

LETTER NO. IV. RANDOM SKETCHES AS I PASS ALONG.

FRANK SANDERSON. In examining the history of the human mind, as well as in examining the phenomena of the natural world, we cannot always trace the progress by which an event has been produced, by causes known to exist; yet, if we can show the known principles of human nature, how the various parts may naturally have arisen, the mind is not only to a certain degree satisfied, but a check is given to that indolent philosophy, which refers to a miracle whatever appearances, either in the natural or moral world, it is unable to explain.

That there is too much of this indolent philosophy among mankind, we may have humiliating evidences. And when assisted with ingenious and superstitious explanations, we follow man's delusion in their legitimate offspring, under the name of religion, we are led to that benighted condition, in which he bore the image of his Maker, without the noble attributes of reason and reflection.

To exalt and dignify the human character, the art of printing has done more service than perhaps all the ingenuity of man beside; and to this powerful moral lever, we may attribute the almost entire extinction of error, which at one time threatened the destruction of the human family. Even in the history of our own country, our very existence as a nation was placed in the most critical condition by the supremacy of hereditary error. Who is not familiar with the humiliating history of the Massachusetts witchcraft? and who does not deplore the fatal consequences of the erroneous infatuation? And yet, the very learned jurist, Sir Matthew Hale, denounced as "obscure and sordid" all those who were attached to the doctrine of witchcraft. We have lived to scorn his denunciations, but, I blush to say, to find his doctrines respected in Cambria county.

In the year 1844, the citizens of Ebensburg and vicinity were considerably excited on the subject of witchcraft, many of whom still believe in its existence. The public mind was directed to this subject, by the representation of a very old and respectable citizen of Cambria township, whose character for integrity and piety, placed him among the first citizens of the township. It was by him alleged, that his cattle, apparently in good health, suddenly fell down and expired in an extraordinary manner; that articles and horse-gears would not stand the stable pins; that stones were almost constantly rolling off his house, so that which, struck him on the head; that squirrels infested his bed-room and chattered their teeth, to his great annoyance; that articles of service disappeared very mysteriously, without the knowledge of himself or family; and that his daughter was possessed and held conversational intercourse with the spirit invisible. Every known means at command were used to expel this witch. Horse doctors, cow doctors, seventh sons, old men, and witch hags, all gave their mystical aid, but to no effect. The witch still continued to give terrorance, so declared itself in favor of HARRY CLAY, as its name asserted that which it length, by a *lupus ingris*, no doubt the witch informed the little girl, to whom alone all the above information was communicated, who it really was and what it was. The disclosure implicated a neighbor with whom the family of the little girl had had an unfriendly altercation, and at once the Sheriff of the county with a posse, went out to arrest said neighbor.

The whole matter arose out of the following circumstances: A Mr. E., the person accused, who was a remarkably ugly man, though possessed of very clever intelligence, had in his possession a copy of a very old edition of Herbarius Astrologus, in which were old engravings representing the number of raising the dead; both of which, preparing an oblation, eggs, fangs, toads, beads, spiders, &c., &c.; also, a magical incantation, magician's wand, and many other things, now out of the ordinary knowledge of men. This book was shown to our superstitious friend, and a very unsatisfactory account given in relation to its merits; whereupon all the ludicrous and almost criminal representations above, had their origin. The unfortunate astrologer could never again restore himself to favor with his fear-stricken neighbor; and what seems still more strange, there are many who still believe that "the witch should be shot with a silver bullet, and charms are still worn to resist his diabolical influences. The facts of this case are easily corroborated by persons who were present at the time.

But I will change my subject. It is a pleasure to the traveller to find occasionally men who entertain different views from one's self, and are ready to communicate them without any hesitation. In conversation with a very intelligent man of Cambria, I learned that his country claims the honor of discovering America before the intrepid Genoese navigator, some three hundred years. This claim prior discovery is predicated upon the voyage of MADOC GUTENBERG, a young prince of the eleventh century, who sailed west until he found an unknown country inhabited with people of a different color and long black hair; where flowers grew perennially, and grapes were found in the greatest abundance, from which circumstance MADOC called the country *Vivallona*. Indeed there are many things to show that this comparatively unknown voyager did reach America, and of which I may have occasion to speak hereafter.

In Ebensburg I commenced my journey on foot, and taking a north-easterly direction, soon found myself in the midst of a highly cultivated tract of country, agreeably to the report of the town of Loretto. This is a very flourishing little place, depending entirely upon the agricultural and lumber interests of the country adjacent, for support. While here I visited, and with much interest, learned the history of a very extraordinary man, whose name is familiar to our countrymen, and who was a number of years a resident in Ebensburg, by Wm. Conway, Esq., (subsequently Secretary of the Territory of Iowa,) dated May 14, 1840. I find that the honorable man, of the name of the person alluded to above, which I transcribe, knowing nothing of anything so interesting as the information it contains.

