The two fine rivers which unite their rapid waters in its very midst before they fall into the magnificent basin from which they flow into the St. Lawrence, supplied the water-power for several mills and factories.

There was in the village a considerable trade in grain, flour and lumber. The fisheries were very profitable, and the game was abundant. Life was really pleasant and easy.

The families Tachez, Cazeault, Fournier, Dubord, Frechette, Tetu, Dupuis, Couillard, Duberges, which were among the most ancient and notable of Canada, were at the head of the intellectual and material movements of the place, and they were a real honor to the French Canadian name.

I met there with one of my ancestors on my mother's side whose name was F. Amour des Plaines. He was an old and brave soldier, and would sometimes show us the numerous wounds he had received in the battles in which

he had fought for his country. Though nearly eighty years old, he sang to us the songs of the good old times with all the vivacity of a young man.

The school of Mr. Allen Jones, to which I had been sent, was worthy of its wide-spread reputation. I have never known and teacher who deserved more, or who enjoyed in a higher degree, the respect and confidence of his pupils.

He was born in England, and belonged to one of the most respectable families there. He had received the best education which England could give to her sons. After having gone through a perfect course of study at home, he had gone to Paris, where he had also completed an academical course. He was perfectly master of the French and English languages. And it was not without good reasons that he was surrounded by a great number of scholars from every corner of Canada. The children of the best families of St. Thomas were with me, attending the school of Mr. Jones. But he was a Protestant, the priest was much opposed to him, and every effort was made by that priest to induce my relatives to take me away from that school and send me to one under his care.

The name of the priest was Loranger. He had a swarthy countenance, and in person was lean and tall. His preaching had no attraction, and he was far from being popular among the intelligent part of the people of St. Thomas.

Dr. Tachez, whose high capacity afterwards brought him to the head of the Canadian Government, was the leading man of St. Thomas. Being united by the bonds of a sincere friendship with his nephew, L. Cazeault, who was afterward placed at the head of the University of Laval, in Quebec, I

had many opportunities of going to the house of Mr. Tachez, where my young friend was boarding.

In those days, Dr. Tachez had no need of the influence of the priests, and he frequently gave vent to his supreme contempt for them. Once a week there was a meeting in his house of the principal citizens of St. Thomas, where the highest questions of history and religion were freely and warmly discussed; but the premises as well as the conclusion of these discussions were invariably adverse to the priests and religion of Rome, and too often to every form of Christianity.

Though these meetings had not entirely the character or exclusiveness of secret societies, they were secret to a great extent. My friend Cazeault was punctual in telling me the days and hours of the meeting, and I used to go with him to an adjoining room, from which we could hear everything without being suspected. From what I heard and saw in these meetings, I most certainly would have been ruined, had not the Word of God, with which my mother had filled my young mind and heart, been my shield and strength. I was often struck with terror and filled with disgust at what I heard at those meetings. But what a strange and deplorable thing! My conscience was condemning me every time I listened to these impious discussions, while there was a strong craving in me to hear them that I could not resist.

There was then in St. Thomas a personage who was unique in his character. He never mixed with the society of the village, but was, nevertheless, the object of much respectful attention and inquiry from every one. He was one

of the former monks of Canada, known under the name of Capucin or Recollets, whom the conquest of Canada by Great Britain had forced to leave their monastery.

He was a clockmaker, and lived honorably by his trade. His little white house, in the very midst of the village, was the perfection of neatness.

Brother Mark, as he was called, was a remarkably well-built man; high stature, large and splendid shoulders, and the most beautiful hands I ever saw. His long black robe, tied around his waist by a white sash, was remarkable for its cleanliness. His life was really a solitary one, always alone with his own sister, who kept his house.

Every day that the weather was propitious, Brother Mark spent a couple of hours in fishing, and as I was myself exceedingly fond of that exercise, I used to meet him often along the banks of the beautiful rivers of St. Thomas.

His presence was always a good omen to me; for he was more expert than I in finding the best places for fishing. As soon as he found a place where the fish was abundant, he would make signs to me, or call me at the top of his voice that I might share in his good luck. I appreciated his delicate attention to me, and repaid him with the marks of a sincere gratitude. The good monk had entirely conquered my young heart, and I cherished a sincere regard for him. He often invited me to his solitary but neat little home, and I never visited him without receiving some proofs of a sincere kindness. His good sister rivalled him in overwhelming me with such marks of attention and love as I could only expect from a dear mother.

