

# PASTOR CHINIQUY AN EXAMINATION OF HIS "FIFTY YEARS IN THE CHURCH OF ROME"

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\* Since "*Chick Comics*" indulge their anti-Catholic diatribes with liberal doses of references to the unfortunate Fr Chiniquy, this pamphlet is of more than historical interest. To read *Chick*, one would think that Fr Chiniquy was a recent loss to the Catholic Church, not a character dating back to before the American Civil War. It is with a degree of sorrow that I recommend the reading of this pamphlet as a partial antidote to the unsound anti-Catholic ravings coming from the presses of *Chick*. They say they love the Lord. Excellent. May the Lord they love lead them into the fullness of the Church the Lord founded. Amen. \*

Assistant to the Web Master. \*

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**IF** the person who called himself Father Chiniquy had confined himself to the ministrations of the religion for which he forsook the Church of his baptism, we might have left him unchallenged to give his own account of the motives and circumstances of his alleged conversion. But inasmuch as he has sought to gain popularity and income by **wholesale misrepresentations** against the personal character and beliefs of those with whom he was previously associated, and his books written for this purpose are still widely used as instruments for the persecution of poor Catholic working men and working women in the shops and factories, those connected with him can have no complaint against us for submitting his past career to a searching examination, even if the result should be to discover facts not tending to exalt his reputation. So far, indeed, we have not taken this course, the difficulty of obtaining the requisite information from distant places having been so great; but so many piteous appeals have reached us from the victims of this unscrupulous persecution, that we have seen the necessity of putting the man's story to the test, and through the kindness of some American and Canadian friends we have been supplied with some materials which, if they do not enable us to check his story at every point, suffice at least to show that he was not exactly the witness of truth.

Before entering on the particulars of his life it will be convenient to consider the general nature of his charges against the Catholic Church and her clergy. And here at the outset we discover a very remarkable development in his allegations. In his earliest biographical effusion, *published by the Religious Tract Society in 1861*, he bases his conversion solely on doctrinal considerations, and so far from bringing charges against the moral character of the Catholic clergy, he says expressly that there are in the Church of Rome many most sincere and respectable men, and that "we must surely pray God to send them His light, but we cannot go further and abuse them"; nor is there any charge against their personal character in his *Why I left the Church of Rome*, which comes next in chronological order.

But it would seem that the ultra-Protestant palate required something more stimulating, for in his verbose and voluminous *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* (1885) he tells quite a **different story**. There he represents himself as one whom the influences of birth, education, and social connections attached firmly to the Catholic Church, but whom a series of appalling experiences as a child, as an aspirant to the sacred ministry, as a priest, drove in spite of himself to realize that this Church was utterly unscriptural in her doctrines and corrupt in her morals. Gradually and sorrowfully he was led to realize that her rulers were perfectly well aware of this opposition between her teaching and that of the Bible, and just for this reason

strove always to keep the knowledge of the sacred volumes from her people, forbidding her laity to possess copies of them, and her clergy to attach to them any meaning save such as was dictated by a unanimous consent of the Fathers, which was never obtainable. Gradually and sorrowfully he was led to realize that the practice of auricular confession meant nothing less than the systematic pollution of young minds by filthy questions, and that the vow of clerical celibacy served only to set the priests on the path of incontinence. Gradually and sorrowfully he was led to realize that the clergy practically as a whole were drunkards and infidels, whose one interest in their sacred profession was by simony and oppression to make as much money out of it as their opportunities allowed them.

Thus Bishop Panet is represented as making the acknowledgement that "the priests [of the diocese of Quebec] with the exception of M. Perras and one or two others, were infidels and atheists," (*Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*, p. 139. All subsequent references are to this work except where otherwise specified.) but as finding a strange consolation in learning from M. Perras that "the Popes themselves, at least fifty of them, had been just as bad."

Father Guignes, the Superior of the Oblate Fathers, tells him "there are not more undefiled souls among the priests than in the days of Lot" (p. 280), that "it is in fact morally impossible for a secular priest to keep his vow of celibacy except by a miracle of the grace of God," but that "the priests whom God calls to become members of any of the [religious] orders are safe." Later he discovers that, so far from this being the case, "the regular clergy give themselves up with more impunity to every kind of debauch and licentiousness than the secular" (p. 308). In Illinois things were quite as bad, indeed much worse. "The drunkenness and other immoralities of the clergy there" -- as pictured to him on his arrival in those parts by a M. Lebel, a Canadian priest who had charge of the Canadian colonists of Chicago -- "surpassed all [he] had ever heard or known" (p. 352), and somewhat later he made the painful discovery that Lebel himself was among the worst of them.

Nor were the bishops in the two countries any better. Bishop Lefevre, of Detroit, was a man capable of taking the teetotal pledge publicly in face of his assembled flock, and that same evening coolly disregarding it at his own private table; and his predecessor, Bishop Reese, "during the last years he had spent in the diocese, had passed very few weeks without being picked up beastly drunk in the lowest taverns" (p. 347). Bishop Quarter, of Chicago, is fortunate in not himself coming under Chiniquy's lash, but the latter assures us that he died poisoned by his Grand Vicar, who desired thus to prevent the exposure of his own licentious conduct (p. 352). Bishop Vandeveld, who succeeded Bishop Quarter, is on the whole more leniently dealt with, but "though he was most moderate in his drink at table" we are assured that "at night when nobody could see him he gave himself up to the detestable habit of intoxication" (p. 382).

Bishop O'Regan, the successor of Bishop Vandeveld, and the prelate who, by force of circumstances, was brought into the sharpest conflict with Chiniquy, pays for it by being represented as the incarnation of all that can be odious in human character; and Archbishop Kendrick is represented as having agreed with Chiniquy that "the rapacity of Bishop O'Regan, his thefts, his lies, his acts of simony, were public and intolerable," and "that unprincipled dignitary is the cause that our holy religion is not only losing her prestige in the United States, but is becoming an object of contempt wherever these public crimes are known" (p. 434). Bishop Bourget, of Montreal, is another prelate whose character is aspersed by this man's allegations. In one place we are assured that this bishop, when a young priest staying with his Bishop at the Hotel Dieu in Montreal, was one of two or three priests who so shocked the nuns that the latter said, "unless the bishop went away and took his priests away with him, it would be far better that they themselves should leave the convent and get married" (p. 307). Also, this ecclesiastic, we are told, when Bishop of Montreal, bade Chiniquy to allure into a convent a lady who confessedly had no vocation, solely in order that he might transfer her large fortune into his episcopal coffers (p. 358); and that for refusing to co-operate in this iniquitous scheme he determined to ruin him, *put up an abandoned girl to make a false charge against his honour*, and then suspend him without allowing him to defend himself.

This is the substance of Chiniquy's indictment against the bishops and clergy of the two countries of which

he had experience, and in support of it he brings together numerous facts, or what purport to be such, full of detail and of long conversations, all so conceived as to suggest that the greatest part of the iniquities of these people were either too palpable to need proof, so were attested by the acknowledgements of the accused persons themselves. That a book of this kind should deeply impress readers of the Protestant Alliance type is not surprising. But **more prudent minds** will note:

(1)

that this mass of denunciation was not published till after 1885 -- that is, after a quarter of a century from the date when, with his apostasy, his experiences of Catholic life from the inside must have ceased;

(2)

that all rests on this unsupported testimony of Chiniquy himself; and

(3)

that the whole tone of the book is that of a man absolutely egotistic and impracticable, absolutely incapable of seeing any other side but his own, absolutely reckless in his charges against any one who should venture to oppose him, and absolutely exaggerated at all times in his language;

(4)

in short, that the author of a story which makes out the Catholic Church of Canada and the United States, at the date of which he writes, to be so essentially different from what unbiased witnesses find it to be within the scope of their own direct observation, is one who paints himself in his own book as destitute of all those qualities which predispose a discerning reader to repose confidence in an author's statements.

To this general motive for distrust others accede as soon as we begin to carry our **examination into the details** of the book. Thus in his fourth chapter he tells us of a secret meeting in the house of one of his uncles, which was attended by several of the leading inhabitants of Kamouraska. Its object was to discuss the conduct of the clergy in the confessional, and the narrator fills six closely printed pages with a detailed report of the speeches then delivered. He was not invited to the meeting, but was present at it in the character of an eavesdropper, hiding in some unobserved corner, his age at the time being ten. We must suppose, then, that this youthful scribe, with an intelligence beyond his years, took down the speeches in shorthand, for future use; or rather, since we are not credulous enough to believe this, we must suppose that all this account of the meeting was pure invention of his after-years, and must conclude that the man was capable of such amplifications and inventions, and of palming them off as truths when it happened to suit his purpose. And this point about his method being established, we may surely suspect him of employing it in the similarly detailed stories with which the book abounds, and in which priests and bishops speak just as a fierce anti-Catholic might wish them to speak, but quite unlike the way in which they are found to speak all the world over.

Nor is it a question here of their speaking as bad men rather than as good men, but of the specific style of the explanations and vindications of their own doctrines and practices which they are made to give. For instance, it is known perfectly well from their theological books what replies priests and other Catholics are taught to give to those who take objection to their Church's doctrine on the lawfulness of Bible reading and of interpreting Scripture inconsistently with the "unanimous consent of the Fathers", on the veneration of our Blessed Lady and the Saints and of its accord with Holy Scripture, on the practice of asking and refraining from asking questions in the confessional, and so on. Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that what these Catholic theological books say on these subjects is altogether unsound and indefensible, at least the clergy of Canada might be expected to answer in the language laid down for them in their books, and not in the language which makes Catholics laugh when some composer of Protestant fictions puts it in the mouths of his characters. Yet the priestly characters in Chiniquy's *Fifty Years* speak invariably like the latter, not the former. And, *just as if we came across a traveller's account of a country in which the lions brayed and the donkey's roared, the nightingale cawed and the rooks sang*

sweetly in the night-time, we should say that our traveller was either joking or lying; so will any intelligent possessor of a historic sense say of Chiniquy's paradoxical account of the sayings and doings of the Canadian and American clergy.

It may be well to give **an illustration** of what we refer to under this head, and the following is an apposite one (p. 334). Chiniquy had preached a sermon on devotion to our Blessed Lady, and had been congratulated on it by Bishop Prince, then Auxiliary Bishop of Montreal. During the night he professes to have seen how unscriptural had been his preaching, and how opposed to the teaching of the Evangelist, who, when our Lord's mother and brethren stood without, refused to recognize them as having any claims upon Him. It is a well-known passage, and any Catholic commentary would, if referred to, have explained that our Lord wished to teach a lesson to the apostles and their successors in the ministry, of the devotedness with which they must be prepared to subordinate all earthly ties to the service of their ministry. Yet neither to Chiniquy nor to the bishop does it even occur to consider this explanation, and they talk just as if they were two Protestants.

"How", asks Chiniquy, "can we say that Jesus always granted the requests of His mother, when this evangelist tells us He never granted her petitions when acting in His capacity of Saviour of the world?" At which simple, easy question the bishop is represented as seeming "absolutely confused", so that Chiniquy has to help him out by further asking "Who came into the world to save you and me?" to which the bishop replies sheepishly, "It is Jesus"; and "Who is the sinner's best friend, Jesus or Mary?" to which the bishop replies, "It is Jesus . . . Jesus said to all sinners, 'Come unto me', He never said 'Go to Mary' " -- the bishop finally extricating himself from his embarrassment by saying feebly, "You will find an answer to your questions in the Holy Fathers." *Is it likely that a Catholic bishop talked like that?* Is it not more likely that the writer who fabricated what he supposes himself to have overheard at the age of ten, **fabricated this conversation too**, and others like it throughout the book which are similarly destitute of probability?

