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ROMAN CATHOLICS IN NEW YORK.

INTRODUCTION OF CATHOLICISM INTO NEW YORK. — ITS PRESENT POSITION. —
ARCHBISHOP McCLOSKEY.

PRACTICALLY, in this city, Catholicism is the state religion. It carries the city at every election. It holds every position of emolument and trust within the bounds of the municipality. A few officers are appointed who are nominal Protestants. But these are as obsequious as members of the Romish communion. A distinguished member of the New York bar, who was in communion with the Reformed Dutch Church, told me that he was offered a judgeship in the city, coupled with conditions with which, as a Protestant and a Christian, he could not comply. Another, with an easier conscience, took the position on the supreme bench. Large annual sums are appropriated to carry on the work of the Catholics, and are paid out of the city funds. Valuable plots of land, under one pretence and another, have been donated and used for strictly sectarian purposes. To keep the poor Catholic children out of the Mission Schools at Five Points and elsewhere, and to keep them under Catholic instruction, a society was formed, founded by, and long

under the care of, the late Dr. Iris, at one time Protestant bishop of North Carolina. Hundreds of children were gathered into this society, and the city government appropriated thousands of dollars every year for their support. The society is wholly sectarian, designed to build up this particular sect.

Our large charitable institutions are almost wholly under the control of the Catholic priests; they have the run of the institutions; especial privileges are granted as to hours of service; especial conveniences are fitted up for Catholic worship; while Protestants have to take things as they find them. At the Tombs, the women and children are under the charge of the Sisters of Charity. To this class Protestant ministers and laymen can have no access at all. A fine chapel, in a retired portion of the prison, fitted up with all the paraphernalia of Catholic worship, at the expense of the city, is used for service. No one is allowed to enter it while worship is going on. A priest is employed, and music, with all the attractions of the Romish service, is introduced. Protestant worship on Sunday is held in the great hall, without convenience or decency, amid the jabber and talk of prisoners in their cells, not one of whom can be seen; with the crowd taken from the bummers' cell, gathered in an indiscriminate mass on the pavement, squatting, kneeling, lying down, and jabbering, amid the locking and unlocking of cell doors, the shouting of officers, the tramping of prisoners to and from the court, and general disturbance.

Recently the Common Council have forbidden laymen to visit prisons and almshouses for religious

instruction; thus almost completely banishing Protestant teaching from these institutions. For years a large corps of devoted religious men have given their Sundays to this work. There are few Protestant ministers that can leave their churches, and the new law has almost banished everything but Catholicism from our public institutions.

INTRODUCTION OF CATHOLICISM INTO NEW YORK.

Father Isaac Jaques, a Jesuit, in 1642 introduced Catholicism into this state. He was seized by a party of Indians in Huron County, and most cruelly treated. His captivity lasted fifteen months. He escaped to Fort Orange, now the city of Albany. The Indians demanded their prisoner, and threatened to take revenge with tomahawk and torch. The Dutch refused to give him up, and sent him to New York for safety. They pacified the Indians by paying his ransom. They gave him his passage on the first vessel sailing for Europe, together with a safe pass, that he might not be harmed on his journey; paid all his expenses, and ordered that he should be landed in France. In 1683, three Jesuits resided at New York for a time, and opened a college. The Catholic element was too weak to support it. The brief record of the time is,—“Mr. Graham, Judge Palmer, and John Tudar did contribute their sons for some time, but nobody imitating them, the college vanished.” The British government tolerated the Catholic religion in Canada, but not in New York. In 1778 a French man-of-war was taken by the English and brought to New York. The chaplain, M. De La Motte, was put on parole, and visited

the city. He asked permission of the British commander to celebrate mass, at the request of the few Catholics in the city. He received a peremptory refusal. He celebrated the mysteries of his faith notwithstanding. He was arrested, and confined in prison till exchanged. The old Dutch Church, now used as a post office in this city, was occupied at that time by the English troops as a riding-school and a hospital. Here it is supposed M. De La Motte was confined. On the evacuation of New York by the British, public worship commenced, and St. Peter's Church, in Barclay Street, was erected. The State of New York granted the act of incorporation in 1785. The Spanish ambassador laid the corner-stone of St. Peter's in 1786; and Charles the Third presented a handsome sum for the erection of the building. New York was erected into a see, April 8, 1808, by Pope Pius VII. From that time to the present the course of this church has been onward, till it is the great power in this metropolis.

ITS PRESENT POSITION.

It has churches and a ministry suited to every class of its worshippers, from the highest to the lowest. It has an enormous property in real estate in the most valuable localities. Its churches, large and numerous as they are, bear no proportion to its worshippers. Each church holds a dozen congregations a day, and each service is crowded. The cathedral, in the process of erection on Fifth Avenue, has not only one of the most commanding positions, but will be one of the most costly and magnificent churches on this continent. The revenue of the church is immense. Every

member of its countless congregations has to contribute to its maintenance; and all do so, from the least unto the greatest. Every worshipper has to pay pew rent, and contribute to the work of the church. When a contribution is taken, collectors are appointed, who go from pew to pew during service, call up the worshipper from his knees, get his money, and then leave him to his devotions.

Among all the Protestant sects there are not as many discordant elements or as much disunion as among the Catholics. They are divided into clans and nationalities, and often give the archbishop great trouble, and defy his authority. The union is apparent, but not real. More than once in this city the trustees have shut the doors of the church in the face of the priest appointed by the archbishop, and have refused to see him. The Irish have their churches and priests. The Italians have theirs. So have the French and other nations. These different communities are hot partisans. The Jews and Samaritans did not maintain a fiercer enmity.

ARCHBISHOP McCLOSKEY.

Archbishop McCloskey succeeded Archbishop Hughes, on the death of that prelate. He is in every respect unlike his predecessor; is a man of medium size, a round, jovial, contented face, carrot-colored hair, mild expression, quiet and unostentatious in his manner, seldom appearing before the public by speech or pen except in connection with some occasion in which his church is represented. Bishop Hughes was always before the public. He was aggressive in his movements, always

in a controversy with some one; attacking Congress, the legislature, the courts, the common school system, or some other prominent matter. Archbishop McCloskey conducts the affairs of his diocese with the secrecy attributed to the Jesuits. But no one doubts that his administration of affairs is much more successful, and that the diocese was never in as prosperous a condition as now. That the Catholics do not manipulate a few things — the Croton Board, the Police Department, the Fire Department, the Central Park — is owing entirely to the interference of the state. Strenuous efforts are being made to restore these departments to the city government, that they may be tributary to Catholicism in the city and country.