There was a mixture of timidity and dignity in the manners of brother Mark which I have found in no one else. He was fond of children: and nothing could be more graceful than his smile every time that he could see that I appreciated his kindness, and that I gave him any proof of my gratitude. But that smile, and any other expression of joy, were very transient. On a sudden he would change, and it was obvious that a mysterious cloud was passing over his heart.

The Pope had released the monks of the monastery to which he belonged, from their vows of poverty and obedience. The consequence was that they could become sic and even rich, by their own industry. It was in their power to rise to a respectable position in the world by their honorable efforts. The pope had given them the permission they wanted, that they might earn an honest living. But what a strange and incredible folly to ask the permission of a pope to be allowed to live honorably on the fruits of one's own industry!

These poor monks, having been released from their vows of obedience, were no longer the slaves of a man: but were now permitted to go to heaven on the sole condition that they would obey the laws of God and the laws of their country! But into what a frightful abyss of degradation men must have fallen, to believe that they required a license from Rome for such a purpose. This is, nevertheless, the simple and naked truth. That excess of folly, and that supreme impiety and degradation are among the fundamental dogmas of Rome. The infallible pope assures

the world that there is no possible salvation for any one who does not sincerely believe what he teaches in this matter.

But the pope who had so graciously relieved the Canadian monks from their vows of obedience and poverty, had been inflexible in reference to their vows of celibacy. From this there was no relief.

The honest desires of the good monk to live according to the laws of God, with a wife whom heaven might have given him, had become an impossibility—the pope vetoed it.

The unfortunate monk was bound to believe that he would be forever damned if he dared to accept as a gospel truth the Word of God which says:—

“Propter fornicationem antem, unusquisque uxorem suam habeat, unaquaque virum suum habeat. (Vulgate Bible of Rome.) Nevertheless to avoid fornication let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” (1 Cor., vii.: 2). That shining light which the Word contains and which gives life to man, was entirely shut out from brother Mark. He was not allowed to know that God himself had said, “It is not good that man should be alone, I will make him an help-meet for him,” (Gen. 2: 18). Brother Mark was endowed with such a loving heart! He could not be known without being loved; and he must have suffered much in that celibacy which his faith in the pope imposed upon him.

Far away from the regions of light, truth and life, that soul, tied to the feet of the implacable modern Divinity, which the Romanists worship under the name of Sovereign Pontiff, was trying in vain to annihilate and destroy the

instincts and affections which God himself had implanted in him.

One day, as I was amusing myself, with a few other young friends, near the house of brother Mark, suddenly we saw something covered with blood thrown from the window, and falling at a short distance from us. At the same instant we heard loud cries, evidently coming from the monk's house: "O my God! Have mercy on me! Save me! I am lost!"

The sister of brother Mark rushed out of doors and cried to some men who were passing by: "Come to our help! My poor brother is dying! For God's sake make haste, he is losing all his blood!"

I ran to the door, but the lady shut it abruptly and turned me out, saying, "we do not want children here."

I had a sincere affection for the good brother. He had invariably been so kind to me! I insisted and respectfully requested to be allowed to enter. Though young and weak, it seemed that my friendly feelings towards the suffering brother would add to my strength, and enable me to be of some service. But my request was sternly rejected, and I had to go back to the street among the crowd which was fast gathering. The singular mystery in which they were trying to wrap the poor monk, filled me with trouble and anxiety.

But that trouble was soon changed into an unspeakable confusion when I heard the convulsive laughing of the low people, and the shameful jokes of the crowd, after the doctor had told the nature of the wound which was causing the unfortunate man to bleed almost to death. I was struck

with such horror that I fled away; I did not want to know any more of that tragedy. I had already known too much!

Poor brother Mark had ceased to be a man—he had become an eunuch.

O cruel and Godless church of Rome! How many souls hast thou deceived and tortured! How many hearts hast thou broken with that celibacy which Satan alone could invent! This unfortunate victim of a most degrading religion, did not, however, die from his rash action; he soon recovered his usual health.

Having, meanwhile, ceased to visit him; some months later I was fishing along the river in a very solitary place. The fish were abundant, and I was completely absorbed in catching them, when, on a sudden, I felt on my shoulder the gentle pressure of a hand. It was brother Mark's.

I thought I would faint through the opposite sentiments of surprise, of pain and joy, which at the same time crossed my mind.

With an affectionate and trembling voice he said to me, "My dear child, why do you not come to see me any more?"

I did not dare to look at him after he had addressed me these words. I liked him on account of his acts of kindness to me. But the fatal hour when, in the street before the door, I had suffered so much on his account—that fatal hour was on my heart as a mountain which I could not put away—I could not answer him.

