

The Jesuits' Mission.

By the year 1636 fifteen Fathers of the Society of Jesus had entered Canada, and commenced that astonishing warfare celebrated with honest enthusiasm by American writers, of which the fruits were long ago described by Father Bressany, who had himself no mean share in producing them. 'Whereas at the date of our arrival,' he says, writing with the hand which the savages had cruelly mutilated after tormenting him for a whole month, 'we found not a single soul possessing a knowledge of the true God; at the present day, in spite of persecution, want, famine, war, and pestilence, there is not a single family which does not count some Christians, where all the members have not yet professed the true faith. Such has been the work of twenty years.' A little later, as is well known, the whole Huron nation was Christian. 'It was in June, 1611,' writes Marshall, 'that Fathers Birat and Masse arrived in Canada, and it is a notable fact that the first Jesuit slain in America, in 1613, fell by the hands not of savages, but of the English.'

American Protestants have graphically described the labors of these first missionaries and of their successors. A few examples of the language they employ can scarcely fail to prove interesting reading. 'The Catholic priest,' writes Washington Irving, 'went even before the soldiers and the trader. From lake to lake, from river to river, the Jesuits pressed on, unresting, and with a power which no other Christians have exhibited, won to their faith the warlike Miamis and the luxurious Illinois.' 'The history of their labors,' says Bancroft, 'is connected with the origin of every celebrated town in the annals of French America; not a cape was turned, not a river entered, but a Jesuit led the way.' It was a Jesuit, Father Allouez, who made known Lake Superior, and Father Marquette who discovered the Mississippi and the mouth of the Missouri. Of this great missionary Bancroft declared that the people of the West would yet build his monument. He died of fatigue in 1675, on the banks of a stream known from that day to this as the 'Black Robe's River.'

Father Marquette's Fame.

The venerable historian, Charlevoix, who travelled through the West in 1721, states that the French mariners never fail to invoke Father Marquette when they are in peril on Lake Michigan. Many have declared that they believed themselves indebted to his intercession for having escaped very great dangers. 'Father Marquette,' writes Shea, 'was not a mere scholar, or man of science. If he sought new avenues for civilised man to tread the very heart of the continent, it was with him a work of Christian love. It was to open the way for the Gospel, that the Cross might enlighten new and remote nations. No missionary of that glorious band of Jesuits who in the seventeenth century announced the faith from Hudson's Bay to the Lower Mississippi, who hallowed by their labors and lifeblood so many a wild spot now occupied by the busy hives of men—none of them impresses us more in his whole life and career, with his piety, sanctity, and absolute devotion to God, than Father Marquette.' In 'The Woodstock Letters' for December, 1907, under the heading 'Chicago: Father Marquette,' we read: 'An event of unusual interest to Catholics will be the formal dedication of a mahogany cross erected to the honor of the Jesuit Fathers, Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet, pioneer explorers of the Chicago River and Mississippi Valley, on the site where Fathers Marquette and Joliet first stepped on Chicago soil, and where the former spent the winter of 1675. The Chicago Association of Commerce appointed a special committee to participate in the ceremonies, and the organisation also appropriated 400 dollars for the purpose. The cross, which is to be placed at Robey street, south of Blue Island avenue, on the bank of the Chicago River, has been donated by Cameron L. Wiley. It is mahogany, fourteen feet high, and is made of twelve-inch beams. Governor Deneen has promised to be present at the ceremony.'

Among the Indians.

In 1641 a bark canoe left the bay of Ponetangueshene for the Sault Ste. Marie, at the invitation of the Chippewas, who had heard of the messengers of the Great Spirit. 'There at the falls, after a navigation of seventeen days, they found an assembly of two thousand souls.' Raymbault and Jogues travelled in that canoe. The former perished by the rigor of the climate, the latter was destined to a more tragical fate. Returning by the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence to Quebec with 'the great warrior Ahasistari' and a party of Christian Hurons, he was attacked by a band of Mohawks, and fell into their hands. Ahasistari might have escaped, but seeing Father Jogues a captive he returned to him saying: 'My brother, I made oath to thee that I

