

one hundred and seventeen years had passed away. Towards the close of the sixteenth century, several efforts had been made, under Protestant auspices, by Sir Walter Raleigh and his relative, Gilbert, to make a settlement on the Atlantic borders of this country. These attempts proved unsuccessful. Their projectors succeeded only in giving a name to the territory in which their experiment had failed. They called it Virginia, a name intended, no doubt, as a compliment to Queen Elizabeth. But within seventy years from the first voyage of Columbus, the coast had been visited, explored, sketched in maps circulated in Europe at the time,—visited and explored, I say, in all directions, north and south, east and west, on the Atlantic and on the Pacific,—by scientific and daring navigators, all Catholics, and all sailing under the flag of some Catholic power in Europe. Quebec was founded in 1541. And from the spot on which we stand, to the North Pole, France at that period was in actual possession,—in this sense, at least, that there was no European power to question her title or disturb her occupancy. And from this spot to Cape Horn, the same was true in regard to the occupation and claim of the Spaniards and Portuguese.

But as I have spoken of the primitive Colonies, so I would now distinguish the primary Discoverers of America, from those who must take rank in the secondary or tertiary class. Even in the primary class, there must be no competition of honor or merit, as regards one who stands out by himself, the first, alone, incomparable, peerless—Christopher Columbus. But at a certain distance behind him, there were three formidable rivals, desirous of seeming, at least, to share with him a portion of that human glory which has made his name immortal. You will not be surprised that all these were Catholics, since at the period in which they lived and struggled for fame, Protestantism had not yet begun. But you will be struck with the fact, that the three imitators and rivals of Columbus, were his own countrymen—Italians, all. Their names were Cabot (father and son), Amerigo Vesputi, and Verazzani, the two latter natives of Florence, and the former, though residing in Bristol, in England, a native of Venice.

We cannot help regretting that the new hemisphere did not take the name of the first discoverer (if, as it would appear, it had no name of its own)—that it was not called Columbia, after the noble Genoese sailor, instead of America, from Amerigo, the Florentine.—But after all, justice, in this respect, has contrived to establish a "court of error" in the popular mind, whether in this land or in Europe, which rules, that whenever you pronounce the name of America, every one thinks of Columbus, and no one of Vesputi.

Poor Columbus! A sailor himself, and as an heir to the papers of his father-in-law, he had heard and read of voyages and their wonders, not unlike in their philosophy (but of a higher and different order) those which tempted Douglas from his Grampian hills. He went about from court to court, with a heavy heart, asking permission to visit the western continent and bring back news. Courtiers, and even sovereigns, who listened for a moment to his pleading, said or thought that the poor man was deranged. No, he was not; but he would have probably become so, if Providence had not opened for him an occasion and opportunity to test his theory by practical experiment. The difficulty was want of means to execute his project, or perish in the effort. In the court of Spain he had the support of one or two distinguished ecclesiastics. Columbus was a scientific enthusiast, and such men are always eloquent when they speak of their favorite project. Still his eloquence had proved vain at many courts, and in the final, almost hopeless interview, it was, as he knelt pleading before Ferdinand and Isabella, that he touched a chord which vibrated in the inmost heart of the illustrious and royal lady. In that august presence, he had spoken of the anticipated glory and gain, connected with the success of his enterprise, but without effect. But when he spoke of the probability of the existence of men made after God's own image, who might be brought to know Jesus Christ, and to be saved, believing in Him, he melted the heart of "Isabella, the Catholic,"—so that she lost all appreciation of the jewels that adorned her person and her diadem, throw them, so to speak, at the feet of the enthusiast, and deemed their value as nothing, compared with the mere possibility of their being instrumental in bringing souls buried in the darkness of paganism to the knowledge of Christ.

In a few months afterwards, Columbus was seen planting the cross on the Island of San Salvador, and taking possession of this hemisphere, in the name of Christ our Saviour ("San Salvador") and of Spain. I look upon this scene as one of the most interesting, if not thrilling, events recorded in the annals of the human race. But in this title-page and frontispiece of American history, Columbus was not alone. His partner in the glory was Isabella the Catholic, the meek, the brave, the enlightened, the discreet, the beautiful Queen of Castile and Aragon.