He then asked me again with the tone of a criminal who sues for mercy; "Why is it my dear child, that you do not come any longer to see me? You know that I love you."

“Dear brother Mark,” I answered “I will never forget your kindness to me. I will forever be grateful to you; I wish that it would be in my power to continue, as formerly, to go and see you. But I cannot, and you ought to know the reason why I cannot.”

I had pronounced these words with down-cast eyes. I was a child, with the timidity and happy ignorance of a child. But the action of that unfortunate man had struck me with such a horror that I could not entertain the idea of visiting him any more.

He spent two or three minutes without saying a word, and without moving. But I heard his sobs and his cries, and his cries were those of despair and anguish, the like of which I have never heard since.

I could not contain myself any longer, I was suffocating with suppressed emotion, and I would have fallen insensible to the ground if two streams of tears had not burst from my eyes. Those tears did me good—they did him good also—they told him that I was still his friend.

He took me in his arms and pressed me to his bosom—his tears were mixed with mine. But I could not speak—the emotions of my heart were too much for my age. I sat on a damp and cold stone, in order not to faint. He fell on his knees by my side.

Ah! if I were a painter I would make a most striking tableau of that scene. His eyes, swollen and red with weeping, were raised to heaven, his hand lifted up in the attitude of supplication; he was crying out with an accent which seemed as though it would break my heart.

“Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu que je suis malheureux.”

My God! My God! what a wretched man I am!

The twenty-five years that I have been a priest of Rome, have revealed to me the fact that the cries of desolation I heard that day, were but the echo of the cries of desolation which go out from almost every nunnery, every parsonage and every house where human beings are bound by the ties of the Romish Celibacy.

God knows that I am a faithful witness of what my eyes have seen and my ears have heard, when I say to the multitudes which the Church of Rome has bewitched with her enchantments. Wherever there are nuns, monks and priests who live in forced violation of the ways which God has appointed for man to walk in, there are torrents of tears, there are desolated hearts, there are cries of anguish and despair which say in the words of brother Mark:

“Oh! que je suis malheureux!”

Oh! how miserable and wretched I am!

Chapter III

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THE CONFESSION OF CHILDREN.

No words can express to those who have never had any experience in the matter, the consternation, anxiety and shame of a poor Romish child, when he hears, for the first time, his priest saying from the pulpit, in a grave and solemn tone, "This week, you will send your children to confession. Make them understand that this action is one of the most important of their lives, that for every one of them, it will decide their eternal happiness or misery. Fathers and mothers, if, through your fault, or his own, your child is guilty of a bad confession—if he conceals his sins and commences lying to the priest, who holds the place of God himself, this sin is often irreparable. The devil will take possession of his heart: he will become accustomed to lie to his father confessor, or rather to Jesus Christ, of whom he is a representative. His life will be a series of sacrileges; his death and eternity those of the reprobate. Teach him, therefore, to examine thoroughly his actions, words and thoughts, in order to confess without disguise."

I was in the church of St. Thomas when those words fell upon me like a thunderbolt.

I had often heard my mother say, when at home, and my aunt, since I had come to St. Thomas, that upon the first confession depended my eternal happiness or misery. That week was, therefore, to decide about my eternity.

Pale and dismayed, I left the church, and returned to the house of my relatives. I took my place at the table, but could not eat, so much was I troubled. I went to my room for the purpose of commencing my examination of conscience and to try to recall my sinful actions, words, and thoughts. Although scarcely over ten years of age, this task was really overwhelming for me. I knelt down to pray to the Virgin Mary for help; but I was so much taken up with the fear of forgetting something, and of making a bad confession, that I muttered my prayers without the least attention to what I said. It became still worse when I commenced counting my sins. My memory became confused, my head grew dizzy; my heart beat with a rapidity which exhausted me, and my brow was covered with perspiration. After a considerable length of time spent in these painful efforts, I felt bordering on despair, from the fear that it was impossible for me to remember everything. The night following was almost a sleepless one; and when sleep did come, it could scarcely be called a sleep, but a suffocating delirium. In a frightful dream, I felt as if I had been cast into hell, for not having confessed all my sins to the priest. In the morning, I awoke, fatigued and prostrated by the phantoms of that terrible night. In similar troubles of mind were passed three days which preceded my first confession. I had constantly before me the countenance of that stern priest who had never smiled upon me. He was present in my thoughts during the day, and in my dreams during the night, as the minister of an angry God, justly irritated against me on account of my sins. Forgiveness had indeed been promised to me, on condition of a good confession; but my place had also been

shown to me in hell, if my confession was not as near perfection as possible. Now, my troubled conscience told me that there were ninety-nine chances against one, that my confession would be bad, whether by my own fault I forgot some sins, or I was without that contrition of which I had heard so much, but the nature and effects of which were a perfect chaos to my mind.