Nor is the test of **self-contradiction** wanting to complete our distrust of Chiniquy's allegations. He is continually telling his readers that the Church of Rome forbids the reading of Scripture to the laity, and even to her ecclesiastical students. Thus when he was a young seminarian at St. Nicolet he tells us it was the rule of the College to keep the Bible apart in the library, among the forbidden books. But one day, having obtained access to a copy and surreptitiously spent an hour or so in perusing it, he afterwards felt bound to tell the director, his great friend M. Leprohon. The latter, he assures us, was sad, and while acknowledging his inability to answer his pupil's argumentation, said, "I have something better than my own weak thoughts. I have the thoughts of the Church and of our Holy Father the Pope. They forbid us to put the Bible in the hands of our students." Yet in the story of his boyhood -- in which he tells us how he used as a child to read aloud to the neighbouring farmers out of a Bible belonging to his family, and how the priest, hearing of this, came one day to take the forbidden book away -- he has to acknowledge that this copy had been given to his father as a seminary prize in his early days.

And -- to pass over such insights as he gives us into clerical life in the order of the day observed in the presbytery of his first Curé, where a daily hour was assigned to Bible reading -- we may be content to set against his later allegations the statements he made on the *occasion of his controversy with Roussy, a Protestant minister, on January 7, 1851.*

This date, indeed, should be noted, for it means that this controversy took place shortly before his departure from Canada to Illinois, and therefore after the many occasions when, according to his *Fifty Years*, he had felt and expressed to personal friends his concern at finding that the Church feared the Bible and sought to hide it from her children. And yet on the platform, on January 7, 1851, he talks just as a Catholic priest would talk, except, indeed, for the repulsive egotism and browbeating which is all his own. Take, for instance, the following passage:

"Certain Protestants will repeat that the Church forbids the reading of the Bible by the people. This is a cowardly and absurd lie, and it is only the ignorant or the silly amongst Protestants who at present believe this ancient fabrication of heresy. Some unscrupulous ministers, however, are

constantly bringing it up before the eyes of their dupes to impose upon them and keep them in a holy horror of what they call Popery. Let Protestants make the tour of Europe and America; let them go into the numerous book-stores they will come across at every step: let them, for instance, go to Montreal, to Mr. Fabre's or to Mr. Sadler's; and everywhere they will find on their shelves thousands of Bibles in all modern languages, printed with the permission of the ecclesiastical authorities. I hold in my hand a New Testament, printed less than five years ago, at Quebec. On the first page I read the following approbation of the Archbishop of Quebec: 'We approve and recommend to the faithful of our diocese this translation of the New Testament, with commentaries on the texts and notes at the foot of the pages. Joseph, Archbishop of Quebec.' Every one of those Catholic Bibles, to be found on sale at every bookseller in Europe and America in like manner, bears irrefutable witness to the fact that Protestantism is fed on lies, when day by day it listens with complacency to its ministers and its newspapers, telling it in various strains that we Catholics are enemies of the Bible."

This and much more to the same effect may be found in the report of the discussion between Chiniquy and Roussy which was republished in 1893, under the title of *The Two Chiniquys* at the office of the True Witness.

Again, as regards the question of clerical morality, from time to time we get from him, as it were through rifts in the clouds of his inventions, little glimpses into the **real life of the Canadian clergy**, which reveal them to us in a by no means unpleasant light. What could be more edifying than the account given of M. Perras's priestly life (p. 133), or of M. Bedard's (p. 157)? True, he tries to cast some flies into their ointment, but there is M. Têtu, the Curé of St. Roch, who was evidently a truly good man, and of whom Chiniquy is constrained to say that he "*never saw him in a bad humour a single time during the four years that it was his fortune to work under him in that parish*" and "*from whose lips an unkind word never proceeded*" (p. 169). And there is the young priest, M. Estimenville, who in the cholera time at Quebec was introduced by Chiniquy for the first time to the hospital he was to serve.

"The young priest turned pale, and said,

'Is it possible that such a deadly epidemic is raging where you are taking me?

I answered, 'Yes, my dear young brother, it is a fact, and I consider it my duty to tell you not to enter that house, if you are afraid to die.'

A few minutes of silence followed . . . he then took his handkerchief and wiped away some big drops of sweat which were rolling from his forehead on his cheeks, and said,

'Is there a more holy and desirable way of dying than by ministering to the spiritual and temporal wants of my brethren? No. If it is the will of God that I should fail when fighting at this post of danger, I am ready.' . . . He died a few months afterwards" (p. 224).

Nor was this a single case.

"We must be honest" (he writes in another place), "and true towards the Roman Catholic priests of Canada. Few men, if any, have shown more courage and self-denial in the hour of danger than they did. I have seen them at work during the two memorable years 1832 and 1834, with a courage and self-denial worthy of the admiration of heaven and earth. Though they knew that the most horrible tortures and death might be the price of their devotedness, I have not known a single one of them who ever shrank before the danger. At the first appeal, in the midst of the darkest and stormiest nights, as well as in the light of the brightest days, they were always ready to leave their warm and comfortable beds to run to the rescue of the sick and dying" (p. 166).

These admissions, wrung as it were from the traducer of his brethren, may serve to show that the clergy of Canada were not so unlike the clergy elsewhere. That there should be wheat is always to be expected, and Chiniquy, as we shall see, was his own greatest argument to prove that they were both wanting in Canada and the United States. But in the first generation of Christian clergy, who received their Master Himself, the **proportion of tares to wheat was one in twelve**. We may trust that it has never

been anything like as high since, nor is there any reason to suppose it was anything like as high among the clergy in whose ranks Chiniquy lived and worked.

But **what about the bishops** whom Chiniquy represents as such utter monsters? We must refer the reader to Mr. **Gilmary Shea's** *History of the Catholic Church in the United States* for an account of the two bishops of Detroit, Bishops Reese and Lefevre, who were evidently quite unlike what we might gather from *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*.

Nor, as Chiniquy has little to tell against Bishop Vandevælde, need we say more than that, as we have ascertained from well-informed correspondents, he was a little weak in his government, perhaps, but was a thoroughly good and conscientious man, and by no means likely to have had a habit of secret tipping. Bishop Bourget of Montreal and Bishop O'Regan of Chicago were the prelates who had to do most of the unpleasant work in restraining Chiniquy, and were, therefore, his pet aversions. What is to be said of them? Bishop Bourget, so far being a harsh, inconsiderate, unscrupulous and mendacious character, was a prelate who left a deep and lasting impression on the Canadians by reason of his very remarkable holiness of life. He was a man of the most delicate charity and tenderness, quite incapable of doing the smallest injustice even to the most guilty, and when compelled to punish ever anxious to make the way of penitence and restoration easy for the offender. Indeed, so eminent was Bishop Bourget for his virtues that his contemporaries looked forward to the possibility of his being beatified some day. And we may add that the letters written by him in this Chiniquy case, of which we have copies now lying before us, all bear out this estimate of his character. They breathe throughout a spirit of the most exquisite conscientiousness and charity.

*About Bishop O'Regan, Mr. Gilmary Shea gives us the following facts.* He was born at Lavelloc, in County Mayo [in Ireland], and was educated at Maynooth (near Dublin). Archbishop McHale made him Professor of Holy Scripture at St. Jarlath's College [Ireland]. He came to St. Louis in 1849 at the request of Archbishop Kendrick, to be head of the Seminary at Carondelet. When he received the Bulls (appointing him to the see of Chicago) he sent them back, saying that he was a college man without missionary experience; and when he was ordered to accept, he said: "I accept only in the spirit of obedience." He began his administration with energy, and feeling the want of good priests, made earnest efforts to obtain them for his English-speaking, German and French congregations. He introduced system, and did much to restore discipline, but his methods caused discontent, which was fostered by many. Bishop O'Regan had entered heartily into works for the good of the diocese, and expended large sums of his own means for it. But, tired out by the opposition of Chiniquy and some others, he resolved to visit Rome and plead in person for his release from a burden which he felt to be beyond his strength to bear. His resignation was eventually accepted, and he was transferred to the titular see of Dora on June 25, 1858. He then returned to Europe, and spent the remainder of his life in retirement in Ireland and England. He died in London, at Brompton, on November 13, 1866, aged 57, and his remains were carried to his native parish of Confert. Mr. *Gilmary Shea* adds: "It may be said of Bishop O'Regan that he was a man in the truest sense, single-minded, firm as a rock, and honest as gold, a lover of truth and justice, whom no self-interest could mislead and no corruption could contaminate. He held fast the affection of many and won the esteem of all."

*So far we have been occupied with the general character of Chiniquy's accusations, the truth or falsehood of which we have sought to estimate by applying tests furnished chiefly by his own writings.* Probably our readers will agree with us that the result has been to show that **this person is not exactly the kind of witness who can claim to be taken on his own valuation**, and, apart from an external confirmation which is not available, can be trusted implicitly. *We must now go through the stages of his life up to the time of his apostasy, to see how far his own account of it agrees with that of others.*

To help us in our task we have for the one side his *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*, which is the fullest presentation he has given us of his story; and for the other side *we have some documents* which have been procured for us by the kindness of a Canadian friend. These are:

(1)

*Biographical Notes Concerning the Apostate Chiniquy*, a paper which has been published quite recently: this was drawn up by Monsignor Têtu, of Quebec Cathedral, a grandson of the Hon. Amable Dionne, who married one of Chiniquy's maternal aunts (*Document A*).

(2)

A copy of a manuscript belonging to the Archives of the Collège St. Marie, at Montreal, entitled *Manuscrit trouvé dans les papiers de M. le Chanoine Lamarche après sa mort*. [Manuscript found among the papers of Monsieur Canon Lamarche after his death.] This paper is an account and a criticism of Chiniquy's life, but is defective, the first twenty pages being missing as well as all that followed the forty-four pages preserved. From internal evidence the writer is M. Mailloux, a Grand Vicar of Quebec, who knew Chiniquy very well in his Canadian days, and was afterwards sent to Illinois to undo the evil he had wrought there (*Document B*).

(3)

A copy of a letter dated March 19, 1857, and addressed by Bishop Bourget of Montreal to the "Canadian Catholics of Bourbonnais." It has been transcribed for us from the *Courrier de Canada*, a Montreal paper, in which it appeared on April 7, 1857 (*Document C*).

(4)

A paper entitled *Explanations of certain Facts misrepresented by M. Chiniquy in his Letter of April 18, 1857*. This paper is also by Bishop Bourget, and is dated May 6, 1857. It has been copied for us from the archives of the see of Montreal (*Document D*).

(5)

A number of letters exchanged between Bishop Bourget and others between the years 1848 and 1858. These have likewise been transcribed for us from the authentic copies in Bishop Bourget's Register (*Document E*).