Died, the 6th of October, the Rev. DEWEY TRACY, AUGUSTINE GALLITZIN, who for 42 years exercised pastoral functions in Cambria county. The venerable deceased was born 1770, at Munsie, in Germany. His mother, Catherine Gallitzin, resided among the highest nobility in Russia. His mother was the daughter of Field Marshal General de Schmelzer, a colonel in the Russian army, who died in the battle of Jena. The deceased held a high commission in the Russian army, from his infancy. Europe in the early part of his life was dissipated by the French Revolution; but he fled to America, where he was warmly received; it offered no facilities or attractions for travel, and it was determined to return to Europe. He landed in Baltimore in August, 1782, in company with Rev. Mr. Brocius. By a train of circumstances in which the hand of Providence was visible, he was directed to the ecclesiastical state, and he renounced forever his brilliant prospects. "Already endowed with a splendid education, he was the more prepared to embrace the Christian ministry, with facility and success. Having completed his theological course, he spent some time on the mission in Maryland.

In the year 1789, he directed his course to the Alleghany mountains, and found that portion of it, which now constitutes Cambria county, perfectly unoccupied, almost without inhabitants or habitations. After incalculable labor and privations, and expending a princely fortune, he succeeded in making "the wilderness blossom as the rose." His untiring zeal has collected about Loretto, his late residence, a Catholic population of three or four thousand. He not only extended the Church by his missionary labors, but he illustrated and defended the truth by several highly useful publications. His "Defence of Catholic Principles," has gained eminent celebrity both here and in Europe. In this extraordinary man we have not only to admire his renunciation of the brightest hopes and prospects, his indefatigable zeal—but something greater and rarer—his wonderful success in making "the wilderness blossom as the rose." He had been, or what he exchanged for privacy and poverty.

To intimate to him that you were aware of his condition, would be sure to pain and grieve him. He who might have revelled in the princely halls of his ancestors, was content to spend 50 years in a rude log-cabin, amidst the most abject and sordid conditions of life, that he might be able to clothe the naked members of Jesus Christ, the poor and distressed. Few have led behind them such examples of charity and benevolence. On the best of us have been invoked so many blessings from the mouths of widows and orphans. It may be literally said of him, that he made gold of his life, and would have disposed of it all in charity to the poor.

The remains of this truly good and great man are marked in their resting place by a beautiful and stately monument, erected by the congregation long since under his pastoral care, by whom his memory will be cherished, and his virtues held up for emulation.

Repeat of the Law of 1847.

We sincerely hope, says the Democratic Union, that the Legislature will repeal the unconstitutional parts of the law of 1847, and place Pennsylvania in a proper position with regard to the law. We have received some commendation from other States in the Union for our unwavering allegiance to the law, and it requires only this one act of repeal to put the crown upon our good faith.

We will not again enter upon an argument to prove that the act of 1847 contains provisions that are incompatible with the constitution. We consider the question a settled one. The case of the Commonwealth against Prigg, 16 Peters, 538 decided the principle. The general police powers of a State may be exercised in aid of the constitutional clause providing for the delivery of fugitive slaves, and the acts of Congress made in pursuance thereof; but they never can be regulated "to interfere with or obstruct the just rights of the owner to reclaim his slave, derived from the Constitution of the United States, or with the remedies prescribed by Congress to aid and enforce the same." The same court further decided, in a late case, that the law of the State of the master regulated his rights in regard to his slave, and that no other State's law the fugitive may have gone, could confer upon him privileges which would deprive his master of his claim, or his remedies to enforce it.

Again—What does the fugitive clause mean? Does it simply announce the right of the master to seize his absconding slave, or does it further exact from the authorities of the State their co-operation in making good the claim of the owner to his fugitive. Certainly it does both. The language is "shall be delivered up." It is preemptory.

But apart from the above considerations, ought not the law of 47 to be repealed, because it tends to discountenance the authority of the fugitive clause of the constitution, and the law of the Union. Upon this point, in reference to similar enactments in Massachusetts, President Fillmore says, in his message to the Senate of February 21, 1851: "This law, it is obvious, had two objects—the first was to make it a penal offence in all officers and magistrates of the Commonwealth to exercise the powers conferred on them by act of Congress of the 12th of February, 1793, entitled 'An Act respecting fugitives from justice, and persons escaping from the service of their masters,' and which powers they were fully competent to perform under the inhibition and penal enactment. 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