

CATHOLIC HEROES OF CIVIL WAR HELPED CAUSE OF CHURCH

And It Was Further Strengthened in This See by the Works of His Eminence John McCloskey, First American Cardinal.

Catholic Church History in New York. Written Especially for The Evening World BY REV. J. TALBOT SMITH. ARTICLE NO. V.



John Hughes

The earliest results of the Civil War were favorable to the Catholic body in New York and throughout the Union. Into the bloody chasm went all the old feeling against them, for a long time snowed out, and when the gallant Sixty-ninth came marching home with tattered flags and decimated companies the most hostile recalled the bloody battlefields of the South and relented somewhat. When Gen. Phil Sheridan rode into the limelight, the idol of his day, a few historians recalled the French alliance which had enabled Washington with his money, fleet and army to coop up Cornwallis in Yorktown and end the war for independence, and also the gallant Irish soldiers of that day. The bigots were forced to take a back seat when reminded that Protestant England had oppressed and Catholic France had aided the struggling and despairing colonies. The services of Archbishop Hughes both in this country and in Europe could not be forgotten.

As a matter of fact, sympathy with the Irish was so vigorous in 1865 that the new movement for the independence of Ireland, the Fenian enterprise, became popular. The Fenians planned to invade and capture Canada, and offered the command of their armies to Gen. Sheridan. He expressed his willingness to serve the moment the leaders could show a full treasury and 100,000 men, but not before.

Resented Attempt to Split the Union. The irritation of this country against the entire English nation, Gladstone included, for its mean attempt to split the Union by secret intrigue and open hostility led the authorities and the public to regard the Fenian movement with complacency.

The Fenians actually invaded Canada and fought a few battles, but their preparations for war were too slim for a single campaign, and the invasion and the movement failed together. It would have been most surprising to the feelings of Americans, in particular, would it have deflected Secretary Seward, had the Fenian army materialized with Sheridan at its head, and loosened Canada forever from the grip of the British lion.

Within ten years from the close of the war the Catholic body had two representatives before the public who did them honor—John Kelly, former Member of Congress and reorganizer of Tammany after the Tweed regime, and Francis Kernan, United States Senator from Utah.

John Kelly was really one of the great men of his time although the passions of municipal politics obscured his merit from the public. Republicanism was virulent in those days, and its bitterest representatives were the publishing house of the Harpers, who employed cartoonists like Nast and historians like Eugene Lawrence to vilify their opponents. Both Kelly and Kernan suffered from them. Their assaults upon the Catholic body made them the most detested partisans of the hour, for they seemed to possess neither fairness nor decency.

The First American Cardinal.

Archbishop Hughes had been succeeded in 1864 by John McCloskey, a native New Yorker, who had been Bishop of Albany from 1847. He was of delicate physique and nervous temperament which kept him far from the public eye. In this respect he was the opposite of the Hughes. Retirement was a fashion with Catholic prelates then and they were much scandalized when the audacious Hughes took to the platform and harangued the whole American people. They were provoked to the point that his boldness and martyrly were injuring the Church.

It was a relief to the sly bishops when the See of New York found a prelate as shy as themselves. But Dr. McCloskey made up in intelligence and purpose what he lacked in physical strength, and a study of his administration shows executive ability of a high order.

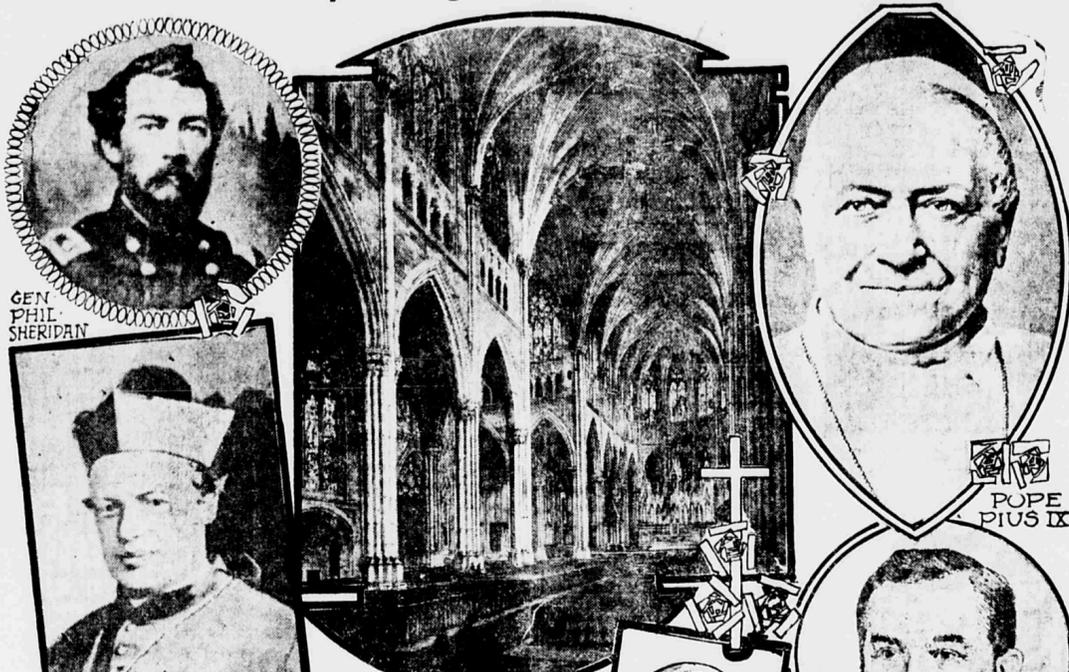
Moreover, he was born lucky, which is better than to be born rich. Pius IX. made him a Cardinal. President Lincoln had recommended Dr. McCloskey for that honor, but it is recognized that this distinction was the recognized candidate. It was conferred on Cardinal McCloskey, and the ceremonies of the consecrating filled the journals with good matter and stirred the imagination of Americans.

