

primary object with most of them was to consolidate all the discordant and conflicting elements which entered into the composition of Know Nothingism in the various States, sections and districts in the United States into one great, powerful and controlling political machine. It was probably immaterial to most of them what peculiar views or principles prevailed—the question was, could the various and contrariant views and purposes and principles be harmonized or reconciled, or so evaded as to bring into concerted political action materials for a large and powerful party, sufficiently dispersed, and sufficiently numerous, to control the elections, and place the power of the State and national governments in their hands? The first thing was to get clear of the *old name*, which was low and vulgar in sound and origin, and on these and other grounds very objectionable. This was not so difficult a task—the designation of *American* had long been familiar, and would be acceptable to every one—it was *nomen generalissimum*, and could be made to cover all shades of opinion, principle or purpose; besides many not of the society would still claim that name—none would refuse to be called by it unless he had time to stop and specify his reason, because it was a common name for, and equally applicable to all citizens of the country. This would cause a great show, delusive to be sure, but still a great show, and diffuse a high idea of the numbers and strength of the party, and thereby win over all the *fence-men*, who are so constantly on the watch to find out and unite with the strong side, and thus add to the real strength of the party—the primary object. The name of Know Nothing was therefore thenceforward for ever renounced, discarded and repudiated, and that of American assumed and appropriated in its place.

Next arose a question which gave them much more trouble, and though managed and disposed of with masterly skill at the time, has been found to annoy them ever since, and still annoys and distracts them exceedingly. This was one of the fundamental principles of the order—had been and still was—and is fundamental in all the lodges and councils of the Know Nothings, their founders and progenitors. This was the question of *religious proscription*—that principle could not, must not be discarded—the prejudiced, the bigoted and the ignorant dupes were too numerous for that—they formed the basis on which rested all the hopes of ultimate success, the great mass of the order. They must be kept steadfast, and this hatred of Catholics (strong with many of them as the antagonism of good and evil) was the chief principle of cohesion amongst them. But on the other side there were a considerable number of Catholic voters in the country, who, with one accord, must resist