

CHAPTER XXXVII

The Truth Proclaimed at Montague. Narrow Escape. Brutally Struck Whilst on the Steamer. I Forgive My Aggressor.

The 6th of August, 1886, I arrived at Montague, one of the most interesting towns of Prince Edward Island. The weather was splendid. Mr. McLeod who gave me hospitality in his house, after extending to me a most hearty welcome, said: "There is great excitement in the town on account of your coming, but we have a good number of Orangemen here, and with the help of God we will protect you.

At the evening meeting the fine new church was crowded to its utmost capacity. Among the crowd were many Irish Roman Catholics and some French Canadians. The address was on the idolatry of the Church of Rome, which worships a god made with a wafer. To my great joy several Romanists came to shake hands with me at the close of my address, saying: "Thank you; you have said the truth: we will no longer worship a god made by the servants of the priests."

I blessed God for the result of that address, and my hope was that my humble labours there would be fructified by the God of the Gospel.

When my hostess showed me to my room at night I remarked that it was very near the street, and that it was too much exposed to the stones of the rioters, if there should be any trouble in the night. Then the good lady gave me another room which could not be exposed to the stones from the street. We went to bed after asking God to protect us during the night. He had heard our prayer and granted our humble petition.

At about twelve o'clock—the night was very dark—I was awakened by a frightful noise. Evidently the window of

the first room which the good lady had prepared for me was smashed to pieces, and stone after stone was pouring into the room. I kept as quiet as possible in my room that they might not see their error. Of course no one was hurt, as there was no one there. The reader may imagine the excitement in the morning when the people came to see the broken window and the many big stones on the floor and on the bed, every one of which could have killed a man. I had to thank God for having inspired me not to take that room, for I surely would have been killed there. Many friends came during the forenoon to congratulate me on my narrow escape, and I joined my thanksgiving to theirs, to the God of the Gospel who had so visibly protected me. Several friends proposed to make legal inquiries to find out the rioters and the would-be murderers, but I prevented them, saying that the best thing we could do was to follow the example of our Saviour, "Forgive and forget."

As I was to give an address that same evening in another place, I prepared myself to take the steamer which was to leave at noon, but when on the boat I saw that I had made a mistake; I found that the steamer instead of leaving at noon, was to leave only at 2 p. m. The captain and his crew were on shore taking their dinner. I had dismissed the friends who had accompanied me to the steamer and I remained alone with a few passengers. I took a chair and sat on the rear of the deck reading my Bible. I had not been there long when I heard rapid steps approaching me, and, looking up, I saw a giant man, with rough face, walking up to me and uttering terrible imprecations, saying: "D—— apostate! this is your last day!"

My first thought was that it was his intention to throw me overboard. I cried to my God for help. But I was mistaken. Instead of trying to throw me into the water, he raised his terrible arm and gave me a blow evidently intended for my left temple. By the mercy of God he missed his aim; for he would surely have killed me instantly had he struck

the temple. His fist struck the cheek-bone, one of the strongest parts of the human body. I fell unconscious on the deck, where I suppose I remained two or three minutes. When I came back to myself I found three good ladies washing my face with cold water and crying: "My God! my God! he has killed him!" My mouth was filled with blood and my nose was bleeding profusely; trying to speak I felt that one of my teeth was broken. Quite a crowd of friends surrounded me and helped me to stand upon my feet, expressing their indignation at the brutal attack of which I had been the victim.

A few minutes later another crowd arrived, having in their midst my would-be murderer. These were Orangemen who were working on the shore near the steamer, and who had seen him when he struck me. Quick as lightning everyone of them had armed himself with sticks and was running after the faithful servant of the Pope. Having overpowered him they forced him to march back to me in order that I might have him punished as he deserved. One of them said: "Here is the infamous coward who has just struck you; we saw him from the shore, and we have brought him back to you that you may tell us what to do with him and he be punished as he deserves." I answered him: "My dear friends, when our dear Saviour was struck on one cheek, did He ask His Father or His apostles to punish and strike his enemies? No. On the cross where He was nailed He prayed to His Father for those who had crucified Him, saying: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Well, the only thing we have to do is to dismiss the man, and to pray our Heavenly Father that He may help him to know the Gospel truth, and to give up the errors of the Church of Rome which has made him so blind and so cruel. Give me his name and let him go." They told me that his name was Wm. S. Monds.

The empty place of the missing tooth is a daily witness of what I have suffered for my dear Saviour's sake, and I bless Him for it.