

Letter from Rev. Mr. Chiniquy.

[We, sometime since, gave a translation from a French Canadian paper of a letter from Mr. Chiniquy to some of his friends, on the occasion of his visit to his native Province. The following is extracted from a late Quebec paper, being the translation of an Address to his countrymen at large, on the subject of his reception at Quebec in February last. However unrelaxing in their claims for despotic authority the Priesthood may be, it certainly would seem that their power is somewhat on the wane in Canada. The calm and manly spirit in which Mr. Chiniquy's address is couched, will not be lost on the reflecting part of his readers in that Province, and it seems next to a certainty that his accession is but the prelude of a movement that will signally vindicate the right of independant thought among our Canadian fellow-subjects.—Ed. C. M.]

MONTREAL, March 5, 1859.

To my fellow-countrymen of the District of Quebec:—

BRETHREN AND FRIENDS.—The events of the 14th day of February are of so serious a nature, and the enemies of the light and of the truth in Quebec are so much interested in misconstruing them, that I feel myself obliged to repeat them over again to you, just as they occurred.

About a year ago, 500 of the most respectable citizens of St. Rochs invited me to come and visit the numerous friends that desired to see me again and hear me once more. It was in consequence of this invitation that I arrived in St. Rochs on the 10th February, at 10 o'clock a.m. My friends had there prepared a house for me, in Crown street, a short distance from the parish church.

Every one knows that the clergy, the preceding Sunday, had prohibited all the Roman Catholics of Quebec, and of St. Rochs, St. John's, and St. Vallier's suburbs, from going to hear me, from speaking to me, and even from saluting me. They proclaimed, in the name of the *Holy and infallible Romish Church*, that whosoever should infringe upon these prohibitions would commit mortal sin, be destined to eternal fire, and would find himself excommunicated, &c., &c. But what was the result of all these puerile menaces—of all these ridiculous thunderbolts, good only to hold the people in slavery and ignorance? It was, that the people of St. Rochs only laughed at them, and treated them with contempt.

I had scarcely arrived, when a great crowd, of every age and condition, surrounded my dwelling, who shook hands with me, expressing their joy at seeing me again. The principal room where I received my friends was inadequate, during the first three days, to hold the number of persons who wished to express their sympathy, and to give the most striking marks of approval for the resistance we had opposed to Episcopal tyranny in Illinois. The street in front of my residence was, from morning to evening, crowded with people, who waited in the open air, in the cold weather of the month of February, for their turn to have an interview with me. And several times I was obliged to open the windows and to address some friendly remarks to these kind-hearted friends, to bless them, and thank them for having retained their friendship for the proscribed of Illinois.

On the 11th, I gave a public lecture in the Lecture Hall, Ste. Anne street. A long time before the appointed hour most of the seats were filled, and a great number could not get in at all, the crowd was so great, and were obliged to return home disappointed. This discourse was received with unequivocal marks of approval. I announced a second lecture for the Sunday, at two o'clock, p. m., and said that the subject would be "*The mission of Jesus Christ upon earth.*"

As on the first occasion, most of the available space of the hall was occupied at an early hour, and a dense crowd pressed in, filling up the passage and the platform almost to suffocation, and still a great number were obliged to leave for want of room. During my discourse, at the moment when I quoted the memorable words of St. John, where he says that Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a laboring man (*homme du peuple*) raised his voice to insult me. I waited a while.

At the morning service the priests had preached in a way to excite the worst passions of their hearers. They shed tears of grief and holy anger at the immense defection they had witnessed, and the public disrespect, so clearly evidenced, into which their authority had fallen; and many respectable persons had told me before-hand that the priests were doing everything they could to excite a disturbance, and prevent me being heard: this rude interruption, therefore, did not in the least surprise me. The indignation against its author was, however, universal; and he was immediately expelled out of doors. The pro-mayor cordially approved of the zeal of my friends, who had

thus hastened to re-establish order and silence—united in the request of the whole audience that I should continue my lecture in these noble words, "Proceed, Mr. Chiniquy; you only speak the truth. I shall shed the last drop of my blood before I allow liberty of speech to be destroyed in Quebec." I was enabled, then, in the most perfect quietness, and with the wrapt attention of my audience, to enlarge upon those sublime and consoling truths upon which I had purposed to speak. During the remainder of the Sabbath day the crowd pressed about me as densely as ever. * * * I gave away some copies of the Holy Scriptures; every one seemed to wish to possess this Divine book. In the twinkling of an eye, I distributed my whole stock of New Testaments. During the evening, friends came to tell me, "the priests are going about everywhere; they are furious at seeing that the people are resolved to read the Gospel, and that you are distributing this holy book."—Their partisans are diminishing rapidly; but, with the few that remain, they are determined to make a final effort to cause a disturbance, in which you will either lose your life or be obliged to leave the city, and thus be prevented from speaking to-morrow, as you have engaged to do." I replied to these friends, "My life is in the hands of God, and I shall be only too happy to lose it in the cause I have espoused. I fear nothing on the part of the enemies of the Gospel. He who put it into my heart to come here to scatter the seed of the Divine Word will be quite able to protect me." Notwithstanding, a handful of brave young gentlemen, well armed, made up their minds to keep watch during the remainder of the night. The news of their generous determination soon became known out of doors, and the priests saw that the courage of their partisans would be unequal to the task of attempting violence against my person. To attack an adversary when surrounded by friends ready to defend him appeared to them too rash and fool-hardy, and they thought it more prudent, more certain, more Roman, to wait until he was without defence. At eight o'clock, the following morning, my young friends said to me, "We shall go home and have our breakfast, and return to our post in half-an-hour."—"Very well, my friends," I said to them; "at the same time I do not apprehend any danger." They then went off, leaving me with the two people who had had the goodness to offer their services in administering to my wants.

