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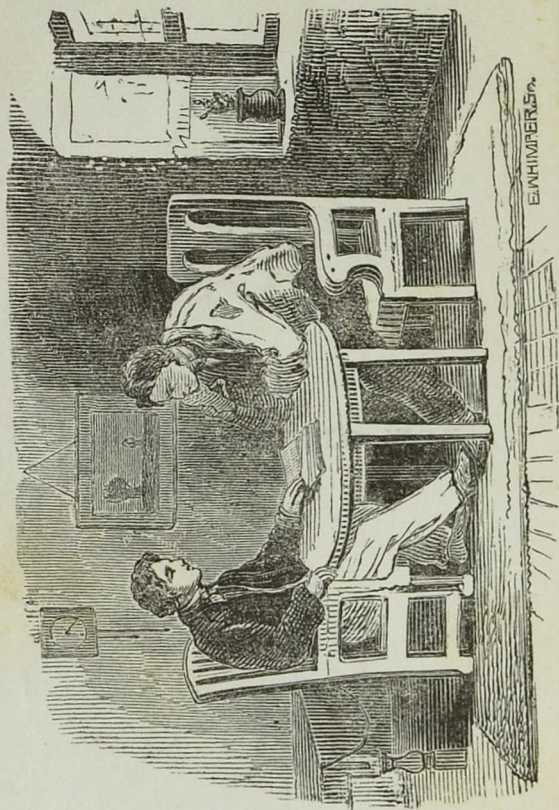
THE
FEW OLD LEAVES.



J. GROOM, BIRMINGHAM;
AND
BAZAAR, SOHO SQUARE, LONDON.

The background of the page features a very faint, light-colored illustration. It depicts a large, multi-story house with a prominent chimney on the right side. In the foreground, there is a landscape with what appears to be a path or a small structure, possibly a well or a fence. The overall style is that of a simple line drawing or a light wash of color, typical of a book cover or endpaper from the late 19th or early 20th century.

THE
FEW OLD LEAVES.



E. WHIMPER, SC.

THE

Few Old Leaves.



J. GROOM, BIRMINGHAM;

AND

BAZAAR, SOHO SQUARE, LONDON.

THE
FEW OLD LEAVES.

HONOURED MRS. A—,

It is some time since I promised that I would give you a short history of Mick Donovan's reformation from Popery; but persecution and illness have prevented me from sending this little account sooner. I was removed from County L——, in October 184—, and placed in B——, under the superintendence of a Rev. Mr. G. who introduced me as Scripture Reader to some men, who he told me, were Converts. Mr. G. desired those men to take a little furniture belonging to me, and to secure it in the house I was to live in, which was situated in a most difficult place. I thought at the first appearance of this place, that it would be impossible for any man to pass over the very high hill, which stood between me and the house allotted to me, even without

any incumbrance; but my opinion soon altered. About thirty stout men made their appearance on the top of the hill, and descended it with the agility of deer, each man having a strong stick in his hand, no unusual appendage with the Irish peasantry. They saluted me in the Irish tongue, and on hearing my reply, they all with one mind and heart cried out, "No Popery, &c." Among those who were assembled, I perceived that one did not join in denouncing Popery, but several times raised his hat from his head in silence: I perceived also that his hair was grey, which gave him a more venerable appearance than any man present. The men seized my little furniture, and carried it up the hill, without resting, till they arrived at the top; three of them remained with me, to assist my wife and little children up the very steep hill. I asked their names; one of them said, "My name is Sam, and

this man's name is Pat, and that is Mick Donovan." I said to the latter, "I perceived that you did not join with your fellow-converts, in denouncing Popery, just now." He answered, "although I didn't raise my voice, you may depend that my heart is as much against Popery as that of any man in Ireland." Sam Sheeling said, "You may be sure that Mick is a true Protestant; he was the first man who reformed in this country, about 16 years ago; and many a hard battle he has fought since then; and I must tell you," added the speaker, "that I was the greatest persecutor that he had for about four years." Mick said, "Yes, Sam, you must know well how you persecuted me, and you know that you were guilty of sin in so doing, and I know also, what a grievous sinner I was, and still am," adding, "look back at you sins and mine, and then let us look at the love and mercy of God to

us, for whilst we were transgressing against Him, he did not destroy, but showed us kindness, and brought us to Jesus, who has promised not to turn any one away, that comes to Him, with the burden of his sins upon him." Mick spoke whilst we were going over the hill, in a way which led me to believe that he was a convert, not only in name, but in reality. We at length reached the house destined for me, and I was quite pleased to find that Mick was to be my next door neighbour. As soon as my little furniture was put to rights, each man departed. Donovan returned to me in the course of an hour, with some nice butter and milk, and also some fish; and after bestowing his gifts with all possible christian heartiness, he left, promising to return after dinner. About seven o'clock, Mick came with his wife and three sons: whilst conversing, I asked him his reason for leaving the

