

# DIPLOMAT CALLED 'DEVIL'S ADVOCATE'

## Henry Vignaud's Opposition to Canonization of Columbus Wins Him Title.

## FORMER BELLE IN PRISON

## Sylvia De Thomas Accused of Swindling Jewelers in French Capital.

BY VANCE THOMPSON.

*Special Cable to The Star-Telegram.*

PARIS, Nov. 20.—Henry Vignaud, the venerable diplomatist, who for thirty-five years was first secretary of the American embassy in Paris, has been denounced as "the devil's advocate."

The reason for this mediaeval denunciation is his opposition to the attempt to put Columbus in the calendar of saints. Archbishop Ryan of Philadelphia, backed by 2,000 Knights of Columbus in America, has petitioned the Holy See to canonize the discoverer of America. In addition, Bishop James J. Keane of Wyoming headed a large pilgrimage of Knights to personally urge Pope Pius X to favor the canonization of Columbus. Among other reasons he argued that there was not a single American saint in the calendar and that it would be some consolation if the discoverer of America were so honored.

Now Henry Vignaud is recognized by the Vatican as the best and most learned historian of Columbus, so the Roman congregation consulted him. He came out flat-footed against the canonization, saying that Columbus was anything but saintly; that his manners and morals were like those of any rough and ready sailor man with a wife in every port. He proved to the Roman congregation that Christopher Columbus had at least one illegitimate child.

This was denied by those who clamored for canonization and thereupon Vignaud produced overwhelming proof that Columbus never married Beatrix Enrique, mother of Fernando, his second son. Vignaud will devote a chapter in his forthcoming book to this subject.

As Vignaud has been officially consulted the venerable historian is now "the devil's advocate," this being the ecclesiastic name for the official whose business it is to raise objections to a candidate for canonization.

Sylvia De Thomas, who was a belle in New York twenty years ago when Fred Bebbardt and Berry Wall were young and Ward McAllister ruled society, is still locked up in the prison at St. Lazare for swindling jewelers. Her six children by her first husband, Von Beck, remained until Wednesday in a furnished house in the Avenue Kleber, which was taken by the so-called Count Gubet, whom the mother married six months ago. They were without funds and their very food was supplied by a servant who refused to desert them, aided by an old woman, who sells newspapers near the house.

No request for aid was made to the American embassy until the agent of the house told the first secretary that he must clear the house by Wednesday. An attache of the embassy was sent to investigate the affair and had a long talk with the eldest daughter, aged 16. She seemed terrorized and refused to make any statement even as to her parentage, answering all questions with "You must ask mamma."

Ultimately the attache learned that their father, Von Beck, in spite of his long residence in New York, never became an American citizen. The American agent would have paid out of his pocket for sending the children to New York, but he could not interfere under the circumstances.

W. R. Honnier, an agent for the property, learned that the children's grandmother and grandfather, Von Beck, were still living in Copenhagen, so telegraphed and ascertained that the children would be eagerly welcomed. So on Thursday, accompanied by a commissary of police, he took them to the station, bought their tickets, and sent them to Denmark. Two years ago, when Von Beck died, his parents brought suit in New York to gain possession of the children, urging that their mother was an unfit person, but they lost their case.