Five years from the date of that event, namely, in 1497, John and Sebastian Cabot were sent out by the British Government under Henry the Seventh, and made an extensive survey of this coast,—creating thereby that title on which Queen Elizabeth based her right to plant colonies in this country, more than eighty years afterwards.

I have now touched, merely touched, on the prominent points of American history, so far as my subject authorized or required me to do so, from the first to the last page. I have reviewed the validity of the imaginary claims on which it is assumed that this is a Protestant country,—in presence of the constitution, and all that has happened since its adoption,—in presence of the faith of treaties,—in presence of the war of freedom and independence,—in presence of colonial history,—in presence of the period of discoveries antecedent to colonial settlement, at least on these shores—and as yet, I confess I have not discovered the first fact or document which could warrant any man, possessed of an ordinary amount of true information, to assume that this is a Protestant more than a Catholic country.

But, perhaps it may be said that the religious or sectarian character of a country is to be determined, not by historic titles either of discovery or occupation, but by the genius of its political and civil institutions. If this ground be taken, the evidences on the Catholic side are stronger than those which have already passed in review. The great elements of our institutions, namely, representative government, electoral franchise, trial by jury, municipal polity, were all the inventions of Catholics alone. They come in part from the period of Alfred the Great. They had acquired a very high development already under Edward the Confessor, and it was only after royal power had attempted to make encroachments on the rights secured by them, that the Barons at Runnymede extorted from King

John a written pledge not to secure new privileges, but to confirm those which were understood as the hereditary birthright of English Catholic freemen. These, therefore, assuredly do not supply any evidence that this is a Protestant country. But, perhaps it may be well to inquire what is meant by the term. It surely cannot be that the elements of nature, earth, air, fire, or water, can be qualified as belonging to one denomination more than to another. We are composed of Catholics and Protestants, if you will, in the enjoyment of a common inheritance; and although the fields of Protestant proprietors may be more numerous than those of Catholics, still the same dew of Heaven cause the wheat to germinate in the earth, and the same sunbeams ripen the harvest of the one as well as of the other, without discrimination. But if those Protestant proprietors should ask of us to be grateful for this, that they permitted us to share the dew and the sunbeams with themselves, that we ought to be thankful for this, our answer is, No, gentlemen; our title to the benefit of the seasons is just the same as yours. We are, indeed, grateful for your kind offices of good neighborhood, but, pray, do not require us to give you thanks for Heaven's gifts, which we share in our own right.

What, then, is the meaning of the words Protestant country, as applied to the United States? I suppose that, at last, it will come down to signify nothing more than that the majority of the inhabitants are Protestants. But has it never occurred to those who could make such an observation, that majorities and minorities are mere accidents, liable to change, whereas the constitution is a principle, and not an accident? Its great and inappreciable value is that it proscribes the duties of majorities, and protects, with equal and impartial justice, the rights of minorities. In this country, the Constitution of the United States is the majority, and it shall rule. Now, in presence of the Constitution, this is neither a Catholic nor a Protestant country, but a broad land of civil and religious freedom and equality, secured indiscriminately to all.

In passing so rapidly on the direct line of my subject, I have been obliged to leave unnoticed innumerable incidents, many of which possess attraction enough to have made one turn aside and dally by the way.—For instance, the missionary labors of the Jesuits and other apostles of the cross, who, thirsting not for gold, but for souls, had not ceased to traverse this country, in every direction, from the earliest period. Time has, to a great extent, obliterated their foot-prints on the soil, but the reason is, in part, that the Indian tribes among whom they labored are gone—shrinking away into the deeper or more distant wilderness. The memory of the illustrious Jesuit Fathers, who labored for their conversion, has accompanied their descendants even to their present remotest hunting grounds. But it has become comparatively weak, and is now reduced to a symbolic term, which they cherish with great affection, and express in the words "black gown," or "robe noir." Two hundred years ago, the poor Franciscans trod the golden sand of California beneath their bare feet, without noticing or appreciating its value. They looked more to heaven than to earth, and it would have been almost out of keeping with their character, to have made the discovery which has recently startled the mind and whetted the cupidity of the world.

