

the star of empire took its way," the ever watchful leaders of the Papacy made the most determined and well sustained efforts to establish the supremacy of their religion in the lands beyond the Atlantic. In Spanish America their efforts were unopposed and completely successful. But in the northern parts of that great continent, the British and French races,—the champions of the two opposing forms of Christianity,—had both established themselves, and soon began to contend for the mastery. It was a religious, no less than a political struggle from the beginning. The Pilgrim fathers, who settled New England, had fled from persecution in their native land, that they might enjoy that religious liberty in the wilds of the new world, which was denied them in their native land. The French, on the other hand, with a zeal which does them honor, were anxious to extend that religion, which they believed to be the only true one, and convert the red men of the Forest to Christianity.—And no one can contemplate, without admiration, the heroic efforts of the early French Missionaries, in their explorations of the vast countries along the St. Lawrence and Ottawa, on the borders of the great lakes, and down the Mississippi and its tributaries to the gulf of Mexico. But God had very different objects in view with these labors, than they ever intended or even imagined. They were preparing the way for the opening up of these countries, that they might furnish an asylum for the oppressed protestants of Europe. And thus we obtain a glimpse of the great truth that God often not only bears long with error, and oppression, and iniquity, but employs sometimes the zeal which they engender, in working out his own glorious and beneficent purposes.

It must have been an alarming thing for the public-spirited protestants of Britain and America, some 120 years ago, to con-

template the efforts which were being made by France, to obtain the ascendancy in North America. At that time they possessed the valuable islands at the mouth of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, with the Labrador coast, and the territories on Hudson's Bay, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and a large part of what is now the State of Maine,—the whole of Canada and a large part of what are now the States of New York and Vermont, with the whole country extending from the great lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. We do not mean to say that they actually occupied these countries, but they claimed the possession of them, had settlements scattered through most of them, and parts extending from the great lakes to the mouth of the Mississippi. There were clashing interests between the British and French colonists, which led to mutual jealousies and bitter animosities; and these again to sanguinary and cruel conflicts, till at length it became a struggle for national existence, when the mother countries took part in earnest, in the contest. But neither party was at all aware of the important nature of the warfare, which was there being waged, or of the sublime nature of the results, which were depending upon it. It was not the interests merely of a few trading companies which were concerned; it was not the honor or commercial superiority merely of France or Britain. It was the destiny of vast future empires that was then being determined—it was the question of future freedom, or tyranny for the world, that was then being settled; and most important of all, it was the fate of religion and the future welfare or woe of the human race, which was then in the balance.—Popery and Protestantism had then marshalled their hosts for a great struggle, though neither party was, at the time, fully aware of the momentous nature of the issues which were at stake. To those