

**THE CATHOLIC DEMOCRACY OF
AMERICA: TWO ESSAYS ON THE
POSITION, GROWTH, AND INFLUENCE
OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES**

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The Catholic Democracy of America: Two Essays on the Position, Growth, and Influence of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States by J. E. C. Bodley

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J. E. C. BODLEY

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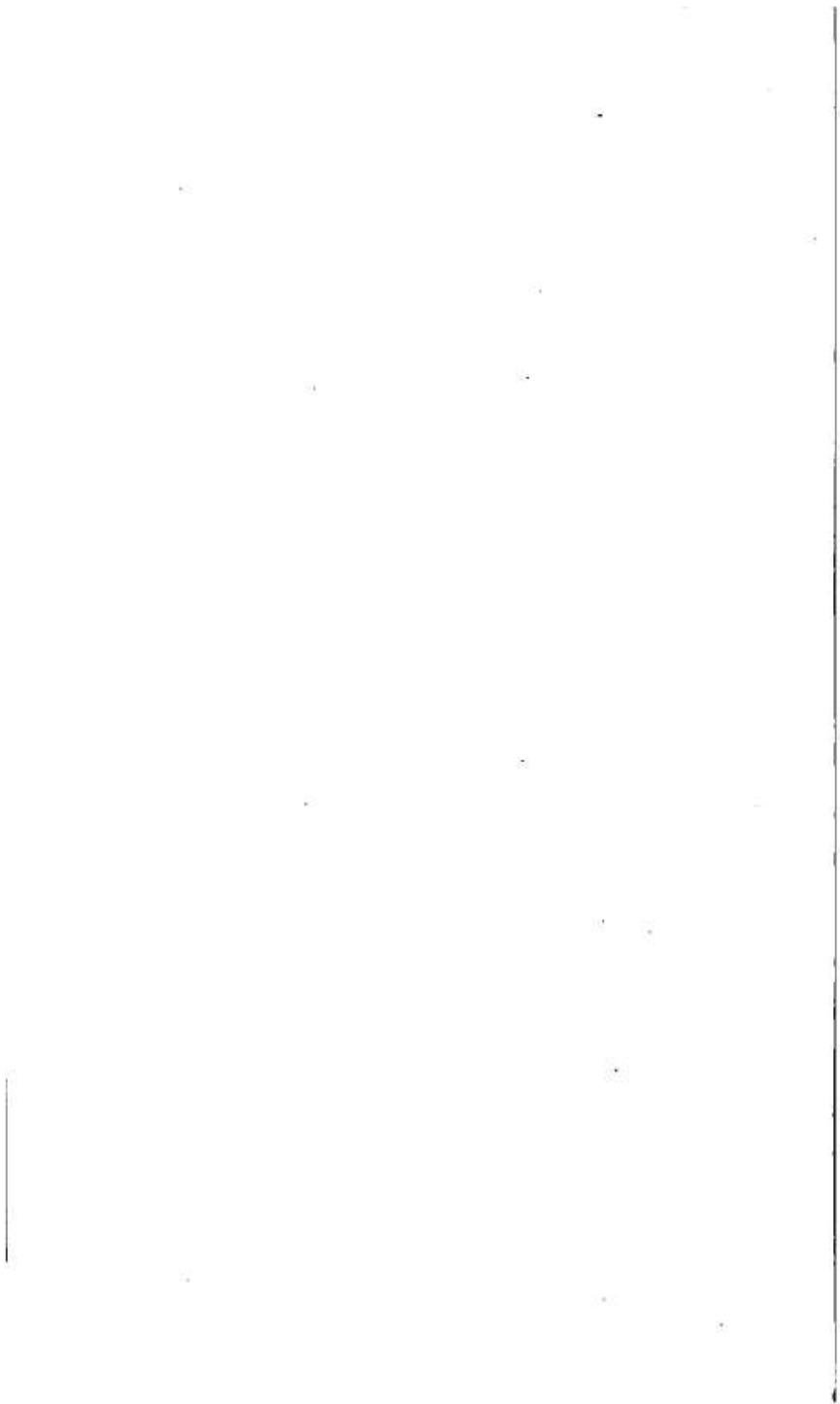
ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN AMERICA.

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OF AMERICA.

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1890.



PREFACE.

The accompanying Pamphlet is a reprint from two articles which have recently appeared, the former in the *Nineteenth Century*, the latter in the *Edinburgh Review*.

Since Macaulay's splendid *Essays* of a half century ago, few contributions to current literature have excited so much interest, or elicited so much praise as have marked the appearance of these articles. They have been widely copied, and favorably commented upon by the friends and foes of Catholicism in the English-speaking world, and I learn that a French and German translation of these papers has been published in Europe.

By a masterly grasp of thought, Mr. Bodley has compressed into seventy-seven pages, the salient points of a century of our Church's history. He has given us a graphic and an interesting sketch of the rise and development and prosperity of the Catholic religion in the United States, together with the leading causes that have contributed to its marvellous extension.

And this he has done in a style at once so attractive and entertaining, so luminous and perspicuous as to absorb the attention and delight the fancy of the reader from beginning to end.

Should the Catholic reader meet with an expression here and there to which he would hesitate to subscribe, he should remember that the author is a Protestant; and indeed it is rarely that a production so free from bias, so broad and fair-minded has ever emanated from a non-Catholic pen. So warm indeed and sympathetic is the tone of the articles that several critics were led to believe that the writer was of the household of the faith.