would share thy fortune: whether death or life. I am here to keep my vow.' Ahasistari was burned alive. The noble barbarian accepted martyrdom with exultation, and sang at the stake, not his own warlike deeds, but the praise of Jesus and Mary. They allowed Father Jogues, because of his infirmities, to wander about, and often he wrote the name of Jesus in the bark of trees, as if taking possession of these countries in the name of God. His torments were long and horrible, but his martyrdom was to be postponed for four years. They tore out his hair and nails by the roots, cut off his fingers by one joint at a time, and only suspended his torture when they seemed likely to deprive him of life. Yet he never wavered. Ransomed at length by the Dutch, he was released, and having visited Rome to obtain a dispensation to say Mass in spite of his mutilated hands, the Sovereign Pontiff replied: 'Indignum esset Christum martyrem Christi non biberi sanguinem.'

Having obtained the permission which he solicited, instead of seeking repose, he returned immediately to America, and being recaptured by the Iroquois in 1646, was again cruelly tortured, and finally obtained the crown of martyrdom. On the 16th and 17th of March, 1649, Fathers Jean de Brebeuf and Gabriel Lallemant, both apostles of the Hurons, passed to their eternal reward through one of the most appalling trials which man ever inflicted or endured. The first had been twenty years in the mission, and had converted more than seven thousand Indians; the last was weak and delicate, and had only just commenced the apostolic career. Among his private papers was found after his death a writing in which he devoted himself to martyrdom, and wrote: 'O, my Jesus, sole object of my love, it is necessary that Thy blood, shed for the savages as well as for us, should be efficaciously applied for their salvation. It is on this account that I desire to co-operate with Thy grace, and to immolate myself for Thee.'

They were both captured by the Iroquois, allies of the English, and implacable enemies of the Hurons, after a battle in which every combatant of the latter tribe was either killed or captured.

Beatification.

The informative process for the beatification of Isaac Jogues, Anthony Daniel, John de Brebeuf, Gabriel Lallemant, Charles Garnier, Noel Chabanel, priests of the Society of Jesus; and of the laymen, their assistants, Rene Goupil and John de la Lande, was instituted early in the September of 1904 by his Grace Archbishop Begin. Although many others of the early missionaries of Canada and their assistants, and even some of their neophytes, might have been included in this process, only those were selected whose death for the faith can be most satisfactorily proved.

Through sufferings and sacrifices the Gospel gained ground on every side. The whole Huron nation received the faith, and Protestant writers tell us that its survivors still do honor to their apostolic teachers. Abenakis and Algonquins, Ottawas and Onondagas, received the message of peace. The Cayugas and Oneidas, the Senecas and Miamis, welcomed the preachers of the Gospel; and a single missionary, Claude Allouez, lighted the torch of faith for more than twenty different nations. In many a mission, from the Mohawk to the Genesee, and from the Hudson to the Mississippi, were gathered Christian Indians, who would have done honor to the first ages of Christianity. Even the fierce Iroquois yielded at length to the promptings of grace, and gave to the Church bright examples of Christian virtue. In the year 1881 the Sachems of the Algonquins and Iroquois sent to the Holy Father some articles made with their own hands, accompanied by the following touching letter:—'Thou art the Shepherd of all the faithful; thou hast taught us to know Jesus Christ; thou didst send us the men of the black robe saying to them, "Go, seek the Indians; they are my children; help and assist them." Thou art our father, and we will never acknowledge any other. Should our descendants forget thee and lapse into error, show them these gifts and they will return to thee.' General Carleton, Governor of Canada in 1774, reports that in that year there were in the colony no fewer than 150,000 Catholics and less than 400 Protestants. In the Dominion of Canada there are now four ecclesiastical provinces, nineteen dioceses, three Vicariates-Apostolic, and two Prefectures-Apostolic. According to the 'Catholic Almanac' of 1885, there are in the said provinces 17 ecclesiastical seminaries, 44 colleges, and about 3500 parish schools. The Laval University, founded in 1852, is an offshoot from the Seminary of Quebec, established in 1663 by Francis de Laval, the first Bishop of Canada. At Quebec there is a