Romish Church. After a few minutes' silence, he said, " I know many reasons now, why I should not remain a Papist, at first, I had only one reason for leaving Popery. I am a native of K——, and was born in the parish of B——. I have four brothers; my father held a farm consisting of 50 acres of good land, and we had ten cows. My father lived till we were all married; he divided the land and cattle equally amongst us, and we all lived together. I was the last of the family to get married, and my father died about four years afterwards. The day he was buried, I found in the grave-yard *four leaves of a book sewn together.** I could not read well, I could only spell, although I had learned to read when I was at school. I put the leaves in my pocket, and did not think of them for two months afterwards. One Sunday, on coming from Mass, I was looking for some tobacco

* See Appendix, Note A.

in my pocket, and I found the leaves; I then called to mind where I had found them, and the remembrance brought my poor father's death so strongly before me, that I began to shed tears. My mother on seeing this, began also to weep; two of my brothers who came in, did the same. When we were composed again, I told them what had been the cause of our weeping, and shewed them the few leaves. My mother said, "Mick, I command you in honour of the Blessed Mother of God, that you will put up those leaves safe, and they will always put us in mind of your poor father's death." One of my brothers who could read, took the leaves and began to read them, and as he was reading, I took notice of these words, "SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES, FOR IN THEM YE THINK YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, &c." I also observed that he read about a man who was thirty-eight years lying

beside a pool of water, and when Jesus came, He cured him, and desired him to take up his bed and walk: and he also read, "VERILY, VERILY, HE THAT HEARETH MY WORD, AND BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT SENT ME, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE, AND SHALL NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION, BUT IS PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE." Mick remembered many more useful passages, which his brother read from the few old leaves. When they were finished, he put them aside, and in about a fortnight after, he was digging in his garden, and he was forcibly struck with, "*Search the Scriptures,*" &c. He did not know what the Scriptures were, he had never heard of them before, neither did he know the meaning of "*testify.*" At night, when Mick was about to go to bed, he asked his brother if he knew the meaning of "Scripture" and "testify." His brother answered, "I think Scripture

is a sort of tree, and I think that testify is something they put upon the walls of gentlemen's houses." Mick did not contradict him, yet the explanation did not satisfy him, for he saw more in the words than any of his brothers; neither did he let them know his feelings, nor the anxiety that was aroused within him. Some weeks passed away, and yet these words did not leave Mick's mind, when one Sabbath as he was going to Mass, a man named John Carver overtook him, he was a Protestant schoolmaster and clerk. In conversation Mick asked him for the meaning of the words *Scripture* and *testify*. Carver told him the meaning, and shewed him a Bible. Mick repeated what he had committed to memory of the contents of the few leaves, and also told him where he had found them. Carver said that it was he who had lost the leaves, out of his Bible, one day when

a Protestant was interred, and he asked Mick to give them to him; but Mick entreated that he might keep them to put him in mind of his father's death. Carver told him that he would allow him the loan of an entire Bible, if he would return the leaves. Mick thanked him, but made no promise. In the course of conversation he asked Carver what sort of religion the Protestants had, and he answered, "Our religion is found in the Scriptures." At once the blessed word struck on Mick's soul, "Search the Scriptures," but he concealed his feelings from Carver, and requested that he might have the Bible after prayers. Carver said, "You must wait till to-morrow, and I will give you one out of the school," but he said, "No, give me the one that you have in your pocket." This was refused, but he was urgent, and at last offered two shillings and sixpence for the Bible; the money

was accepted, and on receiving the Bible, Mick said, "Come now, read me some of it, that I may see whether it is like what I have at home." But Carver said, "I am in a hurry now, and fear being late for prayers," and he added, "You must give me the leaves of my Bible which you found. "No," he said, "I will not do so, if you loved religion, you would be more careful of a book that you draw your religion from." Carver said no more, but went away somewhat offended at this rebuke. Mick proceeded to Mass, and during the time, "*Search the Scriptures*," was still returning to his thoughts. He was suddenly roused from his meditation, by a violent torrent of abuse, uttered by the Priest against a poor Scripture reader and the Bible. Mick began to tremble, lest the Priest by divine influence should know that he had a Bible in his pocket, and he felt ready to give up his treasure, as

