

put in better condition, new ones were laid out, and the settlement received its full share of the county road fund, the drainage fund, and the school fund. Upon the application of a number of the settlers to the general government, a post office was also established, called Robinsonville, of which the writer was appointed first postmaster. The other Belgian settlements emulated our example, organized new towns, established school districts, provided teachers, laid out new highways, petitioned the general government for post-offices, and exercised their right of suffrage at every election.

Now came the building of churches,—one, and sometimes two, at each settlement,—and when the church was built, then would follow a parsonage for a priest. But the priest was hard to get, and when one would come he was generally a poor specimen of his kind. Some of them were so avaricious that they would refuse to bury a dead child because the parents did not have the ready cash to pay for their services; others were dissipated, some were habitual drunkards; and it was not rare to see a row break out in a church during the service, between the priest and the officers of his church, terminating in a regular fight, in which there generally came out a whipped priest.

Our Belgians are mostly Roman Catholics, some are Protestants; but generally they are lovers of liberty and freedom, willing that every one should worship according to the dictates of his own conscience. The question of religion is not a subject of contention among them. I have seen Protestants contribute material and labor towards building Catholic churches, and Catholics have done the same thing towards building Protestant churches. Religious quarrels are confined among themselves, and are mostly upon such materialistic questions as the location of a church site, the building of a church, or the retaining of an arbitrary priest.

Upon the 15th of August, 1858, an alleged miracle happened among the Roman Catholics of the First Settlement, which made quite a noise at that time, the effect of