Thus it was that the cruel and perfidious Church of Rome took away from my young heart the good and merciful Jesus, whose love and compassion had caused me to shed tears of joy when I was beside my mother. The Saviour whom that church made me to worship, through fear, was not the Saviour who called little children unto Him, to bless them and take them in His arms. Her impious hands were soon to torture and defile my childish heart, and place me at the feet of a pale and severe looking man—worthy representative of a pitiless God. I was made to tremble with terror at the footstool of an implacable divinity, while the gospel asked of me only tears of love and joy, shed at the feet of the incomparable Friend of sinners!

At length came the day of confession; or rather of judgment and condemnation. I presented myself to the priest.

Mr. Loranger was no longer priest of St. Thomas. He had been succeeded by Mr. Beaubien, who did not favor our school any more than his predecessor. He had even taken upon himself to preach a sermon against the heretical school, by which we had been excessively wounded. His want of love for us, however, I must say, was fully reciprocated.

Mr. Beaubien had, then, the defect of lisping and stammering. This we often turned into ridicule, and one of my favorite amusements was to imitate him, which brought bursts of laughter from us all.

It had been necessary for me to examine myself upon the number of times I had mocked him. This circumstance was not calculated to make my confession easier, or more agreeable.

At last the dreaded moment came. I knelt at the side of my confessor. My whole frame trembled. I repeated the prayer preparatory to confession, scarcely knowing what I said so much as I troubled with fear.

By the instructions which had been given us before confession, we had been made to believe that the priest was the true representative—yea, almost the personification of Jesus Christ. The consequence was, that I believed my greatest sin had been that of mocking the priest. Having always been told that it was best to confess the greatest sin first, I commenced thus: “Father I accuse myself of having mocked a priest.”

Scarcely had I uttered these words, “mocked a priest,” when this pretended representative of the humble Saviour, turning towards me, and looking in my face in order to know me better, asked abruptly, “What priest did you mock, my boy?” I would rather have chosen to cut out my tongue than to tell him to his face who it was. I therefore kept silent for a while. But my silence made him very nervous and almost angry. With a haughty tone of voice he said, “What priest did you take the liberty of thus mocking?”

I saw that I had to answer. Happily his haughtiness had made me firmer and bolder. I said "Sir, you are the priest whom I mocked."

"But how many times did you take upon you to mock me, my boy?"

"I tried to find out," I answered, "but never could."

"You must tell me how many times; for to mock one's own priest is a great sin."

"It is impossible for me to give you the number of times," answered I.

"Well, my child, I will help your memory by asking you questions. Tell me the truth. Do you think you have mocked me ten times?"

"A great many times more, sir."

"Fifty times?"

"Many more still."

"A hundred times?"

"Say five hundred times and perhaps more," answered I.

"Why, my boy, do you spend all your time in mocking me?"

"Not all; but unfortunately I do it very often."

"Well may you say *unfortunately*; for so to mock your priest, who holds the place of our Lord Jesus Christ, is a great misfortune, and a great sin for you. But tell me, my little boy, what reason have you for mocking me thus?"

In my examinations of conscience I had not foreseen that I should be obliged to give the reasons for mocking the priest; and I was really thunderstruck by his questions. I dared not answer, and I remained for a long time dumb, from the shame that overpowered me. But with a harrassing

perseverance the priest insisted on my telling why I had mocked him; telling me that I should be damned if I did not tell the whole truth. So I decided to speak, and said, “I mocked you for several things.”

“What made you first mock me?” continued the priest.

“I laughed at you because you lisped. Among the pupils of our school, it often happens that we imitate your preaching to excite laughter.”

“Have you often done that?”

“Almost every day, especially in our holidays, and since you preached against us.”

“For what other reasons did you laugh at me, my little boy?”

For a long time I was silent. Every time I opened my mouth to speak courage failed me. However, the priest continuing to urge me, I said at last, “It is rumored in town that you love girls; that you visit the Misses Richards every evening, and this often makes us laugh.”

The poor priest was evidently overwhelmed by my answer, and ceased questioning me on this subject. Changing the conversation, he said:

“What are your other sins?”

I began to confess them in the order in which they came to my memory. But the feeling of shame which overpowered me in repeating all my sins to this man was a thousand times greater than that of having offended God. In reality this feeling of human shame which absorbed my thought—nay, my whole being—left no room for any religious feeling at all.