A spy was at the door, and waited for a favorable moment to give the signal to his accomplices. My friends had hardly got out of sight when a whistle was heard, and about 50 men silently assembled in front of my door, and sent a deputation of three of the most notorious of the gang—worthy ambassadors of the priests—to command me to leave the house instantly; and to tell me that if I did not obey this order the house would be demolished in five minutes, and I should be buried in the ruins! * * * They accompanied their threats with the most horrible oaths and the most frightful blasphemies; they swore in my presence, that they would sooner lose their lives than suffer me to speak another word in Quebec. "You are a cursed Protestant," they vociferated; "you are the enemy of our holy priests—of our holy bishops: you wish to destroy our holy religion. Get out of this at once, or we shall exterminate you."

These brave champions of the *holy Roman Church* and of the *holy bishops* of Quebec addressed to me a thousand other insulting epithets. But from words they proceeded to actions: the one set about smashing the chairs, the other approached towards me foaming with rage at the mouth, holding his black fist close to my face. I replied quietly, "Your threats are useless; if you wish to kill me, it is an easy matter for you to do so—I am alone and without defence. But if you are able to kill me, you can never frighten me. You see my breakfast is ready, and I wish to take it before leaving." I sat down at the table, poured out my tea, and put in the sugar and cream as tranquilly as if I had been surrounded by my best friends. Still the fists were raised above my head. The brave men who waited upon me were in dread of their lives; the broken chairs were flying in all directions about me. My desire was to gain a few minutes, so that my friends in St. Rochs might learn how I was situated and come to my rescue. The worthy defenders of the *holy Roman Church*, perhaps suspecting my design, redoubled their imprecations and blasphemies. The menaces and fists were not only directed against myself, but against the two good people who had prepared my breakfast. I then said to these furies—"It is against me alone that you should direct your anger and your blows, since it is myself

alone who has come to preach the truth; leave these brave men alone—I shall go."

I then went down stairs, and got into the cariole provided for me by the rioters. In the street a man was about to raise his voice to insult me, but one of the chief rioters cried out, "Silence! not a word."

They feared, probably, that their cries might attract the attention of my friends in the neighbourhood, whose presence they had good reason to be afraid of. Arrived at the house of a relation in town, I sent for the pro-Mayor, Mr. Hall, and told him what had transpired, saying that I should place myself under the protection of the laws, and that I wished to give my lecture at the appointed hour. This honorable gentleman assured me that all the power, civil or military, at his disposal, would be employed to protect me in my right of addressing my friends. He further assured me, that there was not an honest-minded citizen in the city who would not sooner forfeit his life than the liberty of speech: and he honorably kept his word. Thanks to his energetic measures, I was enabled to give my lecture at the hour appointed, in spite of the rioters that the *holy Romish Church* kept in readiness to disturb the peace. These *holy men* covered with red and black rosaries, entrusted with medals, from 100 to 1000 days of indulgence, who were so brave in action in the morning, in attacking a man alone and undefended, were quite dumb, without strength, and as meek as lambs, when they saw before them men determined to maintain the most sacred rights of the citizens.

You have thus an abridged, but faithful history of what transpired in the disturbances of 14th February; but before leaving Canada, I owe it to my fellow-countrymen, I owe it to the cause of truth, to address some reflections to the priests and bishops of Canada.

Within three years, look at the four disturbances which you have raised to rid yourselves of those you call Protestants, apostates, enemies of your *holy Romish Church*. Incapable of meeting your opponents on the ground of argument, worthy descendants and supporters of the *holy inquisition*, you have recourse to violence, to oppose and destroy the truth which makes you afraid; you have recourse to bloody riots to prop up your tottering power. It is well; continue; accustom the people to use the stick and the club for an argument; discipline your adepts to shed the blood of those that you call the enemies of the *holy Romish Church*; applaud with cries of rage the murderers who knock down their victims, and the robbers who violate the most sacred right of nations, that of the domestic hearth; you will then prove to all that you are worthy successors of those who slaughtered thousands of their brethren on the night of St. Bartholomew; you will open the eyes of the blindest to the spirit and tendencies of the Romish Church; you will demonstrate to the most incredulous, that you have completely renounced this gospel which tells you not to do to others what you would not like to be done to yourselves; you will shew to the most ardent of your *zealots* that you are the enemies of Him who said to Peter, "Put up thy sword in its sheath, for those who make use of the sword shall perish by the sword."