Charles Chiniquy was born on July 30, 1809, at Kamouraska, a town on the right bank of the St. Lawrence, some forty miles below Quebec. His parents were Charles Chiniquy, a notary by profession, and Reine Chiniquy, née Perrault. His father dying on July 19, 1821, he was adopted by his uncle, the Hon. Amable Dionne, who, on finding that he desired to be brought up for the priesthood, sent him to school at the Little Seminary of St. Nicolet. When he had been there three years a *difficulty arose*. "Owing to a misunderstanding between myself and my uncle Dionne he had ceased to maintain me at college" (p. 66). *This is all that Chiniquy himself tells us about the matter*, but *Document A* says: "In 1825 Mr. Dionne ceased paying for him, and refused him admittance into his house, declaring him unworthy of being a member of his honourable family," and the same document in a note says: "I [i.e., Monsignor Têtu] can certify that the Honourable Amable Dionne was an intimate friend of Bishops Plessis and Panet of Quebec, and of Bishop Provencher of the Red River Missions. The greatest sorrow of his life was to see his unworthy nephew, who had always been a bad Catholic, become a bad priest. But that was no fault of his."

We can gather from these words that the fault of which he was considered guilty was an offence against morality. But, after all, he was then only a boy, and two priests, M. Leprohon, the Director of the College, and M. Brassard, one of the Professors -- thinking that he might change for the better and deeming that there was promise in him, took upon themselves the further burden of his maintenance, and so enabled him to continue his studies and afterwards to pass on to the Greater Seminary. Moreover, M. Leprohon till his death, in 1844, and M. Brassard till the time of Chiniquy's apostasy, continued to take a fatherly interest in him, and the latter to believe in him long after all others had given him up as hopeless. On September 21, 1833, he was ordained priest by Archbishop Signaie in Quebec Cathedral, having been incorporated into that diocese. During the next few years he was assistant priest in three parishes in succession, but in 1838 he was made Curé of Beauport, a suburb of Quebec, and it was there that he inaugurated the temperance movement which brought him into great prominence. In 1842 he was

transferred to his native place, Kamouraska, in the first instance as administrator under the now aged M. Varin, and shortly after as his successor.

This was the place of residence of his uncle Dionne, who was by no means glad to have him in the neighbourhood. His own account is that he signalized his tenure of office at Kamouraska by great doings which won for him the attachment of the people; still, he cannot deny that there was a strong party against him. And Mgr. Têtu's *Document A* tells us that, whilst in that place, "*he scandalized many families by his bad conduct,*" and that "it is absolutely certain that his uncle, Amable Dionne, forbade him to enter his house, and that many parents sent their children to confession to the neighbouring parishes, to protect them from the baneful contact of their Curé." He remained at Kamouraska till 1846, when one Sunday in September he astonished the congregation by announcing that he was leaving the place to join the Noviciate of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate at Longeuil. What was the reason?

In his *Fifty Years* he tells us that the ghastly spectacle of an all-pervading priestly immorality made him desire to fly to a place of refuge where he was assured it did not enter (p. 280). In his announcement to his people during the High Mass -- we learn from M. Mailloux (*Document B*), who tells us he has good authority for what he says -- he declared that he had long felt drawn to the religious life, but had resisted the call, which he could do no longer; besides it was bad for his soul to be so loved, honoured, and venerated as he was by his flock at Kamouraska. It was whispered, however, that there was another reason of a different kind which had most to do with the sudden change. "In 1846," says *Document A*, "tradition relates that he was caught in the very act of a sin against morals, and was thereupon obliged to leave the diocese of Quebec." This document acknowledges that the archives of Archbishop's House in Quebec contain no official document regarding the crime (which, if Chiniquy by leaving at once avoided a formal trial, there need not have been).

But that there was some ground for the *suspicion* is implied in allusions to it in a private letter contained in *Document E*. On May 21, 1848, his faithful friend, M. Brassard, always so difficult to convince of the faults of his protégé, wrote to Bishop Bourget of Montreal a letter in which he begs the bishop to allow Chiniquy to be his locum-tenens for a short time at Longeuil, and, whilst endeavouring to forestall the bishop's probable objections, says: "I have reason for thinking that his bad conduct [mauvaise histoire] at Kamouraska is only known to his superiors and perhaps to one or two priests, for my brother the doctor, an intimate friend of the late J. Bte. Tache and of M. Dionne, the sworn enemies of M. Chiniquy, told me two years ago that these gentlemen could not refuse M. Chiniquy a certificate of morality, and that he himself, at that time a sworn enemy of priests, had only to reproach him with an excess of zeal. Besides, it seems to me that M. Chiniquy has paid heavily for his fault."

For whatever motives, he joined the Oblates at their house at Longeuil, in the diocese of St. Hyacinthe, and at the time they seem to have thought themselves fortunate in the acquisition of so famous a preacher, "the most eminent priest in the diocese of Quebec," as the Père Honorat described him to M. Mailloux, (*Doc. B*). But they soon had occasion to change their minds about his fitness for their life, and he parted with them -- or they with him -- after a thirteen months' sojourn under their roof. According to his own account "when he pressed them to his heart for the last time, he felt the burning tears of many of them falling on his checks . . . for they loved him and he loved them " (p. 312). And yet, as M. Mailloux tells us in his *Notes (Doc. B)*, "he carried away with him from the Oblates a paper in which he painted them in the worst colours," a paper which M. Mailloux, to whose house he went that some day, "refused to receive from his hands, accompanying his refusal with words which M. Chiniquy would not be able to forget." What the nature of this portraiture of the Oblate Fathers -- a portraiture in the truth of which M. Mailloux evidently disbelieved -- may have been, we may perhaps judge from what he says about them in his *Fifty Years* (p. 306).

Now that he was free from the Oblates his natural course was to return to his own diocese of Quebec, and ask for another post. But M. Mailloux tells us that "*to give him one there could not be thought of.*" Apparently that diocese had had enough of him, either because of the circumstances known to them in connection with his leaving Kamouraska, or because of his general intractability.



Nor would the Bishop of Montreal give him a fixed post, and he was forced to seek hospitality with his old friend M. Brassard, then Curé of Longeuil, the parish in which was the Oblate House he had just quitted. M. Brassard suggested that he should give up the idea of stationary work, and devote himself wholly to temperance missions, and for this he managed to obtain permission from Bishop Bourget (of Montreal).

It was in this work during the next four years that Chiniquy acquired what was certainly the best distinction of his life. He was most extravagant in his language and reckless in his statements, so much so as to elicit from Mgr. Bourget some prudent admonitions. But he had undoubtedly a gift of fiery though undisciplined eloquence and could appeal with effect to the sensibility of his hearers. Nor, though the effects, according to his own acknowledgements, were not as lasting as they might have been had he been more solid and prudent in his advocacy and had he relied more on spiritual and less on merely secular motives, did he fail to do an amount of good to which even those whom he most abused generously testify. Thus M. Mailloux writes of him at this time (*Doc. B*): "No one in the country can deny that by his sermons on behalf of temperance he has dried many tears; he has brought back peace and happiness to a great many families; he has raised from the gutter many thousands of his unfortunate countrymen; and has set a mark of dishonour on the mania for drinking and getting intoxicated at weddings, meals, family feasts, friendly gatherings, in short in the social relations of the Canadians."

The year 1851 now drew on, and it proved to be an eventful year for Chiniquy's fortunes. *According to his own account* (p. 345), he received from Bishop Vandeveld of Chicago a letter dated December 1, 1850, in which, addressing him (? on the envelope) as the "Apostle of Temperance," he invited him to abandon Canada and put himself at the head of a vast immigration of Canadians which the Bishop wanted to draw into the as yet uncolonised parts of Illinois, south of Kankakee. In this way they would be preserved from the temptations of the cities and their Protestantism, and would be kept together in communities apart, and so become one day a great political force in the United States. Only, the proposal was to be kept for the present a secret, as the Canadian bishops in their selfishness would oppose a movement, however beneficial in itself, which could not but reduce the population of their own parishes.

Whether *Bishop Vandeveld ever wrote such a letter may be doubted*, for the style as Chiniquy gives it in his book is suspiciously like his own, nor is it likely that the bishop would have made this discreditable request for secrecy to the prejudice of his episcopal brethren in Canada. Still, it is true that the Bishop of Chicago did wish, not to entice Canadian colonists into his diocese, but to divert those who were streaming in unasked, from the cities to the new lands to the south, and that he wanted some Canadian priests to take the spiritual charge of them. But so far from wishing to keep this desire secret from the Canadian bishops, he had written a letter -- the text of which is before us (*Doc. E*) -- on March 4, 1850, to Mgr. Bourget of Montreal. In it he lays his trouble before that prelate, and begs for a Canadian priest or two in most moving terms. Possibly it was as the result of this letter that M. Lebel, of Kamouraska, was sent, and so came to be stationed in Chicago when Chiniquy afterwards arrived.

Anyhow, there is no mention of Chiniquy in this letter from Bishop Vandeveld to Bishop Bourget. He went, however, in May, 1851, to Illinois to give a temperance mission to the Canadians there, and took with him a letter from Bishop Bourget, dated May 7, 1851, in which the latter asks Bishop Vandeveld to "regard M. Chiniquy as his own priest all the time he is doing work in his diocese," adding, in the humble and tender tone which characterizes all the letters of that truly saintly man: "I trust that his fervent prayers will draw down upon his ministry the copious benedictions of Heaven, and that I myself may experience some of the fruits of them, I who am the last of all."

It would be a mistake, however, merely from this expression of hope that Chiniquy's prayers might be fruitful, to conclude that the bishop was altogether at ease about him. He wrote him a letter, likewise dated May 7, 1851 (*Doc. E*), in which he gives him some counsels -- namely:

"(1)

take strict precautions in your relations with persons of the opposite sex;

(2)

avoid carefully all that might savour of ostentation, and the desire to attract attention; simplicity is so beautiful and loveable a virtue;

(3)

pay to the priests of the country the honour due to their ministry; the glory of God is the best recompense of an apostolic man."

That the last two of these counsels were given in view of Chiniquy's personal temperament is sufficiently manifest. That the rest was also, Chiniquy himself must have understood, since in his letter back to the bishop, dated May 13, 1851 (*Doc. E*), he writes: "I will not end without asking your lordship to let me be the first told of it, when detraction or calumny casts at your feet its poisons against me. You cannot believe, Monseigneur, how much harm, doubtless without wishing it, you have done to my benefactor and friend, M. Brassard, by confiding to him in the first place certain things which for his happiness and mine he should never have known. If I am guilty it seems to me I ought to bear the weight of my iniquity. And if I am innocent, and it is calumny which is pouring out its poisons over my soul, God will give me the strength, as He has done already in more than one circumstance, to bear all and to pardon all. But let these empoisoned darts wound my soul only, not that of my friend."

These are fair-sounding words, doubtless, and might be the words of an innocent man. Whether they are so or not we can only judge by taking them in connection with what else we can get from independent sources. But we quote them now as testifying that "*in more than one circumstance*" Chiniquy had been *suspected*, and, as Bishop Bourget apparently thought, not always without ground. Suspicion is not the same as conviction, but we shall hear more presently of Bishop Bourget's mind on the subject. Still, it is a point to notice, even at this stage, that Chiniquy should have been so unfortunate as to excite suspicions of the same character in so many independent quarters. *His uncle Dionne*, and therefore some of his *school-masters*, had suspected him in this way in his youth: the diocesan authorities of *Quebec* had so far suspected him as to refuse him further work in that diocese: and now we have *Bishop Bourget* entertaining similar suspicions of him.

