LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649259427

Lectures Delivered Before the House of Representatives by Daniel L. Crossman

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

www.triestepublishing.com

DANIEL L. CROSSMAN

LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Trieste

LECTURES

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

EARLY FRENCH OCCUPATION OF MICHIGAN.

ORIGIN OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.

BY

DANIEL L. CROSSMAN,

CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

BY AUTHORITY.

LANSING:
DARIUS D. THORP, STATE PRINTER AND BINDER.
1889.

DEDICATED

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE MICHIGAN

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

OF 1889.

"In every government, though terrors reign,
Though tyrant kings or tyrant laws restrain,
How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure;
Still to ourselves in ev'ry place consigned,
Our own felicity we make or find;
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy."

—*Goldsmith.*

PREFACE.

During the past winter I have had some leisure evenings, and perhaps as much for my own entertainment as otherwise I have occupied the time of some of those evenings in preparing the article presented here. I present it not as an expert, but as an amateur with an honest love for the theme. The subject is in the line with my most enjoyable reading for some years, and if this paper shall give some readers one tithe of the pleasure to peruse that it has me to prepare it, I shall be content.

D. L. CROSSMAN.

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXTRACTS FROM THE HOUSE JOURNAL.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
April 4, 1889.

Mr. Abbott offered the following:

Resolved, That Clerk Crossman be requested to deliver his lecture on "The Early French Occupancy of Michigan," on Wednesday evening, April 10, and that the use of the hall of the House be granted for that purpose.

Which was adopted.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
April 12, 1889.

Mr. Cole offered the following:

Resolved, That the chief clerk be authorized to have printed, in pamphlet form, 800 copies of the address of the Hon. Daniel L. Crossman, delivered in Representative Hall on Wednesday evening, April 10; said copies to be procured for the use of the members of the House.

Mr. Baker moved to amend the resolution by adding thereto, "and 200 copies for the use of the chief clerk."

Which motion prevailed.

The resolution as amended was then adopted.

EARLY FRENCH OCCUPATION OF MICHIGAN.

Every reader of the narratives of the early settlements in America, is first struck with the fact of Spanish supremacy—Spanish enterprise. Spain fitted out Columbus for all his voyages and discoveries, Cortez for his conquest of Mexico, Pizarro for Central America and Peru, Alverado for Gautemala, and Cabral for Brazil. But Spain reached her maximum of greatness in about the years of Ferdinand and Isabella, declining steadily thereafter, and for the last sixty years of the sixteenth century discoveries and settlements in the western hemisphere were nearly at a standstill, voyages to America being mainly confined to the fishing banks off Newfoundland, where cargoes of haddock and cod were annually awaiting the takers.

It was not until the opening of the seventeenth century that England or France cut any considerable figure in American history, or that the temperate climate of North America was explored to any noticeable extent. Then came on the struggle between England and France—between Iroquois and Algonquin—between Protestant and Catholic—between puritan and ritualist, which, after more than one hundred and fifty years of strife, culminated in a division of the territory on lines wrought out partly by natural water boundaries and partly by the logic of events.

Referring to the great lakes which form part of these water boundaries, I recall the theory of Ignatius Donnelly, in his "Age of Fire," that their enormous basins were scooped out of the earth by collision with a comet, whose central impact was in Huron, grinding up the rock to a depth of seven hundred feet, and whose fragmentary recoil formed the other great lakes, when old Father Time was a small boy in petticoats. The only pleasant part of this theory to contemplate is that this misguided comet left us his substance, consisting of rock, iron, copper, etc., and will not, therefore, be able to come and see us again in the same all embracing way.

In the way of speculations as to early events, there are none more interesting to me than those of late development tending to deprive Columbus of much of the inspiration with which some writers have striven to invest him as he entered upon and completed his great voyage of 1492. That he was a skillful map-maker and a bold navigator there is no doubt, and it seems now about as certain that, in his voyages of former years, he had visited Iceland, some think more than once even, and that on his visits there and in his intercourse with Icelandic sailors in messroom and on quarter deck, he had heard all the old tales and legends which we now know must have been extant in that country of one Leif Erickson, a bold adventurer who, near four hundred years before, had found, in a southwesterly direction, a wonderful "vineland." These stories, even as old sailors' yarns, may have helped to round out the belief of the Genoese map-maker in another continent, or a further India, which might be reached by sailing west, and the recollections of these narrations may have helped to sustain him against the combined importunities of his men, while on his western course.

But the actual discoverer of America will never again be satisfactorily established; whether Northmen or Southmen, Dane, Italian, Spaniard or Portuguese is entitled to the more credit, will never be known.

We no sooner settle down to the study of our Scandinavian discoverers, than we are confronted with a new claimant. A late writer in the American Antiquarian presents Ireland as entitled to the credit of furnishing the first pilgrim and missionary to the New World, and names a date which seems to defy all competition this side of Donnelly's submerged continent of Atlantis. For verification, this writer cites the reader to the Bibliotheque at Paris and to the Cottonian collection of Inos, where he claims is to be found good authority for the statement that in the sixth century, one St. Brendan, an Irish bishop who founded a monastery at Clonfert Kerry, and was at the head of three thousands monks, was of sea-going proclivities, so much so that he was generally known as the "Navigator." Finally, after visiting surrounding countries, he provisioned a bark for a long voyage, and taking trusty companions and competent sailors, he sailed from Tralee bay in a southwesterly direction for discovery. The voyage lasted many weeks, and in the land where he arrived he found a numerous race of people, among whom he spent seven years instructing them in Christianity. Reluctantly leaving them at the end of that period he promised to return again at some future time. His homeward trip was prosperous, and he arrived safely in Ireland. A few years later, being mindful of his promise to his trans-Atlantic converts, he embarked for a second voyage to this western land. In this purpose he was defeated by contrary winds and currents, so, after beating about some time, he returned to Ireland, where, in the year 575, he died at the ripe age of ninety-four, revered by all who knew him.

But, asks the skeptic, the conservative, where did this Bishop land? With what people did he live his seven years? And what became of his established Christian teachings?

The answers to these questions form the strongest part of the case, confirmation hard to explain away. The st nt of early American history, the investigator of Lord Kingsborough's collection of Mexican antiquities, with its hundreds of pages of picture writing, the admirer of Prescott's exhaustive works on Mexico and Peru, all have found in the Aztec and Inca races positive evidences of a well established priesthood with ritualistic methods of worship corresponding closely in many respects with Romish forms. Cortez, behind Columbus only twenty-seven years, and Pizarro, twenty years later, both accompanied by legal notaries, skilled priests, and learned writers, find themselves astonished, confronted with mild mannered, kindly disposed, well meaning races of people, whose civilization was in many respects in advance of those same vainglorious Spaniards, who came to teach them, ostensibly, but truly to subjugate them. History does not tell a story of more gigantic wrong and injury ever inflicted upon a people than was suffered by those native races at the hands of those who came with the grandest protestations of good-will.

Montezuma, as king of a numerous, happy, prosperous people, lived in state in the city of Mexico, with a private character as a man and public reputation as a ruler which even the biographers of Cortez' expedition could not traduce. Cortez and his handful of followers found themselves received with open arms almost everywhere, until their cruelty and disregard for others' rights revealed their true character. They found everywhere among the native races a distinct tradition that in the dim past a wonderful visitor had come to that country, a visitor in long robes, with a white face and shining beard, who had come from the country of the rising sun, who by his very