I was reluctant for some time to yield to the request made to me to write this brief Preface, in view of the frequent and too partial allusions of Mr. Bodley to myself, which I would fain expunge from the pamphlet, had the distinguished author permitted. But the importance of the subject which he as a stranger has dealt with, has constrained me to sacrifice personal feelings to the instruction and edification of the reading public.

JAMES CARDINAL GIBBONS,
Archbishop of Baltimore.

BALTIMORE, August 20th, 1890.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN AMERICA.

THE students of the Collegj Esteri at Rome are not in appearance an athletic race. They are a familiar feature of the Eternal City as they promenade somewhat listlessly its thoroughfares in groups of two and three, attired in the uniform of their various nationalities. The British tourist, as he suns himself on the Pincian Hill on a Sunday morning while his wife and daughters have gone to the English church at the Porta del Popolo, eyes askance what he calls their monkish garb, and as he unfolds his *Times* to read the correspondence on 'Compulsory Athletics' he devoutly thanks heaven that his young barbarians at Harrow and Oxford are not as these students. Even to the more sympathetic observer these pale seminarists do not give the impression of being in training for the life of endurance which the main body of the Church Militant imposes on its officers wherever stationed, whether in the slums of Westminster or in the fever-stricken camps of Tonkin or in the swamps of the Zambesi river.

Such being the characteristic of these young ecclesiastics, the proceedings of a group of them surprised me not a little one sunny afternoon in the spring of 1887 on the flowery green sward of the Pamphilj Doria gardens. There, in an open space cleared among the ilex trees, a band of them, with cassocks turned up, were engaged in an active game. Its nimble mysteries were unfamiliar to English eyes, but the scientific manner in which a ball was thrown convinced me that the players were no foreigners. It is an ethnological fact that the Anglo-Saxon

race alone is capable of propelling a missile in the method known as "shying." The young Disraeli, who had nothing of the Anglo-Saxon in his wonderful nature, gives expression to this, when writing to his father from Malta how some British officers playing rackets had struck a ball to where he was sitting, and how he picked it up and requested "a rifleman to forward its passage, as I really had never thrown a ball in my life." There was no need, therefore, to accost the players in Italian or in French, so, to my question to one of them, "Pray tell me who you are and what you are doing?" was made the answer in the unmistakable intonation of New England, "We are the American College, Sir, and we are playing at base-ball."

This was my first acquaintance with the Catholic Church of the United States, and it was a typical instance of the intensely national idiosyncrasy of that great branch of the Church Universal that its students sent from the New World to be imbued with the tradition of the Old should have been playing their American base-ball beneath the very shadow of St. Peter's.

On the shores of the western hemisphere nearest to Europe the first conspicuous landmark which from the Atlantic meets the traveller's eye are the lofty towers of a Catholic cathedral. Over Newfoundland, the outpost of the North American continent, the British flag flies, so that branch of the Catholic Church which set up the massive edifice crowning the heights above the Narrows of St. John's is not within the jurisdiction of the fathers, who are this month celebrating the centennial of their hierarchy at Baltimore, in the city that took its name from the first Governor of this colony, and thence, as we travel on the main land westward for 3,000 miles till the Pacific is reached, the ecclesiastical provinces into which the vast Dominion of Canada is divided are in the same case. A passing glance, therefore, must suffice for these most interesting organizations with their marked distinctive features.

The Roman Catholic Church claims one-half of the population of Newfoundland, and they to a man are of Irish extrac-

tion. The French rivals of these much-enduring fisher-folk are also Catholics, but they are only summer itinerants on the French shore which they occupy under treaty right, and at the close of the codfishing season they retire to their islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon or even recross the Atlantic to Brittany for the winter. Consequently there is not one French priest in the island. The clergy who work under that wise and amiable Irishman Bishop Power of St. John's and his colleagues have no sinecure. Excepting on the peninsula of Avalon, the interior of Newfoundland is uninhabited, and the clergy have to minister to a population scattered over a rock-bound coast along which fogs and icebergs are a daily peril of their parochial voyages. These serfs of a harsh truck-system, though Ireland is there fatherland, are totally unlike the Irish immigrants, who are one of the largest elements of the population throughout Greater Britain, such as are largely represented in Toronto and other dioceses of Upper Canada.

On the way to French Canada a little settlement is passed near the entrance to the Gulf of St. Lawrence which deserves a word of mention. The counties of Pictou and Antigonish on the north coast of Nova Scotia resemble the province of Quebec in the fact that a considerable proportion of their inhabitants can speak no English. French, however, is not their tongue but Gaelic, and among them are found a probably greater number of Gaelic-speaking Catholic Highlanders than in the whole of Scotland.

The fair province which skirts the waters of the St. Lawrence was called by Frontenac and the founders of Quebec "La nouvelle France," but Quebec has survived the old *régime* whose impress she bears, and now is the only bit of "La vieille France" that the world contains—"La vieille France in its most refined, Catholic, and devout age," as Cardinal Manning once wrote to me. There are quiet towns in France such as Laon and Soissons, which outwardly have an old-world look, but in the beautiful cathedrals of the old twin cities of l'Aisne the clergy and the Suisses are oftentime the only men who assist at High