

Cardinal Gibbons.



TEXT to George Washington there was never an American, perhaps, who has better deserved the confidence of his people than Cardinal Gibbons, and unquestionably there was no more potent factor in the development and promulgation of the Catholic faith in the New World.

Eighty-three years ago, within a stone's throw of the present Cathedral of Baltimore, where Providence had destined he should spend the greater part of his life, James Cardinal Gibbons was born. His father, Thomas Gibbons, a native of County Mayo, Ireland, had been in America but a few years, driven thither by the cruelties of an alien government. The family, however, had to return home in the fourth year as the climate did not suit the frail nature of Mr. Gibbons.

James began his education at a private classical school in Ballinrobe, near Westport. At the age of sixteen the death of his father forced young Gibbons and his family to retrace their steps to the United States, but by this time he had mastered many of the classics, being quite familiar with the polished sentences of Virgil, Ovid, Cicero and Livy, and even with Xenophon and Homer.

Arriving in New Orleans, James received employment in a grocery store, where his industry and fidelity soon won him promotion. But it was only a temporary occupation, for young Gibbons had determined to seek some other walk of life. The opportunity for deciding his career soon presented itself. Three young Redemptorist Fathers, all converts from Protestantism, came to New Orleans to preach a mission. One of the first sermons struck the chord of the young man's heart and he decided to become a priest. He immediately turned his face towards his birthplace, Baltimore, and entered St. Charles College, Elliott City, Md. Having completed his classical course, he proceeded to St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, for Theology, and was ordained priest by Archbishop Kenrick, June 30, 1861.

At this time the country was in a state of turmoil—on the