soon as the Priest should ask for it ; but to his great comfort, the Priest left off denouncing the poor Bible reader, and turning his face from the people, he began to finish Mass in the Latin tongue. Mick went home, and did not tell his people that he had a Bible, nor of his interview with Carver ; he hid his Bible, but on every wet day and idle hour that offered, he used to be spelling out the words of it. At length he met with "*Search the Scriptures,*" and then he knew at once that the leaves he found were part of a Bible. Various circumstances incited Mick to "*Search the Scriptures,*" but opportunity was wanting, for he could not read, though he was always trying to spell. One day he was sent by his brothers to repair a broken fence in one of the fields, and whilst he was at work, the poor Bible reader passed, and saluted him ;—Mick returned the greeting. The Scripture reader being surprised

that any man should speak to him, paused. Mick said, "My friend, I believe you have a poor life of it among the people," and he repeated all that the Priest had said of him.

The poor man said, "I am ready and satisfied to bear persecution, and I think it an honour to be reproached for the name of Jesus."* They sat down, and the reader read part of the 15th chapter of St. John's Gospel, with suitable remarks, which led to his reading part of the 6th chapter of St. Luke, beginning at the 20th verse. In conclusion, he read the 12th verse of the 4th of Acts, and the 7th and 8th verses of the 1st Epistle of St. John, which much pleased Mick. The Scripture Reader and Mick continued their meetings for about two months; sometimes they met twice a week, sometimes only once, according as opportunity offered. At the end of this time the Scripture

* See Appendix, Note B.

Reader was passing through the country, and was followed by six men whom he did not know, their faces were blackened, they fell upon the poor man and beat him with sticks and stones, till they thought he was dead, and indeed he lived only four days afterwards, leaving a wife and four young children to deplore his loss !

About three months after the death of the Scripture Reader, Mick's mother was seized with illness, and called for the Priest. Mick tried to make her believe that Jesus was the true and faithful Friend of Sinners, and not the Priest, and he repeated several times the 24th verse of the 5th chapter of St. John's Gospel, assuring her that the blood of the Son of God would cleanse her sins, and make her fit for His kingdom. His mother felt much comfort from what God enabled him to repeat out of the Bible, and seemed to care less about seeing

the Priest; but the next day, as she was growing weaker, Mick's brother insisted on sending for the Priest, while Mick endeavoured to shew him that the Priest could do nothing; he then grew quite angry, and desired to send for the Priest without delay; so Mick said, "I will go for him." The Priest lived about four miles from their house, and he lingered on the road, and did not reach him until 5 o'clock in the evening. He made known his business, and the Priest said, "It is too late now; why did you not come for me in time?" Mick answered, "that is a bad excuse of your Reverence, for God tells us that we must be always ready, seeing we know not at what time He will call us, and if you were a true servant of God, you would be always ready to prepare or make ready those whom God calls, perhaps some of them very suddenly." The Priest made no reply for some time, at length Mick added,

“Will you come, Sir, or will you not come?” The Priest asked, “Have you five shillings?”* Mick said, “I have, and twice five shillings;” upon which the Priest said, “Come, hand them here, my boy.” Mick, “For what?” Priest, “For to prepare your mother.” Mick, “Oh, if ’tis money that will prepare my mother, I can get as much for five shillings as you can, and you need not come at all, only tell me what it is she wants.” Priest, “You fool! how could you get what she wants? Must not I anoint her with the holy oil, and read over her?” Mick, “Oh! that is another story, and will her soul go to heaven then?” Priest, “Yes, when I read a Mass, that will release her out of purgatory.” Mick, “Well Sir, and if she must go to purgatory after you have oiled her, of what use is it to oil her at all? You may as well wait till she is in purgatory, and

* See Appendix, Note C.