You do not wish that those who differ from you in religion shall have the right to speak; you excite against them the rage of riotous men; you cry for their blood. But really do you think that the people will leave you long in possession of this power you abuse so strangely?

Do you not see that the shoulders of this poor people are bruised and bloody under the heavy and odious yoke you lay upon them? Do you not hear the low and threatening murmurs that come from the breasts of this people, when they see you drag from them their last farthing, for the souls of your insatiable purgatory? Yes, all these confraternities, all these medals, these indulgences of 5, 20, 40 sous, with which you extract the money from poor as well as rich, will open the eyes of numbers, and already many are persuaded that if you really did believe in the fires of purgatory, you would not wait until you got *trente sous* to take a poor suffering soul out of purgatory, no more than you would demand *trente sous* to save a person drowning before your eyes. There are even those who blush for you, when they hear you say in speaking of such and such a person deceased—he is probably in purgatory, give me \$10, \$20, and I shall immediately try to get him out, or to get him taken out. This shameful traffic begins to be despised. The people see that the enormous sums they give you for the souls in purgatory remain at the bottom of your purses, and that the good souls do not get a fraction. Continue your infamous commerce in prayers, indulgences and medals; build for yourselves with these

monies sumptuous palaces; rear up gigantic cathedrals, robe yourselves in purple and the finest garments; load your tables with the most delicate viands, and knock down those that disturb your repose; and continue to elect in every county, the enemies of the people. But mark well what I tell you: the people will soon awaken from the profound slumber in which they have kept them. In spite of you, their eyes will be opened to the light which is coming in upon them on every side.

But this waking up will be terrible, like that of the lion. This people who till the ground, in the sweat of their brow, have not a sou left; the poor people are nearly naked, and their children trembling with cold. But they will soon waken up, and will say—I have now nothing left; I am naked, hungry, without shelter: where are the goods which God gave to me? And a voice from heaven will say to them—"Behold them down there in those magnificent palaces; there is the price of your hard labors, and the bread of your children. Under the cloak of religion, your priests have ruined you and made you their slaves. They have snatched away a thing more precious than all earthly treasures, the Word of God, the Divine Gospel that Christ has sent you to succour you in your wretchedness." And then a disturbance will take place, but a terrible and frightful disturbance, such as is rarely seen on the surface of the globe. What you have done to others, will be done to yourselves, and in the same measure. In these days of agitation, of vengeance and retribution, the Canadian people, like the French people in 1792, will settle their accounts with you, and will make you pay dearly for your frauds, your impostures, your intolerance and your tyranny. You will be dragged with violence from your palaces, and your mournful cries will be but the echo of the cries of pain of your victims; and your blood will be mingled with the blood of those whose blood you have shed; your reign, the reign of man, will be at an end, and the reign of Christ, the reign of God's Word, shall have begun.

C. CHINIQUY.

Provincial Parliament.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

MONDAY, April 4th.

House met at 12 o'clock and adjourned, to enable the Education committee to meet.

The House resumed at 3 o'clock. Hon. Mr. Howe, from the Committee to whom was referred the Report of J. B. Akins, Esq., Commissioner of Public Records, reported thereon—recommending that the work be continued for another year, when the same is expected to be completed.

The Committee on Public Printing reported. An Act relating to Railway Assessment in the City of Halifax was read a third time.

The report of the Committee on Humane Institutions was adopted, on motion of Mr. Ryder, Mr. McDonald moved the adoption of the report of the Committee on the petition of the Inland Navigation Company, and also the second reading of the bill to carry out its provisions.

Hon. Mr. Howe objected to the cancelling of £5,000, due by the Company to the Province.

Mr. Wier and Hon. Prov. Secretary spoke in favor of its adoption.

Hon. Mr. Young explained the circumstances under which the loan was made. The clause which required that bonds should be given for the completion of the works before the debt was cancelled—was put in at his suggestion.

On division, there appeared, for the adoption of the report, 16; against it, 22.

The following bills were read a third time:—A Bill to amend the laws relative to the Militia.

A Bill to alter and establish the boundaries of Electoral Districts in certain counties of the Province.

An Act to regulate the manner of holding the Elections in the different Electoral Districts.

And an Act to prohibit the erection of wooden buildings in certain portions of the City of Halifax.

Mr. Tobin gave notice to rescind the vote as to the report of the Committee on the Inland Navigation Company.

The House in committee on Bills.

The Act to amend the Act for the management of the Hospital for the Insane was read.

Hon. Mr. Howe moved the re-consideration of the last clause of the Bill relating to the Hospital for the Insane, which provides for the expenditure of £7,000 during the ensuing year, to build an addition to that building for the use of violent patients. He thought it would be unwise, in the position of our resources, to expend more money on that work at present.

The Prov. Secretary explained that the government were very reluctant at first to authorize this additional outlay, but they were influenced by the strong representations of the Superintendent and the Commissioners, who stated that the usefulness of the Institution was almost destroyed from the want of accommodation for violent patients.

After some remarks from different gentlemen on the enormous cost of the present building, as compared with the institution in St. John's, the motion was negatived 17 to 15. Bill passed.