Nor can we in this connection leave out of account another thing that may, perhaps, throw a little light on the unpleasantness of his *visit to Detroit*, which took place just at this time, namely, whilst he was on the way to Chicago. We will have heard his own version of the contretemps which caused him to hasten his departure from that neighbourhood (p. 349), but an American friend assures us that a version of another kind was given him by the late Very Rev. P. Hermaert, formerly Vicar-General of Detroit. That version is that Chiniquy, who used to visit Detroit on his temperance mission from time to time, had been complained of to the bishop for his offensive attentions to the daughter of a respectable family. During one of his visits he found that the bishop was going to call him to account for his misconduct, and he hastened away before the bishop could return to the city.

He arrived at Chicago on this temporary visit in June, 1851, and went on to Bourbonnais. But he was back again by the middle of July, and on August 13th published in the Canadian papers a glowing account of the prairies of Illinois, assuring the Canadians that, unless they were quite comfortable at home, their best course was to go there to settle, which they could do with a certainty of immediate comfort if they only had two hundred dollars with them to start with (p. 354).

This letter caused a great stir, and induced a great many young men to respond to the advice, but at the same time aroused much indignation among their pastors, who saw, what the result proved to be the case, that the *scheme was wild*, and that famine rather than speedy prosperity was to be anticipated for those who were caught by it. Chiniquy did not, however, indicate in this public letter that it was part of the scheme for him to be at the head of the emigration, as probably it was not at that time, though it looks as if he were working up towards such an eventuality.

In the account in his *Fifty Years* Chiniquy gives the readers to understand that he was going to Illinois in response to an invitation prompted by a sense of his merits, and that he was going in a spirit of generosity,

and at great sacrifice to his own cherished objects. "I determined (he says) to sacrifice the exalted position God had given me in Canada, to guide the footsteps of the Roman Catholic emigrants from France, Belgium, and Canada towards the regions of the West in order to extend the power and influence of my Church all over the United States" (p. 353). We have our doubts, however, whether his departure for this new sphere of work was so entirely spontaneous, and even whether it was in response to any invitation at all, and not rather because he had begged to be allowed to go, his position in Canada being no longer tenable. Let us see.

In *September, 1851*, a very unpleasant thing happened to him. "I found," he says, "on September 28, 1851, a short letter on my table from Bishop Bourget, telling me that, for a criminal action, which he did not want to mention, committed with a person he would not name, he had withdrawn all priestly powers and interdicted me" (p. 363). He went "two hours later" to see the bishop, to assert his entire innocence, and to ask for the crime to be stated and the witnesses made known, so that he might meet them face to face and confute them. But this, he tells us, the bishop sternly and coldly refused to do. Then, after taking counsel with M. Brassard, he went off that night to the Jesuit Collège of St. Marie, at Montreal. It was to make "an eight days' retreat," and likewise to have the "help of [Father Schneider's] charity, justice, and experience in forcing the bishop to withdraw his unjust sentence against [him]." He represents Father Schneider as helping him cordially, and, as his (Chiniquy's) reflections made him suspect that his accuser was a certain girl whom shortly before he had turned away from his confessional, believing that she had come to entrap him, Father Schneider had the girl found and brought to the Collège.

There, in Father Schneider's presence, and under the influence of Chiniquy's firm cross-examination, she owned that "he was not guilty," but that she "had come to his confessional to tempt him to sin," and that it was to "revenge [herself] for his rebuking her that she had made the accusation." This was on the third day of his retreat, and therefore on *October 2nd*, a date we may find it convenient to remember. When the retreat was over, he went back to the bishop to whom he had already sent a copy of the girl's retraction. The bishop, he says, fully accepted it as clearing his character, and as proof that he had nothing against him gave him a "letter expressive of his kindly feelings," and also a "chalice from [his] hands" with which he might offer the Holy Sacrifice for the rest of his life.

It must be clearly understood that this is Chiniquy's account of what happened, and that he first gave it, not at the time of the occurrence, *but nearly six years later, in a letter dated April 18, 1857*, which was addressed to Bishop Bourget from St. Anne's Kankakee, and was published in the Canadian press (p. 526). Until then nothing had been publicly known about the story of this girl. The occasion of this letter being written arose out of the schism which by that time Chiniquy had stirred up among the French Canadians in Illinois. We shall understand its character better presently; for the moment it is enough to say that Bishop Bourget had thought it necessary to undeceive these poor French Canadians by revealing to them some of Chiniquy's antecedents. Accordingly, when at the beginning of 1857 some of them, who had renounced their momentary schism, sent him a consoling letter to announce the fact, he replied on March 19, 1857, by a letter (*Doc. C*) addressed "to the Canadian Catholics of Bourbonnais" which letter "was read out in the Bourbonnais Church on Passion Sunday, March 29th" (of that year). We shall have to refer to this letter again afterwards, but must give a long extract from it now.

"M. Chiniquy sets himself on another pedestal to capture admiration, by pretending that God has made him the friend, the father, and the saviour of the emigrants. To judge from these pompous words one would have to believe that he only quitted Canada for the grand work of looking after the thousands of Canadians scattered over all parts of the vast territory of the American Union. But here again I am going to oppose M. Chiniquy with M. Chiniquy, for I suppose that, even if he refuses to believe the words of the bishops, he will at least believe his own. I am going to give an extract from a letter written by this gentleman, but that its nature may be the better understood, I should say that on September 27, 1851, I withdrew from him all the powers I had given him in the diocese, for reasons I gave him in a letter which he ought to have preserved, and which he may publish if he thinks that I have unjustly persecuted him. Under the weight of this terrible blow he wrote to me on October 4th following this letter: --

"Monsignor, tribulations surround me on all sides. I perceive that I must take the sad road of exile, but who will have pity on a proscribed man on a foreign soil, when he whom he had looked up to as his father has no longer a word of mercy for him? . . . As soon as my retreat is finished I shall go and embrace my poor brothers and mingle my tears with theirs. Then I shall bid an eternal farewell to my country; and I shall go and hide the disgrace of my position in the obscurest and least known corner of the United States. If, when my retreat is ended, I may hope to receive the word of mercy which you thought it necessary to refuse me yesterday, let me know for the sake of the God of mercy, and gladly will I go to receive it before setting out. It will fall like balm on my wounded soul, and will sweeten the rigours of exile.'

It was under these distressing sensations and in these painful circumstances that he decided to preach the Canadian emigration."

*Our readers will note several things about this letter.*

*First*, it was written From St. Marie's Collège while he was still in retreat under Father Schneider, and on October 4th -- that is to say, two days after the supposed visit and retraction of the unnamed girl.

And yet there is not in it a word of reference to this retraction, nor is what he does say consistent with that story -- for Chiniquy certainly does not write as if he felt confident that the bishop would now acknowledge his innocence and reinstate him.

*Secondly*, the letter shows that he was going reluctantly to Illinois, and (so far as he knew then), not to preach, but to hide his disgrace in obscurity.

*Thirdly*, the whole tone of the letter is one of a man who pleads for mercy, not of one who protests his innocence.

*Fourthly*, the circumstances under which it was written imply that he was professing, even if he did not feel, a hearty repentance for an offence committed; since it is evident Bishop Bourget deemed him guilty, and that being so, neither would he have removed the suspension, nor Bishop Vandevælde have accepted him for his diocese, unless he had professed repentance.

*Fifthly*, two other contemporary letters that are before us (*Doc. E*) point in the same direction. For on October 6th Bishop Bourget wrote to Chiniquy, while still in retreat at St. Marie's, a letter which is apparently the answer to Chiniquy's of October 4th. It breathes the same spirit as all Bishop Bourget's letters, and the reader may judge if it is that of an intolerant despot:

"Monsieur, I am praying myself and getting others to pray for you, and my heart is not so deaf as you appear to think. My desire is that the most sincere repentance may penetrate down to the very depths and to the innermost parts of your heart. I pray for this with all the fervour of my soul, and if I am not heard it will assuredly be because of my innumerable infidelities. O! that I could be free to weep over them, and to bury myself for ever in some Chartreuse, under one of the sons of St. Bruno, whose happy and holy feast the Church keeps to-day."

In this letter the Bishop makes no reference to Chiniquy going to the United States, probably because that project was not as yet arranged. But M. Brassard, on hearing of the misfortune of his protégé, took advantage of Bishop Vandevælde's presence at the time in the neighbourhood, and besought that prelate to give him a chance of retrieving himself.

A letter from Bishop Vandevælde to Bishop Bourget was a result of this. It is dated "Troy, October 15, 1851," and contains the following passage, the only one of interest to us now:

"After all the instances made by M. le Curé de Longueil (M. Brassard), and the promises of his protégé, I consented to give the latter a trial on condition that he got an exeat from Mgr. Bourget exclusively for the diocese of Chicago" (*Doc. E*).

It will be admitted that these various letters throw on the episode of September 25, 1851, a light *somewhat different from that in which it appears in Chiniquy's* own published account above given, and there will be something further to say on the matter presently. But we have heard Chiniquy appeal to two testimonials of esteem, a letter and a chalice, which the Bishop gave him as a means by which he might always be able to vindicate his character in regard to the charge brought against him by this girl. Let us now investigate this point.

The letter is a letter written by Bishop Bourget in response to Bishop Vandevelde's stipulation that Chiniquy, before he could accept him, must have an exeat for the diocese of Chicago. It runs as follows (p. 528): —

"Montreal, October 13, 1851.  
"The Rev. Charles Chiniquy.  
"Sir,—

"You ask my permission to leave my diocese, to go and offer your services to the Bishop of Chicago. As you belong to the diocese of Quebec, I think it belongs to my Lord the Archbishop to give you the dismissal you wish. As for me I cannot but thank you for your labours amongst us, and I wish you in return the most abundant blessings from Heaven. You shall ever be in my remembrance and in my heart, and I hope that divine Providence will permit me at a future time to testify all the gratitude I owe you.

"Meanwhile, I remain your very humble and obedient servant,  
"+Ignatius, Bishop of Montreal."

Chiniquy describes this letter as a "testimonial of esteem" (p. 528), and again as "a perfect recantation of all he had said and done against me" (p. 370). Perhaps an undiscerning reader will be disposed to agree in that estimate of its language; but a Catholic acquainted with the style of an exeat, or permission to leave one diocese for another, will rather take it as a proof of Chiniquy's insincerity that he should thus represent it, for we may be sure he knew better what was significant about this particular document. The complimentary words refer to the results he had attained by his temperance preaching, and it is in keeping with Bishop Bourget's character that, in his desire to say the best he could of the unfortunate man, he should give generous recognition to what stood to his credit.

As he himself says (*Doc. D*) on this point, "We said nothing too much in adding that we protested to him that the diocese of Montreal would never forget his labours for the establishment of temperance. But all this proves that if we refused faculties to M. Chiniquy, it was solely for a motive of conscience, and for the good of the souls for whom we shall have to answer one day before God."