make one business of it; and, will you tell me, if you please Sir, what has purgatory to do with saving a soul?" Priest, "Oh! you fool, purgatory burns off the sins of the soul." Mick, "Oh! Sir, if that be the case, it is only foolishness to put you to the trouble of coming such a distance, since it is purgatory that must save souls, and not you." Priest, "Oh! you dirty ass, why don't you understand me?" Mick, "Indeed Sir, I fear that you do not understand yourself; you told me just now that you should put oil upon my mother, and then that you should read Mass to release her out of purgatory; and now, I know not whether it is the oil, or the purgatory, or the Mass that will be of use to the soul." Mick saw that the Priest was perplexed, and added, "I would sooner trust in Jesus Christ, who will save without any money, than depend on either oil, Latin, or purgatory, which no man

ever saw." Priest, "Go, you wicked man, I see that you have learned your lesson from the Bible reader, who was in this place some time since." Mick then became very angry with the Priest, and charged him with having caused the murder of this man. The Priest was much alarmed at this speech, and said, "God direct you, poor man, you are making a false accusation against me." He then called for his horse, and offered Mick to ride behind him, but he declined the invitation. The Priest anointed the poor woman, refusing to take any money; and next morning she died. Mick spent the night with his mother, and he thinks she died trusting in Jesus. Shortly after this, Mick shewed his Bible to a school-master who lived near, and they both soon agreed upon going to Church once, for a trial; the text was, "NEITHER IS THERE SALVATION IN ANY OTHER, &c."—Acts iv. 12. In a

few days, the report was spread abroad that they had been to Church; they suffered much persecution from the neighbours, and Mick also from his brothers. The poor school-master was forced to leave the place, and seek his living elsewhere; and as to Mick, his brothers resolved to divide their land, &c. and to give him his own part; he knew that he should have no peace otherwise, and desired his portion, to which they agreed. There fell to his share three cows, his bed and some furniture, and with these he came to B——. There was no Protestant in the neighbourhood, when he went to live there, nor for some years afterwards. Nothing was heard of but evil practices: card-playing and whisky-drinking on the Sabbath, and for several years the people failed not to finish the holy day with a most dreadful fight. Mick the while was ever striving to learn something from the Bible, by spelling

out its words ; and he could not for a long time meet with any man who could read, or take pleasure in speaking about religion. At length a very good Clergyman came to M——, the Rev. Mr. L——, and as B—— was part of his parish, he sent his curate to see if he could do any good there ; but as he could not speak the native tongue, and the people could neither speak nor understand English, he could not effect much. Mick was afraid to speak to the minister, lest the savage inhabitants of B—— should see him, and he was the only person there who could attempt to speak English. One day it came into his head to go to M——, to see the Rev. Mr. L——, and he opened his mind fully to him, and advised him to send a school-master to his village. The Clergyman agreed to this, and appointed a Romanist teacher, who having many friends at B——, collected in the course of a

fortnight, a school which numbered above 40 pupils, and was daily increasing till the number reached 120. The Clergyman and his curate visited the school at intervals; the teacher became friendly with Mick, who persuaded him to read the Bible to him every evening after school-hours. In the course of six months, the Lord opened the eyes of the teacher, so that he could see that the Popish doctrines were soul-destroying. He then began to teach the Scriptures in Irish to his pupils, and after some time, the Rev. Mr. L——, sent an Irish-speaking Clergyman, and he read the prayers and preached in the native tongue. When this had continued about a week, the Priest heard of it, and the Sunday following he denounced all those who listened to the minister, and every one who would not take his children from the school; but the teacher's friends being numerous, the pupils attended,

in spite of the Priest, who seeing that he could not put down the school, resolved upon another plan, and began to raise a force to carry measures with a strong hand; but he could not succeed, as the teacher was aided by his numerous friends. Mick Donovan and he went openly to Church in M——, and as soon as the Priest heard of it, he turned the persecution on poor Mick, knowing that he had no friends; but the teacher, like a faithful comrade, took part with him, and one of the teacher's brothers became a convert, with his wife and four children. Then the Rector sent his curate to read prayers on Wednesdays, in the B—— school-house, and the church of God was increased. Some disputing and violence arose between the Priest and Mick and the teacher: the former growing furious, gave information against Mick at M——, and in the course of a few days, four Popish

policemen came to his house at day-break, and desired him to get out of bed, for that he was a prisoner. Mick got up, and they would not give him time to eat his breakfast, nor to put on his shoes; they hand-cuffed him, and brought him towards the teacher's house, whom they had also in custody, under the care of a policeman. As Mick was walking barefoot, a nail stuck into his foot, and being hand-cuffed, he could not pull it out, so he begged they would do it for him, or take off the manacles whilst he could draw out the nail; but they refused to do either the one or the other, and mocked him by saying, "It were well if both your feet were shod with nails, then they would not wear." So the poor man was forced to walk about a quarter of a mile in the greatest agony, until he reached the teacher's house, where the nail was taken from his foot. The teacher's wife had breakfast

