

An Enchanted Island.

A wonderful stream is the river Time. As it runs through the realms of tears, With a faintest rhythm and a musical rhyme, And a broader sweep and a surge sublime, And blends with the ocean of years.

A JESUIT IN CONGRESS.

Interesting Sketch of a Michigan Pioneer Priest.

Editor of the Pilot.—Being down here in Florida for the purpose of founding a Catholic colony, when, by chance, the "Report of the Pioneer Society of the State of Michigan, vol. I. Lansing, George & Co., 1877," came into my hands, I naturally ran through it to notice what I recall the pioneers of that country met with in their efforts at settlement there.

The first mention of him, on page 345, is merely that his name is published as one in a list of inhabitants of Detroit in the year 1806; in which list, by the way, occurred also the (Irish) names of Thomas Welch, Elizabeth McBride, Hugh R. Martin, David McKim, John Donovan, Sally Donovan, Dr. Wm. McCloskey, John Kinzie, Henry McVay, Wm. Keene, John Melburn, Sally Newlin, Robert Conn, Matthew Donovan, James McCloskey, James McDonald, Daniel Maceal, Thomas Mahony, and George Welch, one in nine of the whole population.

On page 347, Father Richard is mentioned as having lost \$250 by the fire of 1805, and Thomas Welch \$215.

The mention on page 317 is unimportant, a mere passing allusion to him in a paper read before the society in 1872.

On p. 355, Fr. Richard is mentioned as having published the first newspaper printed in Michigan, namely, the Michigan Essay, Detroit, Aug. 31, 1809.

On p. 428, the mention of him is as defendant in a law suit, urged against him, and with success, by Counsellor O'Keefe, for the plaintiff.

The mention on p. 443, is in these words:—"Peter Yax comes next. He was a good Catholic, as were also most of the citizens on the river. Fr. Richard visited them twice a year, and frequently stopped with him. Yax had three stalwart sons, all fiddlers. They drink whiskey and get drunk. They curse, they swear, but not so much dance; oh no! not so much dance."

This story shows that the art of special pleading was not unknown, even away out in Michigan, in the time of Mr. Yax. The mention, on p. 450, is in a paper read before the "Pioneer" institute of Detroit, in 1871, by a Mr. Wilkins, School Inspector of that city. In this paper Mr. Wilkins, while alluding to Father Richard as "the head of the Catholic Church in the Territory, a man of political power as well as a fine education," said he did not appear to have been a Christian, a charitable fling for which Mr. Wilkins was nicely roasted in a paper read before the Pioneer Society, the next year, by Mr. Girardin, of Detroit, to which I will come in due course.

The mention, on p. 479, is an illustration of how grossly an apparently intelligent, and, doubtless, well-meaning man may deceive himself when he meddles with religious matters which he does not understand. The paper is "An Account of the Life and Times of Rev. Joseph Hickox, read before the Society by Rev. E. H. Pilcher, D. D., in 1873."

was overcome by the arguments and illustrations of Mr. Hickox. Father Richard was "overcome" by the "illustrations," of Mr. Hickox, but your Catholic readers will see that it was for a very different reason from that imagined by the complacent Dr. Pilcher, who, in his entire ignorance of the reverential awe with which Catholics contemplate the doctrine of transubstantiation, innocently furnishes the explanation of Father Richard's silence.

Mr. Hickox, declaiming against the doctrine in question, wound up with a very gross illustration to prove its absurdity. Dr. Pilcher reports: "Here Mr. Richard colored, as if displeased, but made no reply. The subject was continued, but he would only say, with a bland smile, 'Mr. Hickox, you are the first Protestant preacher I ever conversed with. I must say it is a mystery.'"

And Mr. Hickox, in his ignorance, took this action of Father Richard as a confession of weakness in what Mr. Hickox seems to have thought was an argument. Dr. Pilcher recounts that Father Richard received Mr. Hickox on this occasion "with all the politeness which a Frenchman is capable of exhibiting; which, by the way," he adds, "cannot be exceeded by any other people." He does not see that it was this politeness, as well as the forcing of an argument through the brain of the self-satisfied Hickox, which prevented Father Richard from entering at all into the discussion.

But Mr. Hickox was elated. He had silenced the learned Father Richard. He came again, as related by Dr. Pilcher, "On another occasion Mr. Hickox was passing his house, and felt suddenly moved to call, not knowing what topic to introduce. Mr. Richard met him very cordially at the door, when Mr. Hickox remarked: 'Mr. Richard, I did not intend to call, but I felt suddenly impressed to ask you one question.' Mr. Richard said quickly, 'Ask it. What is it?' When Mr. Hickox inquired, with great solemnity, 'Was you ever born again?' (Was you ever saved?) 'Did you ever see the time when you were in a justified relation in the sight of heaven?' The reply was, 'Never! never!'

Some folks might think Mr. Hickox, and much more his apologist, the learned Dr. Pilcher, ought to have seen the absurdity of Mr. Hickox's so solemnly put question, but no; Mr. Hickox continued: "Then I must tell you that the Scriptures say you are that you are a blind leader of the blind, and both will fall into a snare. You say you are leading a number of people into heaven, and yet do not know the way yourself. Now, get converted yourself, in the name of God, sir, and then you will be a safe guide to your people. That is all I have to say. Good night, sir." So he left him. All of this is set down in the annals of Michigan as a glorious triumph of Mr. Hickox over simple old Father Richard. "So he left him," the story complacently ends, presumably (doubtless they would have the inference go) in deep thought, troubled in mind, by the arguments of Mr. Hickox, but Father Richard was not a Frenchman for nothing, and if we could have behind the scenes after Mr. Hickox's departure we would doubtless have seen the mercurial father pacing up and down his room, beating his head and exclaiming, "Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! Comment est-ce qu'on peut être si stupide!"