But what is really significant about this "testimonial of esteem" is that it contains *not a word of testimonial to Chiniquy's personal integrity*. There is generally a printed form for these exeats, with space left to fill in names and anything extra the bishop may think fit to add; and that there was such an one then in use in the diocese of Montreal may be seen from the exeat Chiniquy gives as having been issued to him about a year previously (p. 324). There, in the printed part, we have the phrase "[Charles Chiniquy . . . ] is very well known to us, and we regard him as leading a praiseworthy life in consonance with his ecclesiastical profession, and bound by no ecclesiastical censures so far as is known to us."

But in the "exeat" of October 13, 1851, there is a *significant omission* of any such attestation of personal character as would certainly have been inserted had it been possible to give it truthfully. And the Archbishop of Quebec, who, as Mgr. Bourget says, was the prelate whose exeat was needful, seems to

have given it on October 19th, in response to the solicitations of Mgr. Bourget and M. Brassard, but with similar omissions. For Bishop Bourget, in forwarding it to Mgr. Vandeveldel on October 18th (*Doc. E*), speaks of it as "not altogether in conformity with your desires," and Mgr. Têtu (*Doc. A*) says, "The Bishop of Quebec gave him an exeat for the diocese of Chicago without a single word of recommendation." So much in correction of the false construction which Chiniquy puts upon Bishop Bourget's exeat.

The construction he puts upon the *gift of a chalice is not less misleading*. "The best proof," he says in the letter written to Bishop Bourget on April 18, 1857, "that you know very well that I was not interdicted by your rash and unjust sentence is that you gave me that chalice as a token of your esteem and of my honesty" (p. 529). It proved nothing of the sort.

Chiniquy had professed, whether sincerely or not, that he was truly sorry for the offences which had led to his suspension, and though Bishop Bourget did not feel justified in giving him further employment, Bishop Vandeveldel, who was sadly in want of priests, was inclined to give him another chance. Accordingly the suspension was taken off him and, as he was about to start an entirely new mission, nothing was more natural than that Bishop Bourget should give him a chalice -- not, indeed, for himself, but for the mission about to be started and in need of sacred vessels.

So far *these contemporary letters convict Chiniquy of untruthfulness*, and this may dispose us to doubt whether it is true that, when suspending him on September 28th, Bishop Bourget refused to tell him either the nature of the crime imputed to him or the name of the accuser. Be it recollected that in Bishop Bourget's Letter to the Canadians of Bourbonnais (*Doc. C*) he says that he suspended Chiniquy "*for reasons stated in a letter which he must have kept and which he may publish if he likes.*"

Chiniquy's reply to this challenge in his *letter to the papers of April 18, 1857*, was by bringing forward his story of the girl coming to his confessional, and one would like to know what the Bishop's comment on it may have been. We can have it, for the Bishop, who naturally could not engage in a newspaper controversy with a suspended priest, thought it well that his clergy should know the true facts now that Chiniquy was endeavouring to misrepresent them.

Accordingly he drew up the paper we have called *Doc. D*, and of which we have before us a certified copy taken from the archives of the diocese of Montreal. It is entitled *Explanations of certain Facts misrepresented by Chiniquy in his Letter of April 18, 1857*, and is dated May 6, 1857. It begins with the words, "These explanations are confided to the wise discretion of the priests, so that each may make such use of them as he thinks desirable." There will then be no impropriety in our quoting from them at this distance of time. *The following passage bears on the point now before us:*

"M. Chiniquy pretends that we did not tell him for what crime we withdrew his faculties. This is false, for we told it to him with all possible distinctness (en toutes lettres) in our letter of September 29th [? 27], 1851, which nevertheless he cites as if it were to his advantage.

"He pretends that we refused him all means of justifying himself. To this we reply that our invariable practice has been not to proceed canonically against any one whatever except when the accusers were resolved to sustain their accusations under oath and in the presence of the person they accuse. If M. Chiniquy desires to appeal to the Archbishop of Quebec, or to the Pope, he will find us perfectly prepared to satisfy him on this point.

"As to the incident of the poor girl whom he brings on the scene, it is so disadvantageous to him that he would have done better for his own credit to be silent about it. However much it costs us we will explain about this incident, as it is the sole argument on which he relies to create the impression that the bishops are tyrants who oppress and condemn their priests without a shadow of justice. Some time after the culpability of M. Chiniquy had been clearly demonstrated to us a certain girl came to depose against him, who said she would feel an intense repugnance to be confronted with him. This testimony therefore could not, in conformity with our ordinary method of proceeding, enter into the

evidence against him. So we contented ourselves with telling this gentleman that, over and beyond all that had been deposed against him, a certain girl had quite recently complained of him.

"Now see what M. Chiniquy does. He confines himself to this fact alone, sends for the girl and gets her to retract. To all this bit of scheming (*manège*) we replied by pointing out the contradiction between M. Chiniquy's words and his actions, saying to him: 'You pretended that you did not know this girl when I refused to name her to you. How, then, was it so easy for you to find her and make her retract?' And to this he had nothing to reply at that time. Hence what he says now (in 1857) about this girl, namely, that it was she who wished to tempt him; that it was in vengeance that she had accused him, and that he had been able to discover her by means of a certain individual whom he had remarked exchanging a few words with her, is a story which any sensible man will see is made up after the event. Moreover, this girl afterwards confirmed her first deposition, under oath, and it was certainly not from us that she received one hundred dollars for that if indeed it is true at all that she was paid."

*We can judge now what were the real motives that caused M. Chiniquy to abandon Canada for Illinois, and whether he has stated them truthfully.* Probably our readers will consider that he has not, and that, on the principle "false in one thing false in all," he has created a presumption against the truth of any future allegations he may make, those only excepted which are confirmed by independent witnesses. Keeping this presumption in mind, *we must pass on to consider his life in Illinois.*

He arrived at Chicago towards the end of October, 1851, and was at once sent on by Bishop Vandeveldel to a district some sixty miles south of Chicago. This was the district of Bourbonnais, and there he proceeded to build a church and found a mission at St. Anne, a place some ten miles south of the town of Bourbonnais, where one had been founded already and was under the charge of a M. Courjeault.

Later, he tells us, and doubtless correctly, he founded two other missions further south still, one at l'Erable, one at St. Marie's in the county of the Iroquois. But St. Anne's was his centre of action and place of residence throughout. There he built his first church and gathered round him his chief congregation of Canadian settlers. The first four or five years of his life in those parts were *marked by various quarrels* with neighbouring priests, all of whom he sets down as despicable blackguards. But this period we must pass over with just a mention of the charge brought against him by some of his neighbours of burning down the church at Bourbonnais on June 5, 1853, with the motive of collecting money from Canada for the rebuilding fund, which he afterwards misappropriated. *M. Mailloux, in his letter of March 28, 1858 (Doc. A),* to Bishop Smith, then administrator of Chicago, states that "this charge was made before witnesses in the presence of Bishop O'Regan," and that "*Chiniquy never exonerated himself from it.*" And Bishop Bourget refers to it in his letter to Chiniquy himself of November 21, 1853 (*Doc. E*): "I will tell you now that the report which is current here [in Montreal] is that money sent you from Montreal for your churches does not reach its destination, but is kept back by you for your own use. If this were the case Montreal would cease to aid you in that way."

But let us come at once to the year 1856. By that time Bishop Vandeveldel had vacated the diocese. The dampness of the Chicago climate aggravated his rheumatism and rendered him incapable of doing his work properly, so he asked to be released altogether from episcopal administration, or else to be translated to some see further south. This, and not any such reason as Chiniquy assigns, was the reason why he went to Natchez, to which see he was translated in the autumn of 1853. *Bishop O'Regan, the conflicting accounts of whose character and personality we have already given, succeeded Bishop Vandeveldel in the autumn of 1854.* If Chiniquy is to be believed, as on a point of this sort probably he is, a state of tension between him and his new bishop promptly arose.

But however that may be, he appears by *the summer of 1856 to have become most anxious to get back to Canada.* For from Bishop Bourget's Letter to the Canadian Catholics of Bourbonnais (*Doc. C*) we learn that on August 9, 1856, Chiniquy wrote to him a letter in which he begs to be allowed to return to Canada, and suggests a useful work there which he and he only could carry through.

"If" (he says in this letter) "you place an insurmountable barrier in the way of my return to Canada, ask God to give me the strength to drink the chalice of humiliations and sacrifices down to the dregs. For, I will not conceal it from you, one of my most ardent desires is to see Canada again. . . . The principal citizens of Montreal have expressed the desire to see me again, and their surprise at my long absence. There are sad secrets in the life of priests and bishops into which it would be deplorable if the world were to penetrate."

Which last sentence appears to mean that, in face of the demand for his return by the principal citizens of Montreal, it would be better to let him return than risk the possibility of the reason for his exclusion getting out, and giving scandal. But what was the work he desired to undertake in Canada?

"The sore which under the name of emigration is devouring our people is not sufficiently understood in Canada; or else firmer and more energetic steps would be taken to restrain it. . . . Of all the Canadian clergy I am unquestionably the one who has had the best opportunities of knowing what this sore of emigration is. No one that I can think of has been able in Canada or the United States to sound its depths as I have done. It is not in an easy chair, in one of the fair presbyteries of Canada, that I have studied the causes and disastrous consequences of emigration. . . . Further, Monsignor, with all this information I have a great desire to go and cast myself at your knees and beseech you to let me say a word to the people in the towns and villages of Canada on this emigration, its causes, its consequences, and its remedies. This word, the fruit of prolonged studies and solid reflections, would not lack, you may be sure, that force and eloquence which springs from profound convictions and a sincere desire to hold back a whole race of brothers who are rushing rapidly to their ruin. For five years now I have been eating the bread of exile . . . but believe me, Monsignor, I have facts and arguments, the exposition of which would resound with irresistible force on both banks of the St. Lawrence . . . and which, with God's grace, might result in a great good, by stopping this great evil. And my discourses on this vital question would be the more appreciated, and would have the more effect, because the mendacious press of Canada has accused me of favouring the emigration of my fellow-countrymen."

This appeal, written in *August, 1856*, may well surprise us, when we bethink ourselves of the same man's letter of *August, 1851* (see above), published by himself in all the Canadian papers, inviting the Canadians to come en masse to the district in which he hoped himself to settle, and describing it in such glowing terms that it came to be called "Chiniquy's paradise."

But our surprise increases when we learn that four months later, *in December, 1856*, this same writer reverted to his former contention, and in another public letter to the Canadian press took credit to himself for the invitation to emigrate to Illinois which, when he gave it five years previously, had been maliciously condemned by the Canadian clergy, but which he declared had now been entirely justified by the event. This was in a public letter to a M. Moreau, a Montreal lawyer, the following extract from which is given by Mgr. Bourget in his Letter to the Canadians of Bourbonnais.

"When I left Longeuil in 1851, having for my only provision the breviary under my arm, to run after the emigrants who were losing themselves in the corners of the United States, I was treated everywhere as a deceiver and a visionary, bishops and priests in Canada denounced me as a liar . . . the papers pledged to the Canadian clergy spread false news about the fine and noble parish of Bourbonnais. And yet, in spite of this fearful combination of hypocrisy, calumny, and falsehood directed against me, I have succeeded in four years in creating all by myself a foundation so fine and solid, with the aid of my poor brethren from Canada, that M. Desaulniers was filled with admiration when he saw it with his own eyes" (*Doc. C*).