Two hundred years ago, Father Le Moyne, laboring among the Onondagas of this State, discovered the Salt Springs, which abound near Salina and Syracuse. At present, nearly all men believe in the reality of the discovery, but prejudice was then what prejudice is now; and when a Dutch clergyman of New Amsterdam, to whom Father Le Moyne had made known the discovery, reported the same to the Classis in Holland, he added, by way of caution, "but whether this information be true, or whether it be a Jesuit lie, I do not determine!" And in that precise year, that is, in 1654—passing to another scene of a different order, you will be surprised and sorry to hear that the Catholics of Maryland, who had given such an example as we have seen described, were themselves disfranchised on account of religion.

It is not to be inferred that, in this historic review, I have been insensible to the merits of other persons and other parties besides Catholics. But the character of my subject, and the limitation of my time, do not permit me to speak of them. Nor is it necessary. Neither the descendants of the Virginia Colonists, nor those of the Pilgrim Fathers, have allowed their ancestors to pass away "unwept, unhonored, or unused." They are proud of being descendants of such parentage. Nor need a Catholic be ashamed if he is told that he was born near the site of St. Mary's, in Maryland. As a Colony, and as a State, she has had her distinguished men. The supreme recognized interpreter of the laws, even of the Constitution, is her son, and a Catholic. The judicial ermine will contract no stain while it is worn by him. Pure and unsullied he received it from the illustrious Marshall, and to his unknown successor he will transmit it as unsullied and as pure—but not purer than in his own private character. The death of Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, the last of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, is a comparatively recent event. The galaxy of great men who had endorsed that immortal instrument had disappeared, one after another, until the star of Maryland alone was left—and not by one State, but by all, its declining course was watched with deepest interest, until, becoming brighter as it neared the horizon, it was seen no more—and is now but a gratefully cherished memory.

The moral of the remarks I have made, if they have any, should be, in my judgment, that no pretensions to religious ascendancy should be entertained on one side, or admitted on the other. In the whole range of human benefits, no nation on earth has more reason to be thankful for the favors which the kind providence of Almighty God has placed in its possession, and within its reach, than the people of the United States. Let them without distinction of creed, unite, and be united, in preserving the common inheritance; let them vie with each other in mutual kindness and good offices; vie with each other in honorable rivalry, as to who shall be best citizens; who shall most faithfully support the country and obey the laws. I hope the time is far distant, but yet it may come, when our country shall have need of all her children. O, then, let them be prepared to rally around her as around their common mother, who had been at all times equally impartial, and equally kind to them all.

I cannot conclude without calling your attention to three distinct moments of American history, which, in the events themselves, in their circumstances and consequences, stand out apart in their own moral grandeur—not to be confounded with any others. The first is the moment when Washington spontaneously returned his victorious sword to the civil authority of

the country which he had liberated. To my mind, the annals of mankind, from the very origin of time, have never presented, in the order of merely human moral grandeur, a moment or a spectacle, more sublime than this. The other, not less sublime, is that in which, after having remained unknown to each other, so far as we can tell, from the period when the foundations of the earth were laid, two worlds met for the first time, and were introduced to each other around the cross, planted by Columbus, on the island of San Salvador, in 1492. The third was that in which the Queen of Castile and Aragon, offered to pledge the precious stones of her crown, in order to defray the expenses of his expedition. If, as there is reason to believe, she was prompted to this by love for souls that might be saved, even though their existence was yet doubtful, this was not only a sublime moment, it was almost divine, as insuring success to the enterprise from the inward prompting and impulse of heavenly charity. Of course, the civility of Spain would not allow their sovereign lady to make such a sacrifice. They provided means from other sources. And although they did well in this, we are tempted almost to regret that some of her jewels did not, by some accident, find their way to this country. The sword of Washington is treasured as a precious relic, no less of his patriotism than of his bravery. The hilt of such a sword would be fitly gilded by a jewel once possessed by such a Queen—the patroness of Christopher Columbus. The double relic would represent two important events connected with American history, and be an interesting memorial, at the same time, of the achievements of Washington and of the magnanimity and charity of "Isabella the Catholic."

CATHOLIC INTELLIGENCE.

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY.—We understand that a petition is in course of signature by the members of the Irish Hierarchy, praying his Holiness to grant a decree for the erection and foundation of the "Catholic University for Ireland," with all the powers for granting decrees and other privileges that were conceded by the late Pontiff to the Catholic Bishops of Belgium.

The Rev. Francis McGinty has collected £1,200 in London, for the Irish Catholic University.