ready, and when they had eaten something, they were conveyed to M——. As they were passing the Priest's door, a band of ungodly men and women followed them, calling them names. When they reached M——, the Clergyman kept them out of prison by giving security for their appearing at the sessions. When he returned home, he found that one of his cows was missing, and at the end of three days she was found, drowned in a pool of water, at a short distance from his own land, with about half-a-ton of large stones thrown upon her by some ill-disposed persons; and on the same night his boat was loosened from its moorings, so that the wind and tide had carried it amongst the rocks, where it was found in the morning, broken to pieces. However, all these trials only drove Mick nearer to his Saviour: his neighbours proposed to take advantage of the temptation,

and entice him to the Priest's side again, lest the Priest's curse should fall more heavily upon him; but Mick said, "These trials are more the mark of God's favour, than of the Priest's curse, for God does often chastise those whom He loves." This was the answer to his neighbours. A very hot persecution was carried on for some years, yet the church went on increasing, notwithstanding the Priest's plans to overthrow it. Mick and the schoolmaster appeared at the sessions, and were acquitted, and one of the Police was discharged for not allowing Mick to draw the nail out of his foot.

On the Sunday after the Priest was defeated at the sessions, a band of men lay in wait for the curate, in order to stone him, as he was on his way to read prayers at B——, but the Lord delivered him out of their hands. When the famine began in this country, Popery was completely

put down in Mick's neighbourhood. Now they have a very fine Church at B——, also a School-house, and a good congregation of 120 converts. Mick is at present at a distance of fifteen miles from me; he is getting on well, and is to come on a visit to me, for a month, at the end of April, when his garden is tilled.

I remain, honoured Mrs. A—,

Your obedient Servant,

B—— N——.

A P P E N D I X.

NOTE A.

“I found four leaves of a book sewn together.” What book? Ah, little did he think that it was the word of the living God; a message of mercy sent to him from the King of kings; for as yet he had never heard of the Bible. But see what wonders this blessed book did for poor Mick. “The seed, which is the Word of God,” having taken root in his heart, brought forth much fruit to the glory of

God. That word is here seen to be “quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword.”—Heb. iv. 12. “The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.” And thus he who was before sunk in the grossest spiritual darkness, was made “wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Oh, may we love the Bible!
 For it alone can tell
 The way to save our ruined souls
 From Satan, sin, and hell:
 In words of truth it tells us how
 We may ascend to heaven—
 That if we trust in Jesus' blood,
 Our sins are all forgiven.

NOTE B.

“*I think it an honour to be reproached for the name of Jesus.*” So taught our blessed Saviour—“Blessed are ye when men shallreproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake.”—Luke vi. 22. So taught Peter—“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye.”—1 Pet. iv. 14. So taught Paul—“I take pleasure in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake.”—2 Cor. xii. 10. But though it be a mark of a Christian to *endure* persecution, it is no mark of a Christian to *inflict* it. Paul

says, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."—Rom. viii. 9. Did Christ persecute? No. Did the Apostles persecute? No. Does Popery persecute? Yes. Did Isaac persecute? No. Did Ishmael? Yes. "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now."—Gal. iv. 28, 29. You will mark that it was he who was born after the flesh, who was the persecutor; and "even so is it now." "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal," says the Apostle. But can a persecuting church say this? The only lawful weapon for the defence of the truth as it is in Jesus, is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."—See Eph. vi. 17. Now, if a man be on the side of error, and the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, be against him, the only weapon which remains for him is the sword of persecution; and hence it will be found that in by far the great majority of cases the persecutor, and not the persecuted is the *real* heretic.

NOTE C.

The Priest asked, "Have you five shillings? come hand them here." Such is

Popery,—anything but a poor man's church. Christ says, "How *hardly* shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God." Popery says, "How *easily* shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God," for they are the very men who can enter most easily, having the therewith to purchase indulgences and masses. Now either the Saviour is wrong or Popery is right. I leave the reader to judge. The gospel message is, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that HATH NO MONEY; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price."—Isa. lv. 1. The Apostle Peter tells us "that we are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ."—1 Pet i. 18. We read of one, who, thinking "the gift of God could be purchased with money," came to the Apostle for that purpose. "But Peter said unto him, thy money perish with thee."—Acts viii. 20. So far from the Apostles *selling* pardons, there is not a single instance of any one of them undertaking to forgive sins. My Romanist friends, I pray you, open your eyes.

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