It is impossible, after comparing these varying epistles, not to feel that Chiniquy's method was to say, not what he thought to be true, but rather what he thought would best serve his interests at the moment. Still, it is also impossible not to feel that something serious must have happened between August and



December, 1856, to make such a change of tone seem to him expedient. *Was it that in August he had grounds for thinking that a storm was gathering around him which he might, perhaps, escape if he could have an honourable pretext for at once leaving Illinois, but that by December the storm had broken, and he deemed his only course was to brave it by taking up an attitude of injured innocence and of revolt?* What comes next may help us to solve this problem.

On August 19th, ten days after his letter to Mgr. Bourget, *Chiniquy was suspended* by Bishop O'Regan (*Doc. A*). What was the cause? From his pages it is impossible to get any definite information.

In one place the bishop is made to say that he suspended him for his stubbornness and want of submission when he ordered him to leave St. Anne and go to Kakokia, on the banks of the Mississippi (p. 441). In another he tells us he asked the Bishop "to make a public inquest about him, and have his accusers confront him" (p. 439), which does not tally with the notion of an offence so palpable as a refusal to go where sent, and points to some offence of a secret kind, such as one against morality. In a third place (p. 449) he suggests that the suspension was inflicted because he would not give up to the Bishop the property in his church at St. Anne — again not the kind of offence to establish which required confronting with accusers, and public inquests, since all that was necessary, if Chiniquy wished to justify himself, was for him to say, "I am quite ready to do all necessary to effect the required transfer of the property."

Bishop O'Regan himself is much clearer (*Doc. E*). In a letter to Bishop Prince, then coadjutor of Montreal, he says, under date of November 20, 1856:

"The question of the property in the church had nothing to do with the removal of M. Chiniquy from St. Anne's, or with his disobedience, his schism, and his subsequent excommunication. . . . I had in my hands all through the legal titles to all the church property which no one could dispute. . . . I came to this last conclusion (namely, to remove him from St. Anne's to Kakokia) for reasons of urgent necessity which I told him at the time and which he is free to make public [words which distinctly point to some offence against morality] . . . his obstinate disobedience [namely, in refusing to go to Kakokia], and the excessive violence of his language and behaviour obliged me to suspend him; his subsequent schism brought on his excommunication."

And this agrees with what *M. Mailloux wrote to Bishop Smith, in the letter of March 28, 1858*, already quoted from (*Doc. A*): —

"I have lived here [at Bourbonnais] since one year. In Canada I knew Mr. Chiniquy very well. I know what his conduct was morally, but the moment is not favourable to mention it. . . .

(1)

Before interdicting Mr. Chiniquy, Bishop O'Regan had received grave testimonials regarding the moral conduct of Mr. Chiniquy. I am fully acquainted with the facts and persons concerned.

(2)

The Sunday following the interdiction issued against Mr. Chiniquy, on August 19, 1856, by the bishop's order, it was published in the churches at Bourbonnais and l'Erable that he had suspended Mr. Chiniquy from his functions.

(3)

Mr. Chiniquy having violated that interdiction, Bishop O'Regan had him publicly excommunicated on September 3rd following. Mr. Chiniquy had in Canada, and still has here, the reputation of being a man of most notorious immorality. The many women he has seduced, or tried to seduce, are ready to testify thereunto. Those who in this country [Bourbonnais] have lived in Mr. Chiniquy's intimacy loudly proclaim that he has lost his faith long ago, and that he is an infamous hypocrite."

Chiniquy, as we have seen, *resisted the excommunication as he had resisted the suspension*, and

continued to minister at St. Anne's, capturing the support of his congregation by representing the bishop as having brought against him an accusation which he knew was false and had not attempted to sustain, the bishop's underlying motive being hatred for the French Canadians, whom he wished to drive out of his diocese. It was a great scandal, and Bishop O'Regan was anxious to end it.

Accordingly he wrote to Bishop Bourget, on October 19, 1856, asking for help (*Doc. E*).

"Mr. Chiniquy [he says] has thoroughly corrupted the unhappy people under his care. This has been the work of some years. It was begun long before I came to this diocese, and I know not how it will terminate. The mischief can only be remedied by a few worthy, pious, and intelligent Canadian priests. If I had one such he could do much, as there is a Canadian settlement not yet corrupted a few miles from St. Anne's, where such a priest being located would soon take away most of his followers. This would be a holy mission for some pious, educated, and devoted priest. He would protect religion and some hundreds from the wicked man who now deceives them."

The result was that Bishop Bourget sent M. Brassard, Chiniquy's old friend and patron, and M. Desaulniers, one of his former classmates, with whom, by his own acknowledgement, "he had been united" ever since "in the bonds of the sincerest friendship." The choice shows that their desire in coming was to convert Chiniquy himself as well as his misguided people. They arrived at St. Anne's on November 24, 1856, and by the next day had succeeded so far as to get him *to sign the following form of retraction* [addressed to the bishop] (p. 515):

"As my actions and writings in opposition to your orders have for the last two months given scandal, and caused many to believe that sooner than obey you I would consent to be separated from the Catholic Church, I hasten to express to you the regret I feel for such acts and writings. And in order to show the world, and you, my Bishop, my firm desire to live and die a Catholic, I hasten to write to your lordship to say that I submit to your sentence, and promise never more to exercise the sacred ministry in your diocese, without your permission. In consequence, I beg your lordship to take off the censures you have pronounced against me, and against those who have communicated with me in things divine.

"I am your most devoted son in Jesus Christ,

"Charles Chiniquy"

*This retraction cannot be called satisfactory, for it equivocal in its language, and breathes no real sentiments of penitence. But it was taken in Chiniquy's name to Bishop O'Regan the next day by M. Desaulniers. M. Brassard remaining with his friend, to await the result. The bishop said to M. Desaulniers, "I would prefer that [Chiniquy] should go away without any retraction rather than give that one, and I shall, as soon as he abandons St. Anne's and gives security that he will not return, have no objection to remove his censures without any retraction" (Doc. E - O'Regan to Desaulniers, December 15, 1856, in which the bishop refers to his words on November 25th).*

*Chiniquy's conduct, when he learnt that the bishop would not make peace with him on his own terms, thoroughly justified the latter's action. Had the unhappy man been really penitent he would have obeyed orders and left the neighbourhood. As it was he persisted in his schism, declaring that he had only signed the retraction as an act of grace and on the condition that he was to be left at St. Anne's, at least as an assistant priest to his friend M. Brassard -- a quite inadmissible condition, of which there is no trace in the text of the retraction. And he even had the impudence and irreverence to say that in acknowledging that his action had given scandal he had acknowledged no more than our Lord had acknowledged when He said "You shall all be scandalized in Me this night" (see Doc. D, which refers to this plea and comments on it). Thus there was nothing more to be done with the unhappy man save to bear with him, and strive to undeceive his congregation, for which purpose M. Desaulniers, at the bishop's request, took up his abode at Bourbonnais; whilst M. Brassard, whose methods of dealing with Chiniquy the bishop found*

compromising, was invited to return to Canada.

M. Desaulniers found his work hard, but achieved some success in reclaiming the schismatics, for Bishop Bourget told Bishop Baillargeon, the administrator of Quebec, on February 4, 1857, that "Chiniquy's followers are apparently diminishing, and are likely to cease altogether if only a few more priests can be sent to them" (*Doc. E*); and on January 1, 1857, a number of them wrote to Bishop Bourget a consoling letter, in which they expressed their regret for having been misled, and their readiness to submit in every way to Bishop O'Regan.

This letter was sent by Bishop Bourget to the Canadian papers, and it was in reply to it that the bishop wrote his Letter to the Canadians of Bourbonnais, dated March 7, 1857 (see above referring to *Doc. C*). This reply was taken to Bourbonnais by Grand Vicar Mailloux, of the diocese of Quebec, and M. Campeaux, of the diocese of Montreal, who left for Bourbonnais on March 20, 1857, to assist in the conversion of the schismatics. As it was read from the altar in the church of Bourbonnais, and was published in all the Canadian papers, it must have been found very disconcerting by Chiniquy, who sought to discount its effects by a letter addressed to Bishop Bourget, which he sent to the Canadian papers. It is the *letter of April 18, 1857*, to which also we have had occasion to refer (*vide supra*), *as containing the first mention of the affair with the girl at Montreal in 1851*.

This letter is given by Chiniquy (p. 526 of his *Fifty Years*) only in part, for, as has been noted, Bishop Bourget, in his *Explanation of certain Facts misrepresented by Chiniquy in his Letter of April 18, 1857* (see above, in reference and quotes from *Doc. D*), quotes as contained in it the words in which Chiniquy assimilates the kind of scandal caused by himself with that caused by our Lord Jesus Christ.

What Bishop Bourget thought of Chiniquy's self-vindication in this letter we have already heard, but it will be interesting, as throwing further light on his methods, to know what his friend M. Brassard thought of it. If we are to believe the account in *Fifty Years* (p. 529), M. Brassard, after reading the letter of April 18th in the Canadian papers, wrote Chiniquy a letter in which he said "Your last letter has completely unmasked our poor Bishop, and revealed to the world his malice, injustice, and hypocrisy."

Here, however, Mr. Chiniquy seems to have forgotten that, when a man is engaged in fabricating facts, he should be particularly careful about his dates. "When," he says, "I received that last friendly letter from M. Brassard on April 1, 1857, I was far from suspecting that on the 15th of the same month I should read in the press of Canada the following lines from him" (p. 530).

"The following lines " were the text of a letter to the *Courrier de Canada*, dated April 9th, in which M. Brassard says:

"As some people suspect that I am favouring the schism of M. Chiniquy, I think it is my duty to say that I have never encouraged him by my words or writings in that schism. When I went to St. Anne's . . . my only object was to persuade that old friend to leave the bad ways in which he was walking. I hope all the Canadians who were attached to M. Chiniquy when he was united to the Church will withdraw from him in horror of his schism. However, we have a duty . . . to call back with our prayers that stray sheep into the true fold."

*As M. Brassard wrote thus on April 9th, it is due to him to believe that he did not write in so different a sense on April 1st, nor can this supposed letter of April 1st be genuine, as a letter written before April 1st cannot have been occasioned by a letter published on April 18th. Besides, if M. Brassard had written thus about unmasking Bishop Bourget, it is inconceivable that Chiniquy should have written on April 23rd (*Fifty Years*, p. 530) to M. Brassard upbraiding him for the published letter of April 9th, without bringing up against him the inconsistency between the published and the private letter. Too much stress, however, must not be laid on this last argument, for we are safe in assuming that the letter of April 23rd was never sent to M. Brassard, and was probably a fabrication perpetrated some twenty to thirty years later, for the purpose of Chiniquy's book. We are practically safe in assuming this, for a real letter is likely to have*

borne some relation to the facts as known to M. Brassard, which this does not.

For instance, this supposed letter asks M. Brassard to say to the Canadian people what he wrote to Dr. Letourneau, namely, that "they do not wish to know truth in Canada more than at Chicago about the shameful conduct of M. Desaulniers in this affair." But **M. Brassard, in a letter to Bishop Bourget of July 10th** (*Doc. E*) tells him that in the early winter of 1856 his advice to Dr. Letourneau had been: "Go with your friends to M. Chiniquy and say to him, 'If you will cease from exercising the ministry we will aid you in obtaining justice if it is due to you, but if you will not we will abandon you,'" and that he further recommended Dr. Letourneau "to get all his friends to abandon him, that finding himself alone he might be constrained to return to his duty."