CONFIRMATIONS.—The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster administered the Sacrament of Confirmation at St. Mary's, Westminster, on Quinquagesima Sunday, and at St. Anselm's, Lincoln's-Inn-fields, on Sexagesima Sunday. At the last-named place upwards of 300 persons received the sacrament. The Bishop of Southwark gave Confirmation at the Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Bermondsey, on Sunday last, to upwards of 200 persons.

RECEPTION OF A NUN.—On Saturday, the 21st ultimo, at the Presentation Convent, Middleton, Miss Frances Molony, daughter of the late John Molony, Esq., of Rosscarbery, received the white veil. The Rev. John Fitzpatrick, P.P., officiated, assisted by several clergymen. After the ceremony, which was numerous and respectfully attended, the friends of the young lady partook of a *dejeuner*.—*Cork Examiner*.

On Tuesday, the 17th ult., his Grace the Archbishop of Dublin confirmed upwards of 1,500 children, of both sexes, in the spacious church of St. Andrew, Westland-row. His Grace addressed the children at three different periods of the ceremony with great energy. After four hours of constant labor, during the instructions and the administration of the holy sacrament, he did not appear in the slightest degree fatigued.

The distinguished convert, Rev. H. J. Marshall, late of Oxford, whose Missionary labors have been lately so successful, is to preach at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Evangelist, Salford, during Lent. The rev. gentleman delivers his first lecture in that church on Wednesday evening.—*Tablet*.

DIOCESE OF CHICAGO.—Bourbonnais is a very thriving Catholic Colony, composed exclusively of Canadian emigrants. It is but six or eight years ago that a few Canadians settled in that part of Will county, where the lands are extremely fertile. They obtained them at Congress price. In the summer of 1846, the Rev. Mr. Badin took charge of the small congregation of Bourbonnais, and remained a considerable time among them. They had then a very small log Church, which, however, was spacious enough to accommodate the new Colony. The beauty and fertility of the country, watered by the Kankakee and Iroquois rivers, and the cheapness of the land, soon attracted new Colonists from Canada, and it became necessary to make an addition to the miserable log Church, which was done by removing the logs of one of the sides and constructing a kind of shed, which gave the log building a very grotesque appearance. Soon after the arrival of the present Bishop, measures were taken to build a more decent house of worship. Owing to the zeal of the Pastor, Rev. R. T. Courjault, a large and solid frame Church has since been erected, measuring 110 feet in length, and 50 in width. The interior has galleries all around, and can accommodate nearly twice as many people as the present Cathedral of Chicago. About 160 pews had been located last year, and more were to be added. The wainscoting and the pews, as far as they are finished, are of oak or walnut and maple, and of neatly finished workmanship. A fine steeple is to be added to it, and when finished the Church will have a very fine appearance. The congregation has increased steadily by new accessions from Canada, and now numbers about 3,000 members. Three Priests now reside in Bourbonnais, and labor with great zeal and fruit among them. The people in general are very edifying and regular in the practice of their religious duties. The Arch-confraternity of the immaculate Heart of Mary, and of our Lady of Mount Carmel, are established among them, as also a Temperance society of which nearly all the adults are members. As the lands in the neighborhood of the Valley of Bourbonnais have nearly all been taken up, a new congregation is now being formed on Beaver

Creek, not far from the Iroquois river; and about 12 or 15 miles from Bourbonnais. This new congregation is to be placed under the charge of the Rev. Charles Chiniquy, the Father Mathew of Canada, now residing in Bourbonnais, who has already commenced preparations to build a new Church at Beaver Creek, which, it is hoped, will be completed before the end of the present year.—*Western Tablet*.

CONVERSION.—A few days ago, Jan. 25th, the Protestant Episcopal minister of Columbus, Ohio, abjured his errors, and was received into the Catholic Church, and more are expected to follow soon.—*Correspondent of Celt*.

AFFAIRS AT ROME.

On Wednesday, February 11th, a young Roman lady, of the noble family of the Giustinianin, took the veil, in the Church of SS. Domenico and Sisto. Lady Campden had accepted the office of godmother to the newly-made Nun, and had previously conducted her to the Vatican, and presented her to the Pope, in order to receive his Apostolical blessing, but, being too unwell to take part in the actual ceremony, Lady Campden deputed Lady Fielding to represent her in the solemn function, which was performed by Cardinal Barberini. As due notice had been given for some time before, the church was very full. Lords Fielding and Campden were present, and great numbers of English visitors, attended the ceremony.

