

design of their rival projects to grasp the wealth and jurisdiction of the soil. The country bordering the great lakes, which we call *new*, will be perceived to have been long known. We shall perceive that the winding courses of its rivers and its remotest forests have been explored, for mercantile and religious objects, from a distant period ; and that the rich furs which abounded in the wilderness of the north-west have for two centuries adorned the robes of the monarchs of Europe, and contributed to the luxury of courts.

The particular character of the religious exertions of the Catholic missionaries exhibits prominently the influence of their religion. This remark is made without reference to sects or creeds. The spirit which was frequently exhibited by them, was not that which pines within iron bars and frowns on innocent enjoyment ; not the religion which exhausts itself in forms and rubrics, in making professions and counting beads, a religion which showed itself in words rather than in action. But it was a spirit which softened the character and controlled the conduct, circulating through the whole moral system as the blood through the veins of the human body. It was a religion which waved its snow-white banner—emblazoned with the star that glowed with clear brilliancy upon the plains of Judea—above the strife of savage passions, and encountered hardships, trials, and even death itself, to benefit barbarians.

We shall see, in the contrast of the present condition of the north-west with that of former times, the influence of political freedom upon national growth. It shows that evil government, by furnishing the means and motives for action, pushes forward the enterprises of communities ; and that national improvement is advanced or checked, just in proportion to the spirit of the people, and the frame of government by which they are controlled.

Had more ample materials and greater leisure been afforded me, the work would have appeared in a more perfect form ; I should have endeavored, under such circumstances, to give each fact in chronological order, and to arrange it under separate years. This, however, was found to be impracticable,