Besides, we have other and more direct proof that Chiniquy was capable of *publishing unreal letters*. On p. 441 of his book he tells us that Bishop O'Regan "published to the world the most lying stories to explain his conduct in destroying the French congregation at Chicago," whereas that bishop in his letter to Bishop Prince of November 20, 1858 (*Doc. E*) says:

"I have not contradicted M. Chiniquy's extravagant letters or the advances of his friends in the same matter [namely, the closing of the French church at Chicago, which had got into irremediable debt]. I have felt that these documents contained in themselves their own refutation.

"These writings purport to be, replies to a letter I am supposed to have written to the *Chicago Tribune*. But I never wrote or published this pretended letter, nor has any one written or published it for me, save the astute M. Chiniquy himself."

That means that **Chiniquy had forged** and sent to the Chicago papers, as coming from the bishop, a letter in reality composed by himself, and composed in such terms as to make it easy for him afterwards to refute it. And M. Mailloux (*Doc. B*) has occasion to allude to another public letter written at this same time, December 17, 1856, by M. Chiniquy. It was written to the "Canadians of Troy," and purported to be the reply to an address of sympathy sent him from that quarter. M. Mailloux adds: "We shall see later whether this address of the Canadians was not written by M. Chiniquy and presented to M. Chiniquy by himself. If it was so, it was nothing unusual for him to do." As has been noted, the manuscript of M. Mailloux' memoir is defective, and so we miss the promised demonstration which doubtless formed a part of it. (see our first reference describing *Document B*.)

Now let us come to a further, and still more monstrous, instance of his *dishonesty in the use of letters*. On p. 538 of his book he tells us that on receiving his letter of April 23, 1857 (the letter we have surmised to be spurious), M. Brassard was confounded, and wrote to beg pardon for his untruthful letter of April 9th, which "he had been forced to sign," and in this alleged letter of apology, dated May 20, 1857, M. Brassard is alleged to have said: "My dear Chiniquy, I am more convinced than ever that you have never been legally suspended, now that I have learnt from the Bishop of Montreal that the Bishop of Chicago interdicted you by word of mouth in his own room -- a kind of interdiction which Liguori says is null and of no effect."

With this alleged bit of letter a little history is connected. On June 8, 1858 (*Doc. E*), M. Brassard wrote to Bishop Bourget, saying, "*I have never given any testimony tending to prove that the sentence of excommunication against M. Chiniquy was not signed by the bishop.*" This disavowal Bishop Bourget sent on to M. Mailloux (Bishop Bourget to M. Brassard, July 2, 1858, *Doc. E*), then in Bourbonnais, where Chiniquy was still contending that M. Brassard was on his side. M. Mailloux wrote back on June 24th to say that he had been glad to make use of the disavowal, but that the day before (the 23rd) a M. Camille Paré, a friend of Chiniquy's, had brought some papers among which was an affidavit of M. Brassard's, signed with his own hand.

"Under oath M. Brassard declares that a letter annexed to [the affidavit] is his, and that it contains his opinion on the schism of St. Anne's. In this letter M. Brassard declares that Bishop Bourget had told him

that the suspension of M. Chiniquy was null because it had been inflicted without witnesses; and M. Brassard further declares that the bishop told him this was the opinion of Liguori."

Naturally Bishop Bourget was perplexed, and called upon *M. Brassard for an explanation, which the latter gave in two letters to the bishop dated July 6 and July 10, 1858.*

". . . If I must be responsible for all that it pleases M. Chiniquy and the inhabitants of St. Anne's to put into my mouth for the furtherance of their cause I can never hope to clear myself. Indeed, M. Mailloux himself would be greatly embarrassed if he were to be held responsible for all that is attributed to him.

"Now let me reply to this latest accusation. I have never written to M. Chiniquy that your lordship had told me the suspension inflicted on him was invalid as having been inflicted without witnesses. Nor did I ever write to him that you had said that this was the opinion of Liguori. If it is my letter that has been shown to M. Mailloux, he cannot have read in it any such thing, and if in the letter that was shown to him he read the phrases I have just cited, that must have been a forged letter, signature and all.

As for the affidavit, that was truly signed by me, except for the words that 'it contains my opinion on the schism at St. Anne's.' Let me explain the history of this affidavit. On the fourth of last May, after eight o'clock, Camille Paré came to my house with a letter from M. Chiniquy and one from Mr. Dunn, a Chicago priest who at the time of my visit two years ago to Chicago was Grand Vicar, but (as I have learnt since) is so no longer. M. Chiniquy asked me to make an affidavit acknowledging the genuineness of a letter I had written to him more than a year ago. It was a letter which he had shown to the Bishop of Dubuque, and which he regarded as likely to facilitate his entrance into the good graces of the bishop, but he had been accused before the bishop of having forged this letter, as well as all the other papers he had produced at Dubuque, papers on the strength of which the bishop had consented to send M. Dunn to St. Anne's on Palm Sunday to announce the return of peace and to celebrate the divine offices. M. Dunn wrote to me at the same time in English asking me to accede to the desire of M. Chiniquy, for the good of religion. It was this letter from M. Dunn which caused me to consent to declare by affidavit that the letter annexed to it was in my handwriting and bore my signature, and that it stated what I thought to be the truth. I wrote at the same time to M. Chiniquy saying that I was giving him the affidavit solely for the purpose for which he had asked it, and that it was not to be published, that it was a confidential letter which I could not consent to have published. Yet see what use he has made of it. . . . (See *Doc. E*).

"I see that he has abused a confidence which I have long since withdrawn from him, and that he has even abused the last act I did on his behalf -- one, too, done on the recommendation of M. Dunn, whom I believed still to be Grand Vicar of Chicago. When then I have done what your lordship may think desirable [to put a stop to this misuse of his name], I shall have finished with [M. Chiniquy]."

>From this we see that *Chiniquy was capable of asking for an affidavit under pretence that it was to attest a genuine letter, and passing it off as attesting one quite different, which contained seriously false statements and which he himself had forged.* After this we need surely have no remaining hesitation in disbelieving the many other letters, conversations, and occurrences with which the book abounds, and on which it relies to exhibit the clergy of Canada and Illinois in a detestable light.

For instance, to specify some of the more salient points of this kind, we may on this ground *reject as spurious* the letters attributed to Bishop Vandeveldé on pp. 345 (see above, the alleged letter inviting Chiniquy to Illinois) and 384 together with the answers to certain questions alleged to have been given by Bishop O'Regan (p. 440); and likewise, the various conversations he is said to have had with M. Beaubien (p. 27), M. Leprohon (pp. 66, 109), M. Perras (p. 136), Bishop Prince (p. 334), M. Primeau (p. 341), Bishop Bourget (pp. 358, 365, 370), Bishop Vandeveldé (p. 377), Bishop O'Regan (pp. 391, 394, 426, 429, 437), Archbishop Kenrick (p. 434), and Bishop Smith (pp. 544, 549).

Similarly we may *reject as fictitious* the most unlikely account of his various dealings with Abraham (afterwards President) Lincoln, in chapters lix to lxi. Particularly on this ground we may reject the cock-and-bull story of the Catholic origin of the *plot to murder President Lincoln*, fortified as it is by a palpably bogus affidavit made at Chiniquy's request and for the purpose of his book in 1881 (p. 508).

A simple reference to the contemporary reports of the two trials of the alleged conspirators, or to the standard *Life of Lincoln* by Nicolay and Hay - which, whilst exhaustive in its account of the assassination and of the two trials of the accused, does not throw out the smallest suggestion of a religious origin of the crime - is sufficient to dispel the unsupported allegation of a man convicted of the dishonest practices we have been able to bring home to Chiniquy. Nor does he better his case by invoking General Harris, the Methodist General, who was one of the judges in the military trial of the conspirators. For in the first place, though General Harris, in his *History of the Great Conspiracy Trial* (1892), censures one or two priests for maintaining the innocence of the Surratts, a great deal of what Chiniquy quotes from him in his *Forty Years in the Church of Christ* (p. 206) appears to be interpolated into his account. And in the second place, General Harris says distinctly (*Great Conspiracy Trial*, p. 250), that "the only reference to the Catholic Church had been made in the public press [and] the prosecution had carefully abstained from any assault on that Church." Besides, in 1901 General Harris wrote an approving *Introduction* to Mr. Osborne Oldroyd's *Assassination of President Lincoln*, in the Preface to which the latter repudiates the idea that "the Roman Catholic Church ever sanctioned that heinous crime."

We may, too, on the same ground of Chiniquy's proved untrustworthiness reject all that is to his purpose in what he has to say about the Spink trial in chapters lvi and lviii. Some friends have been kind enough to refer for us to the authentic report of this case in the hearing at Urbana, on October 20, 1856. But it seems that only the barest entries were made in those days, and the sole record of this particular hearing is "*Spink plaintiff, Chiniquy defendant, cause slander.*"

Apparently Spink sued Chiniquy for one of the slanderous statements he was wont to set afloat against any one who offended him, and Spink in vindicating himself contended, that Chiniquy himself had been guilty of the offence he had imputed to another. But, as M. Lebel's sister, the person who seems to have declared that Chiniquy had misbehaved with her, declined at the last moment to go into the witness box — the sort of thing that constantly happens in such cases — Spink's suit suffered.

Anyhow two things about Chiniquy's account of the case are suspicious — one that he so mixes the items in his narrative that no one could gather that the charge against him in this instance was one of libel; the other that the affidavit of Philomena Moffat, made in in 1881 (p. 462), sounds untruthful, even if it be not altogether spurious. It professes to testify to an overheard conversation, always a doubtful kind of testimony, and whereas at its commencement it states that two persons overheard the conversation, at the end it states that there were three, a contradiction most unlikely in a genuine affidavit. Besides it is hard to conceive how what is supposed to have happened in bringing Philomena Moffat from Chicago to Urbana, a distance of some 125 miles, could have taken place within the short space of ten hours at most. The railway from Chicago to Urbana had only been opened two years previously. Whether by 1856 it had been so fully equipped with express trains, and whether, again, at that date there were regular evening papers at Chicago, both of which the story implies, we have not been able to ascertain.

We might stop here, but for completeness' sake will give briefly *the closing scene of Chiniquy's Catholic life*.

Curiously, at the very time when according to his book he was so much exercised by M. Brassard's condemnation of his schism, he was meditating another attempt to get reconciled (on his own conditions?). On May 12, 1857 (*Doc. E*) M. Campeaux, writing to Bishop Bourget from Bourbonnais, reported that "Chiniquy is showing signs of giving in," and two days previously (*ibid. Doc. E*) Chiniquy himself had written to the same bishop to say he was inviting Bishop Pinsonneault, of Sandwich, Ontario, and M. Brassard to be his intermediaries with Bishop O'Regan for this purpose. Bishop Bourget wrote him

back a kind letter of encouragement (*Doc. E*) but we hear nothing more of the project at this time.