The Holy Father, always desirous of contributing as much as possible to the growth of our most holy religion, the embellishment of Rome, and the progress of the Christian arts has been pleased to direct that the excavations should be made with regularity in the Christian catacombs, in order the better to preserve the monuments which are found there, and illustrate the history of the first ages of the Church. For this purpose, by letters from the Secretariate of State, he has appointed a commission composed of Cardinal Patrizi, his Vicar-General, as president, and of the following:—Mgr. Castellani, Bishop of Portofino, as sacristan of his Holiness; Mgr. Tizzani, formerly Bishop of Terni; Mgr. Luquet, Bishop of Ueschon; Mgr. Marini, secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Immunity, and Prefect of the Vatican Archives; Father Marchi, S.J.; the Chevalier J. B. de Rossi, the Chevalier Minardi, Professor of Painting in the Pontifical Academy of St. Luke; and the Abbaté D. Felice Profili, Vice-Rector of the Roman Seminary, as secretary. The Holy Father has endowed the committee with an annual sum of money to meet the necessary expenses. The members of the committee have already met several times at the house of the president, and have decided, among other things, on the manner in which, for the future, the catacombs shall be visited, in order to satisfy the devotion of the Faithful.—*Giornale di Roma*.

CONVERSION OF A GRAND-NIECE OF THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.—We find the following in the *Impartial du Nord*:—"The Princess Naraki, great-niece of the Emperor of Russia, arrived at Valenciennes three days ago, with the Lady Superior of the Order of St. Vincent de Paul. Their object was to examine the buildings of the Hospice Général, and to make proper arrangements for the installation of the Sisters of the Order. The pious princess desires to occupy a cell in their humble asylum. It is said that, having descended voluntarily from the highest steps of the imperial throne, to which her rank and birth called her, she has abjured the Greek religion to adopt that of the Roman Catholic Church, and to take the veil amongst the humblest Sisters of Charity. She resolved on this vocation in a journey she some time ago made to Paris, after the death of her father, on seeing the exemplary life of the Sisters of the Congregation of St. Vincent de Paul. In order to end her life amongst them, far from worldly greatness, she hesitated at no sacrifice—neither the loss of her property, which was confiscated, nor exile, nor the most complete abnegation of her existence. She possesses a perfect education, solid and varied information, to which she unites a modesty which adds another flower to her almost angelic crown."

The *Dublin Advocate* has an interesting account of the elucidation, by engineers, of the *crannogs*, or artificial island fortifications, mentioned frequently in the Annals of Ireland, and which have been submerged for centuries. Many of them have been found in lakes in remote districts of Ireland, by the lowering of the waters. They are, generally, circular or oval in form, enclosed by double rows of stakes, sunk deeply into the ground or bottom of the lake; in the space thus enclosed, where the bottom was soft, layers of logs of wood are found, over which stones and earth have been superposed to form a solid mass. In the centre are generally found large flat stones, "bearing marks of fire;" and quantities of bones of various animals, evidently used as food, have been discovered. The islands are described as so cunningly devised as that, to approach them with hostile intent was as difficult as a serpent's nest or the lair of a wild beast. In Drumalough Loch, in the county Leitrim, near the border of the lake, opposite the island, a canoe, made out of the solid trunk of a tree, was discovered; though perfect when found it decomposed rapidly on exposure to the air.

RESTITUTION THROUGH A CONFESSOR.—About ten years ago the manuscript department of the British Museum suffered a loss by the cutting out from the manuscripts of several autographs of the early Reformers. Eight months since the authorities of the Museum received a note from a Catholic Priest enclosing the purloined autographs, in which it was stated that in *extremis* a man whom he attended had handed them to him, and requested that they might be forwarded to the proper authorities. On referring to the period when the autographs were abstracted it was discovered that the party who had committed the felony was a foreigner.

EVANGELICAL PIETY.—"Some of our grocers," says the *Dundee Advertiser*, "have got tea bags illuminated with scenes and texts from Scripture. Much surprise is felt that such very orthodox envelopments should not be able to exclude chicory from coffee, or brown sand from sugar."