"Can one be so stupid and live!" I omitted to notice, on p. 443, a reference to Father Richard, illustrating his age of the olden time.

"Old Mr. St. Bernard comes in for a share of remembrance. He furnished the timber for St. Ann's Church, Detroit, on contract with Father Richard, and did a large share of the work with his own hands. Father Richard would say, 'St. Bernard, don't let the moss grow on your axe handles!'" "No, Father, I for the best timber; you for the pray."

But the bonanza of information as to Father Richard is from pages 481 to 495, inclusive, "Life and time of Rev. Gabriel Richard, by J. A. Girardin. Read before the Detroit Pioneer Society, December 19, 1872."

"I will condense and compile as follows, interesting occasional remarks. 'Gabriel Richard was born at Sables, in the Department of Charente-Inférieure, France, on the 15th day of October, 1764. On his mother's side, descended from the family which gave Bossuet to France and the world; made theological studies at Angers, later at Louvain, where he qualified himself for admission as a scholastic; ordained priest in 1791, the time of the great French Revolution; a bad time for priests in France, so he was sent to Baltimore in 1792 to join the Sulpicians who had been established there in 1791; to a place in Illinois, the name of which, as Cervantes says in Don Quixote, I do not wish to remember, for Father Richard reports of it: 'The people of this post are the worst in all Illinois. There is no religion among them, scarcely any one attending Mass, even on Sundays; intemperance, debauchery and idleness reign supreme.' (Illinois places, please don't all speak at once.) After six years service in Illinois, he was transferred to Detroit, arriving there the feast of Corpus Christi, 1798. At that time the mission of Detroit and vicinity contained some 1,800 Catholics, mostly French, who had been ministered to by Father Landry, who, advanced in years, was, at his own request, permitted to return to his native land. Speaking of Father Richard, M. Girardin says:

"Hardly had he been installed pastor than he commenced, as a good spiritual father, to provide his flock with all the elements of religion and education. Education was at this period at a very low ebb, and his great aim was to stimulate his parishioners with a love of learning. He left no stone unturned for the accomplishment of this purpose. He would here and there, as occasion required, have schools established for their benefit, and by his zeal and eloquence, he thundered forth from his pulpit in language so clear and forcible, that his flock soon saw that what he preached he not only himself followed and practised, but would require them to follow and practise. He was indefatigable in the discharge of the duties of his ministry and very austere in his habits and mode of living, for his meals were composed of food of the simplest and coarsest kind, his bed was of the simplest material and hardly comfortable, his dress was of the coarsest and cheapest of cloth; he was courteous and affable to

every one who had the pleasure of his acquaintance, he commanded the highest respect from both Catholics and Protestants. He was a profound theologian, a good speaker, and good mathematician, also a good composer of music."

"He was a profound theologian," of course, as a graduate of St. Sulpice in Paris he must have been; which makes me interject here, that when the Methodist preacher, Mr. Hickox, assailed him that morning with the "solemnly put" question, "Was you ever born again? Did you ever see the time when you were in a justified relation in the sight of heaven?" In his astonishment at this new doctrine he naturally and doubtless, with amazement, answered, "Never! never!"

He traveled much in Michigan, visited the outposts, labored with the Indians, but reports sadly, that "English rum had destroyed more Indians than ever did the Spanish sword."

Returning to Detroit after this trip, he enlarged the church there, and with his assistant, Father Dillet, commenced an educational institution which they designed to be a nursery for young men for the sanctuary.

This leads Mr. Girardin to take up the remark of Mr. Wilkins, before referred to, on which he directed his remarks personally to Mr. Wilkins, exclaiming, "A most unjust, and if not, a malicious assertion. You were either ignorant on this subject or else you were guilty of pandering to the taste of your audience. Father Richard did approve of the education of the masses. For proof of this, his first effort was jointly with Father Jean Dillet, who both, in 1804 opened a school, whose field of operation was the education of young men for the ministry."

And in 1804, mainly through his exertions, a young ladies' academy was started. His first effort was the introduction into the territory of the first printing-press, which was brought all the way overland from Baltimore, and on the 31st of August, 1809, issued the first newspaper west of the Allegheny Mountains, called the *Essai du Michigan, or Impartial Observer*, and the same year published the first prayer-book, of which I have a copy.

M. Girardin continues his strictures on Mr. Wilkins for his unwarranted slurs on the memory of Father Richard, but we are used to the Wilkins style of dirt-throwing, and it does not annoy us now as much as it used to, so I pass on to other matters. Fr. Richard, a devoted priest, who had been created by Father Roes, a Franciscan missionary, in 1750, was destroyed by the fire of 1805. "By this accident he found himself under the necessity of occupying a large warehouse, situated near the edge of the river, belonging to Fr. St. Ann, for the purpose of a church, which was used for some time as a Franciscan mission, in 1750, was destroyed by the fire of 1805. "By this accident he found himself under the necessity of occupying a large warehouse, situated near the edge of the river, belonging to Fr. St. Ann, for the purpose of a church, which was used for some time as a Franciscan mission, in 1750, was destroyed by the fire of 1805. 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