

**A SOUL'S PILGRIMAGE.  
BEING THE PERSONAL AND  
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES  
OF CHARLES F. B. MIEL**

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A Soul's Pilgrimage. Being the Personal and Religious Experiences of Charles F. B. Miel by  
Charles F. B. Miel

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C. F. B. MIEL.

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	5
AT COLLEGE AND SEMINARY . . . . .	11
THE JESUITS . . . . .	19
IN PARIS . . . . .	31
LONDON . . . . .	44
FIAT LUX! . . . . .	58
IN ROME . . . . .	70
IN ENGLAND AGAIN . . . . .	81
BREAKING CLOSE TIES . . . . .	91
NEW FRIENDS . . . . .	101
THE NEW WORLD . . . . .	111
VARIED EXPERIENCES; NEW YORK . . . . .	126
BOSTON . . . . .	139
SAN FRANCISCO AND CHICAGO . . . . .	156
RELIGIOUS REQUIREMENTS OF OUR TIME . . . . .	175
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH . . . . .	182



## INTRODUCTION.

YOUNG MIEL, a student in the seminary at Besançon, about the year 1842, having heard the eloquent Jesuit, Père de Place, preach at the cathedral the Advent season, determined then and there to enter the Society of Jesus. But there was a difficulty in the way. Miel had contracted a debt for his collegiate education, which he was now paying off from his salary as tutor to young Marquis de Lénoncourt. He would not be free to follow his *attrait* until this debt should be paid. Thereupon his friend, the Abbé Perny of Pontarlier, afterwards vicar-apostolic in China, offered to take his place as tutor and turn over the whole of the salary toward the payment of Miel's debt, and did so.

From that time until now, in his hale and reverend age, Dr. Miel has had the gift to win friends. As one of these he has done me the honor to permit me to introduce him to American Churchmen and Christians. If he is not better known than his introducer it is because his useful and most interesting life has been led in fields in which Americans are not wont to walk. Here is the manner of life of the Jesuits described, kindly and with appreciation, by a man who made his full



## Introduction

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novitiate with them, remained for several years under their spiritual direction and entertained with them the most friendly relations, until conscience and clear conviction obliged him to leave their church.

It is difficult, moreover, for us, living as we habitually do in the provincialism of our English language, to realize that our venerable confrère is one of that brilliant group of the later years of Louis Philippe, one received on equal terms by Lacordaire, de Ravignan, Lamartine, Montalembert, Lenormant, Ozanam, Jules Simon, Laboulaye, etc.

An English lady, an Anglican, claimed the privilege to take off his shoulders and upon her own the burden of educating his brothers and sisters, in order that he might the sooner enter the Roman priesthood. When the Abbé Gounod turned aside to follow music instead of the priesthood, it was to Miel he gave his surplice and beretta. Ravignan was his confessor, and presented him to the Archbishop of Paris for ordination, and to him was given to represent the French Catholics at the funeral of Daniel O'Connell.

How such a man with such an *entourage*, with such prospects of preferment before him, was driven from within to abandon it all and start upon the long and weary pilgrimage in search of that

## Introduction

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place where truth dwells, makes up the story of this book. It is the history of a Soul. His sad conviction that fidelity to truth would lead him out of that great Church in which his heart and imagination were bound in captive chains, his stumbling about in the darkness of blank negation, his search for spiritual kinsmen among the Unitarians and the Transcendentalists, and his finding of a spiritual resting place in the Anglican Communion—all these make up a story which has been often lived but seldom told. We wait yet for the Apologia of the convert from Rome, which may be set over against that other drawn out by the great Anglican preacher who became the insignificant Roman cardinal. That no Protestant cardinalate has come to Dr. Miel is because Protestantism pays her champions in a different kind of wares. The foundation truth of the truth as it is in Christ, is that truth is its own exceeding great reward. None knows this better than the author of this autobiography, who, in his serene old age, sets down in little the story of a life which was great, at the solicitation of his sons and his friends, among whom I am glad to subscribe myself.

S. D. McCONNELL.

*Holy Trinity,  
Brooklyn,  
Advent, 1898.*