It was evident that Europe, always fearful of the Republic, had begun to study it, to see that its childhood had passed. The first American Cardinal was placed all over the country as a wonderful man.

The Cathedral Completed.

He completed the grand cathedral begun by Archbishop Hughes, and dedicated it in 1878. The American world met on a second time on this occasion.

First American Cardinal, Who Built Cathedral, And Contemporary Figures in Catholic History

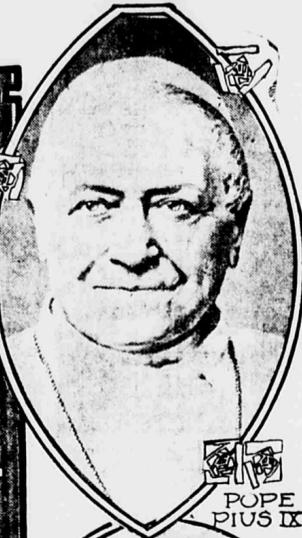


GEN. PHIL. SHERIDAN



MOST REV. M. A. CORRIGAN D.D.

INTERIOR OF ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL. COPYRIGHTED BY F. B. KIRKLEY, 1897.



POPE PIUS IX.



CARDINAL JOHN McCLOSKEY.



JOHN KELLY.

whereas the American wilderness still existed. He was right in his contention, but the cathedral was built, and it had a good effect in its own way.

Days of the Land League. Then came the picturesque days of the Land League, which have had more to do with New York history than most people imagine. The English political leaders of both parties condemned an association which, under Parnell and William O'Brien, threatened English prestige seriously.

The League spread all over the English-speaking world and caught the sympathies of all classes. The British Government thought to counter its spread by using a kind of Catholic lobby at the Vatican, which would so influence the Papal courts as to have the Land League movement declared immoral and dangerous to society. For a long time the clergy held aloof on this account, but New York took it up with the tacit permission of the Cardinal, and it did immense work before its career ended. The English lobby at the Vatican got put out of court, and Gladstone had to make terms with Parnell.

As these facts had a share in the after fate of Dr. McGlynn and Henry George, it is easy to see how the people of the earth are bound together in spite of their remoteness and their own intentions. All these picturesque affairs, the Fenian movement, the conferring of the cardinalate, the dedication of the cathedral, the career of John Kelly and Senator Kernan, the discussions of Brownson, the orations of Dr. McGlynn, the bitter attacks of the Harpers and Nast, lifted the Catholic body in New York out of the rut, and placed them as squarely in the limelight of publicity as Archbishop Hughes were thundering from the public platform.

The Freedom of Worship Bill. They became connected also with questions of principle, and had to make an occasional fight, much against their will, for American liberties, thoughtless, ignored by their proper defenders. Cardinal McCloskey directed the fight for freedom of worship in State institutions, which finally resulted in a bill that nearly ended the career of President Cleveland before it had well begun.

It seems that up to 1887 a Catholic priest could not legally enter a State institution to minister to orphans, prisoners, old people of his faith or to instruct them in their religion. An act passed in 1887 of Cleveland's Gov. Stearns had to expel his supreme authority to open the hall doors in Lewis County and permit a condemned man to receive the last rites.

A bill was framed and sent to the Albany Legislature opening all State institutions to Catholic worship for the Catholic inmates. It took fifteen years to pass it. Cleveland expressed his willingness to sign the bill when it finally passed both houses, but the fear of its effect on his presidential fortunes held it up until Gov. Hill succeeded him. Even then it was used only for New York only by twelve hundred inmates, which he probably owed to the fatal disease of Ferdinand to Blaine—Rum, Whiskey and Rebellion.

Catholic Church School System. In the same way, almost without knowing it, the Catholics reaped the benefit of a church minority system, the dangerous work of various houses to build up a State monopoly of education and charity.

The church school system stands not merely for religious training, but for American liberty in education. Its charity system stands for the right of the individual to work in behalf of the poor and distressed, and both are a protest against any form of State socialism.

Through these activities the New York diocese became prominent in the country, and Cardinal McCloskey, in a large sense, acquired that immense prestige, which, however, did not continue beyond his lifetime. Within ten years of his death it had diminished, nor has it yet been fully restored.

CATHEDRAL CLUB RECEPTION. One of the notable events in connection with the recent death of the cardinal, an occasion which will be the twenty-first annual entertainment and reception of the Cathedral Club, to be held at Lewis Avenue Opera House to-night. The club will have the honor of receiving St. Patrick's Cathedral in the parade to-morrow. Most of the cardinals and clergy who are present in the city for the purpose of participating in the festivities are to be invited to the club's reception. The "Charles A. Smith" is to be sailed by the dramatic members, who promise to furnish the club with the best amateur plays in the city.

For Catholic Centennial News and To-Day's Programme, see page 18.

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