The next episode in the history brings us to the spring of the following year, 1858. During the interval Bishop O'Regan went to Rome, probably on his official visit *ad limina*. As the visit terminated in his translation to the titular see of Dora, it was in accordance with Chiniquy's style that he should claim to have obtained his deposition by representations made to the Holy See and to the Emperor Napoleon (p. 540); *but Mr. Gilmory Shea's account (see above,) sounds more probable*. His successor at Chicago was Bishop Duggan, who, however, did not get his Bulls till January 21, 1859, though he was named administrator in the summer of 1859. Bishop Smith, of Dubuque, was appointed administrator of the see of Chicago during the interval. Hence it was with Bishop Smith that Chiniquy had to deal in 1858.

According to *Fifty Years*, Mr. Dunn -- formerly Grand Vicar of Chicago -- who apparently was of Chiniquy's party, arrived at St. Anne's on March 11, 1858, with the news of Bishop Smith's appointment. He is represented as having been sent by the bishop to invite Chiniquy to send in his submission, and the bishop is made to say a good deal to the discredit of Bishop O'Regan *which probably he did not say*. Indeed, it looks as if the initiative was taken by Chiniquy, with the object of rushing the administrator, who could as yet have had insufficient time to sift his case.

Anyhow, Chiniquy went with Mr. Dunn to Dubuque on March 25th, and *signed an act of retraction*, which the bishop seems to have accepted, and on the basis of which he authorized Mr. Dunn to go back with Chiniquy to St. Anne's and announce the reconciliation of congregation and pastor on Palm Sunday, which that year fell on March 28th. We may presume that this did happen, though we do not feel certain, having only Chiniquy's testimony to go by. Nor for the same reason can we feel certain that his act of submission was worded as he gives it in his book, namely, "We promise to obey the authority of the Church according to the commandments of God as we find them expressed in the Gospel of Christ." Such a form may be innocent, in itself, but is evidently intended to lend to quibbling, by enabling the person signing it to say, whenever he wished to disobey, that he did not find that particular order in Scripture; nor is it likely that Bishop Smith would have accepted so equivocal a document. Moreover, now that we know how little trust can be reposed in Chiniquy's assertions, we may doubt whether there was any tendency to Protestantism him until the day, not then arrived, when he found it convenient to exploit Protestant credulity for reasons of bread and butter.

What is certain is that on March 27, 1858, he wrote (*Doc. A*) to M. Mailloux, then at Bourbonnais, as follows:

"I am happy to inform you that I have made my peace with our good Bishop Smith, administrator of the diocese. The Reverend Mr. Dunn will be with me at noon, at your residence, to dine with you, and deliver into your hands my act of submission. Meanwhile, help me to thank God for having put an end to these deplorable divisions. And believe me your devoted servant, Charles Chiniquy, Missionary of St. Anne's."

This looks as if the Bishop of Dubuque was not altogether satisfied with the act of submission, and had it submitted to M. Mailloux that he might report on it. M. Mailloux wrote back (*Doc. A*) to the bishop on the following day (March 28) in terms which show that he thought the bishop was in danger of being taken in by Chiniquy through imperfect knowledge of his previous career. Hence he gives the substance of his bad record from his Canadian days onward, as may be seen from the two salient passages that have been already quoted from this letter (see above [where *Document A* has been quoted] ).

The next we hear of Chiniquy was from St. Joseph, Indiana, where he went to make the retreat which is sure to have been one of the stipulated conditions of reconciliation. From his *Fifty Years* we see that he realized that M. Mailloux was doubtful about the sincerity of his depositions, and was warning the bishop to be careful; and Mgr. Têtu in his *Notes (Doc. A)* has preserved for us another letter written to M. Mailloux by Chiniquy from this place of retreat.

"In April, 1858," he says, "Chiniquy wrote to M. Mailloux that he was making a retreat and sued for peace. 'You know,' he said, 'how weak and sinful I am. Ah! do not make me still weaker and more sinful by driving me to despair.'"

Another illustration of the different language which the unfortunate man held in private from that which he ascribes to himself in his book!

This letter of "April" must have been written at the beginning of April. At least it must have been if Chiniquy is telling the truth when he says that he was recalled from his retreat on April 6th, and went back at once to see the bishop at Dubuque. In his account of this interview he tells us that the bishop took back the previously accepted *act of submission*, and demanded another expressed in more absolute terms. *This, he tells us, he refused to give*, and hence was told he "could no longer be a Roman Catholic priest" (p. 551).

Then he went to his hotel, where, according to his own tragic account, after spending some time in an agony of distress over his abandoned position, just in the nick of time -- *when, having made himself impossible to every Catholic bishop, he must needs seek elsewhere for some means of living* -- the light from Heaven dawned upon him, and he saw clearly that the Church of Rome was false and that salvation was with the Protestants. Then he went back to his flock at St. Anne's, and on Sunday, April 11th, told them of the treatment he had experienced from the bishop, and of the subsequent light from on high which had come to deliver him. To his delight he found that his whole congregation was prepared to secede with him.

It all sounds most beautiful in his pages, but once more there are some considerations which *make us a little sceptical* as to whether it happened, at all events at this time. For according to **M. Brassard's letter of July 6th** (see above and *Doc. E*), M. Camille Paré came to him on May 4th -- that is, three weeks later than this supposed conversion of Chiniquy to Protestantism -- and brought a message from Chiniquy asking for an affidavit, "which he regarded as likely to facilitate his entrance into the good graces of the bishop."

Moreover, as late as June 23rd this Camille Paré, still acting on behalf of Chiniquy, was using this very affidavit to palm off the spurious letter on M. Mailloux. Indeed, M. Brassard's letters to Mgr. Bourget may be cited as proving that as late as July 10th no news of Chiniquy's final separation from the Church and conversion to Protestantism had reached the writer, who evidently thinks that he is still keeping up his pretence that his faculties as a Catholic pastor are intact through not having been withdrawn by any valid excommunication. It would appear, then, that Mgr. Têtu's *Notes (Doc. A)* are nearer the truth when they tell us:

"The unfortunate man was not converted. On August 3, 1858, Bishop Duggan, of Chicago, excommunicated him publicly and in the presence of an enormous crowd. Such was the end of an ignoble comedy: Chiniquy after that could no longer call himself a Catholic. He would have liked to continue to retain the name in order to glut his passions and to command in the Church. It was not he who left the Church; it was the Church who rejected him from her bosom. It was then that he declared himself a Protestant and endeavoured to maintain in heresy and schism all the souls he had perverted. The Canadian missionaries soon set at naught his wiles and deceit. Nearly all the families that had gone astray returned to the fold."

When thus cut off from the Catholic Church his first idea seems to have been to keep his followers together as an independent religious body under the name of "Catholic Christians." But, in striking agreement with his letter of August 9, 1856, and in equally striking contradiction with his published glorifications of the fertility of his settlement (see above), they found before many months were passed that they were *in the midst of a financial crisis*.

This appears from a letter he wrote on September 28, 1859, to Dr. Hellmuth, at that time Protestant Dean



of Quebec (see Father Chiniquy's *Reformation in the Far West*, reprinted from the *Record*, B. M. press-mark, 4183 aa. 12). The letter is a cry of distress in face of the "awful calamity" which is "rapidly destroying the noble band of new converts," who "cannot last out much longer."

"Before next spring the Church of Rome will exult over our ruins. We will succumb, not because our new brothers and sisters have no charity, but because there is a want of unity in their charity. You are the only one in Canada who takes any interest in this glorious religious movement. Last year some had shown us some goodwill, they had extended to us a helping hand, but now we do not hear a word from them."

Probably it was for this reason that they quickly discovered that "unless we joined one of the Christian denominations of the day we were in danger of forming a new sect" (p. 571), and so were formally received into the Presbyterian Church of the United States by the Presbytery of Chicago on April 15, 1860 (p. 571).

But how long did he remain with these people? M. Mailloux (*Document B*) tells us that "not having been able to retain the place which the Presbyterian ministers of the United States had given him among them, because they turned him out of their society, as we shall see later" (namely, in the later part of his manuscript, which is unfortunately lost), "the unfortunate M. Chiniquy had to come and unite himself with those whom he had confounded on January 7, 1851" -- that is, with M. **Roussy** (see above), and the Presbytery of Montreal.

*Why was he thus dismissed?*

In the days of his lecturing campaign he was often challenged to deny, if possible, that in 1862, after a visit to Europe, during which he had made collections for a supposed seminary in Chicago, *he was accused of fraud*, and rejected or expelled by the Chicago Synod. He never ventured to take up this challenge, but a passage in his *Fifty Years* (p. 472) is interesting in this connection. In it he narrates that "through the dishonest and false reports of those two men the money I had collected [for the said seminary] . . . was retained nearly two years, and lost in the failure of the New York Bank; [and] the only way we found to save ourselves from ruin was to throw ourselves into the hands of our Christian brothers of Canada" -- of Canada, be it noticed, not of Chicago -- (by whom) "our integrity and innocence were publicly acknowledged, and we were solemnly and officially received into the Presbyterian Church of Canada on the 11th of June, 1863."

It is easy here to read between the lines that a charge of dishonesty had been brought against him, one of the same kind as eight years previously had been brought against him in connection with the burning of the Bourbonnais church. It was his misfortune to be continually having charges of the same kind brought against him from different and independent quarters. However, on January 10, 1864, he gave what his new friends doubtless regarded as a signal proof of the soundness of his Protestantism, for on that day *he married his housekeeper*.

Still, how did they find him in the matter of personal character? His egotism and violence are conspicuous in all that he spoke or wrote against his former co-religionists; were they entirely absent from his relations with his new friends?

We are never likely to be told, but we cannot read without musing such cryptic allusions as the following in the sermons preached at the time of his decease:

"We saw thy faults when thou were with us, but now we see thy virtues," said the Rev. A. J. Mowatt on the Sunday after his funeral (*Forty Years in the Church of Christ*, p. 497).

What faults, we ask?

"He had failings, yes, and who is without these? Those with which he could in a special manner be

reproached must be charged to the inadequate and positively harmful clerical education he had received, and which in after years he so vigorously combated," said the Rev. C. E. Amaron, preaching at the graveside on January 19, 1899 (*Forty Years*, p. 486).

"On leaving home for more advanced and literary and theological studies, he entered upon a course of training much of which he afterwards deplored. Possibly some of his best friends were right in thinking that they saw occasionally traces of this bad education in his after-life," says his son-in-law in the *Preface* to this same book. What were these special faults, one wonders?

Of course we are aware that bigots of this type, when they pick up eagerly, but to their cost, the weeds which the Pope has thrown over his wall, find it convenient to ascribe their noxious properties to the defects of the Pope's soil. We are aware, too, what are the particular noxious properties which Chiniquy in his writings finds it convenient to debit to the Pope's soil. Was it to matters of this sort that the preachers and the Preface-writer were thus dimly alluding?

In this connection we may say that the Catholic Truth Society cannot undertake a refutation of Chiniquy's book entitled *The Priest, the Woman, and the Confessional*.

To write or to circulate such a work, which cannot fail to pollute the minds of its readers, *is an outrage upon decency*, and it would be impossible to deal with it in a pamphlet intended for general circulation. *The reader will accept our assurance that in it Chiniquy has employed the same methods of misrepresentation and misstatement which have been exposed in the foregoing pages.*

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