

representatives of the people met on the lovely plains of Thingvalla, and proclaimed the religion of the Catholic Church the national religion. The Church of Christ flourished and brought forth admirable fruits of science and sanctity. Two Islandic bishops are to be found in the Roman calendar, and the Benedictines and Augustinians raised monasteries over the island. The Benedictine monastery at Thingeyra belongs to Iceland's Golden Age, the age wherein Icelandic poets and chroniclers were consigning to imperishable parchment the noble deeds of their fellow-countrymen. Some of these Sagas are masterpieces of style, and show what a marvellous attention was paid to the culture of letters in a remote corner of the world at a time when a large portion of the continent of Europe was sunk in barbarism.

In 1551, Christian III, King of Denmark, after having vainly attempted to plant Protestantism in the island by the softer arts of persuasion, tried the sterner methods of sending men-of-war. The Bishop, Jon Arason, put himself at the head of a small army and swore to meet death rather than abandon to the heretics the cause of God's Church. He was successful in several engagements, but was finally handed over to the enemy by a traitor, and was beheaded on the seventh of November, 1550. He died a hero, and with him died the Catholic hierarchy in Iceland. The Lutheran form of religion was then proclaimed the only religion of the State.

But the people of that northern island, as if loath to yield up the old faith, retained much of the ancient Catholic ceremonial and Catholic spirit. The Lutheran morning service is still known after three hundred and fifty years as the Mass, and at various places may be seen crucifixes, triptychs and pictures of saints, to recall bygone Catholic days. Devotion to the suffering Saviour is still retained in vigour amongst them. A Protestant