

**HISTORY OF ST. PATRICK'S
CHURCH, CARLISLE,
PENNSYLVANIA**

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History of St. Patrick's Church, Carlisle, Pennsylvania by H. G. Ganss

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H. G. GANSS

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—OF—

St. Patrick's Church,

CARLISLE, PENNSYLVANIA.

—BY—

REV. H. G. GANSS, DOC. MUS.

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INTRODUCTION.

The divine commission, "*Go teach all nations,*" has been one to which the Catholic Church has ever been true and faithful : one woven like a tissue of gold in her nineteenth-century history ; one inseparably connected with the divinity of her organization and existence. After the pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, she entered upon her stupendous mission with marks and prerogatives in which the whole human family from the uncultured Lombard and Goth to the erudite Greek and Roman, discerned the presence of gifts which belong to the supernatural order and of graces which connect her by an almost visible bond with the unseen world. These gifts and graces, as history records, have been her inheritance, not only in apostolic ages, but are poured out as lavishly in our own generation as in any that preceded it. It is by this token, and not by numerical success, that we recognize the apostolic commission.

St. Paul's mission was the same when pursued and stoned by the mob at Lystra, as when his disciples embraced and kissed him "*sorrowing that they should see his face no more.*"

The Church never changes, is the complaint of her adversaries. They might with the same truthfulness say that her apostles and missionaries likewise never change, from St. Stephen and St. Paul to the sainted successors whose careers may be touched upon in these pages.

The missionary spirit is the outgrowth of Christianity ; the missionary the lineal descendant of the apostle. In reading profane history we never encounter that yearning desire, unswerving zeal, tireless energy, not to mention the spirit of total self-abandonment and absorption of every personal motive, to bring men to a higher sphere of morality or spirituality. To save one soul the missionary cheerfully makes the sacrifice. The ancient philosophers, no matter how enthusiastic in the advocacy of their doctrines, never left the pleasant haunts of Academus or the alluring pleasures of Athens, under the guidance of a humane, sublime impulse to instruct the ignorant, console the sorrowing, ameliorate the wretchedness of the oppressed, lift up the downtrodden, or sow the seeds of peace and tranquility among hostile nations.

This has been the divinely appointed mission of the Church—a mission in which she has been always faithful, nor has ever faltered. Her ambassadors paled before no

obstacle, shrank from no danger, were disheartened by no failure.—“Neither oceans nor tempests, neither the ices of the pole nor the heat of the tropics can damp their zeal,” says Chateaubriand. They live with the Esquimaux in his seal-skin cabin: they subsist on train-oil with the Greenlander: they traverse the solitude with the Tartar or the Iroquois: they mount the dromedary of the Arab or accompany the wandering Caffir in his burning deserts, * * * * Not an island, not a rock in the ocean, has escaped their zeal; and as of old, the kingdoms of the earth were inadequate to the ambition of Alexander, so the globe is too contracted for their charity.’’*

With the first settlement of this newly discovered country, actuated by the dream of wealth or the excitement of adventure, in search of social advancement or in pursuit of political ambition, fleeing from religious persecution or fugitives from political tyranny, naturally a heterogeneous element crowded our shores.† Cut from the secure moorings of godly homes, untouched by religious influences, unhampered by legal restraints, amidst environments calculated to sound the manhood and search the faith of the strongest—many souls were swerv-

* Chateaubriand—*Genius of Christianity*, Book IV, p. 557.

† “Tyranny and injustice peopled America with men nurtured in suffering and adversity. The history of our colonization is the history of the crimes of Europe.”—Bancroft, VII, 14. (Throughout this Paper the Boston (1879) edition of Bancroft’s Work) has been used.

ing in their loyalty, wandering in a state of religious despondency, infected with the incipient stages of indifference, that would finally culminate in unbelief and apostasy. Nor is this to be wondered at, taking in view the well-nigh insurmountable obstacles that awaited the "papist," the barriers both legal and social that handicapped his material prosperity, and the blandishments and inducements held out by worldly considerations that tried his soul.

To the ministers of the true Faith, this sight aroused anxiety and caused alarm. They turned their eyes to the distant shores, saw the soul in peril on account of the lack of spiritual sustenance, saw many unable to cope with the temptations held out on the verge of apostasy, saw others with their dying lips pray for the sweet consolations of Holy Church which came not. The missionary spirit at once grasped the situation; its agents were true to their holy vocations and apostolic traditions. They came fired with burning zeal. Though they had to encounter cruel and superstitious peoples; had to enter into the midst of barbarism and savagery; had to run counter to the prejudices of jealous nationality and fierce bigotry; though they had to penetrate trackless forests, wade through mephitic swamps, cross foaming torrents, ford treacherous rivers, climb inaccessible mountains, face griping hunger and parching thirst,—benumbing cold and exhausting heat,—they came full of sweetness and charity. In face of all,

we find them ever dauntless, hopeful, patient and persevering,—with the crucifix in their hands, and the image of the Crucified in their hearts.

In the annals of early American history, surely the missionary will be awarded a high niche. His conquests though unseen were none the less factors in the development, peace and prosperity of the country. Or is not he whose life is spent in the recesses of the forest, who performs works of the loftiest heroism without applause, dies a painful death without a spectator, is consigned to his grave without a tear, and lies buried without an epitaph, his name even not in the ken of mankind,—all to procure eternal happiness to some unknown savage,—does not such a one point out to us the loftiest type of humanity which we are able to conceive?

“The salvation of one soul is worth more than the conquest of an empire,” says the heroic Champlain. It was the keynote of missionary toil, prayers and martyrdom, and though undertaken by foreign priests having frequently but a most imperfect idea of the language and customs of the people whose hardships they shared, and from a human standpoint of calculation, totally unfitted for the work before them, in the Providence of God they brought about the most brilliant achievements, and laid the foundation deep and strong, of that spiritual edifice which now challenges the admiration of the nation. Alone and unaided they had to scale an almost immovable