

CHAPTER XXIV

THE OREGON MISSIONS, I

§ I THE FLATHEAD DEPUTATIONS TO ST LOUIS

The diocese of St Louis from its erection in 1826 until 1843 not only reached as far as the Rocky Mountains but passed in some vague way at least beyond the Continental Divide into what was generally known as "the Oregon Country" ¹ This latter area included within its limits what is now Oregon, Washington, Idaho and western Montana Here was a spiritual jurisdiction of truly imperial range, extending as it did from east of the Mississippi, where it embraced the western moiety of the state of Illinois, to the Pacific Northwest ² As early as 1811 or 1812 a group of Canadian trappers and traders, employees or ex-employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, were settled in the lower Columbia basin ³ They were the pioneer Catholics of that region and as early as 1821 a petition for spiritual aid on their behalf was forwarded thence to Father Rosati, vicar-general of upper Louisiana ⁴ When the vicar-general was so shorthanded for help that parishes in

¹ "Oregon territory is that important part of North America which extends from the 42nd to the 50th [?] degree of N latitude and from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean It is bounded on the north by the Russian possessions and on the south by California, forming a kind of parallelogram about seven hundred miles in length and five hundred in breadth and containing 375,000 miles" P J De Smet, *Oregon Missions and Travels in the Rocky Mountains in 1845-1846* (New York, 1847), p 14

² Apparently Bishop Rosati considered the Oregon country as lying, partly at least, within the limits of his jurisdiction De Smet and his associates received from him "faculties" or licenses to exercise the ministry in the country "beyond the Rocky Mountains" although in 1838 the Bishop of Quebec had begun to be represented in the lower and even upper Columbia Valley by a vicar-general It is conceivable that the faculties granted by Rosati were by delegation from the Bishop of Quebec Still, Bishop Signay of Quebec in a letter of November 20, 1840, distinguished between the American and the British possessions west of the Rockies, the former belonging ecclesiastically to St Louis, the latter to Quebec It is difficult to see how lines of jurisdiction could be drawn at this time on a political basis as the entire and undivided Oregon country prior to 1846 was held jointly by the United States and Great Britain There was no such thing as distinct American and British possessions in Oregon before that date

³ CR, *De Smet*, I 23

⁴ *Ann Prop*, I (n 2) 52

the neighborhood of St. Louis could not be adequately cared for, it was impossible for him to meet the wishes of the handful of Oregon Catholics by providing them with a pastor. Ten years later, in 1831, an incident occurred that again turned the attention of Rosati, now become Bishop of St. Louis, to the spiritual needs of distant Oregon. About October 17 of that year a party of four Indians of either the Flathead or Nez-Percé nation appeared in St. Louis, having according to a traditional account travelled all the way from their home in the upper Columbia Valley to ask for Catholic missionaries. The details of the incident were embodied by Bishop Rosati in a letter of December 31, 1831, which appeared in the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*.

Some three months ago four Indians who live across the Rocky Mountains near the Columbia river [Clark's Folk of the Columbia] arrived at St. Louis. After visiting General Clark, who, in his celebrated travels, has visited their nation and has been well treated by them, they came to see our church and appeared to be exceedingly well pleased with it.⁵ Unfortunately, there was not one who understood their language. Some time afterwards two of them fell dangerously ill. I was then absent from St. Louis.

Two of our priests visited them and the poor Indians seemed to be delighted with the visit. They made signs of the cross and other signs which appeared to have some relation to baptism. The sacrament was administered to them, they gave expressions of satisfaction. A little cross was presented to them. They took it with eagerness, kissed it repeatedly and it could be taken from them only after death. It was truly distressing that they could not be spoken to. Their remains were carried to the church and their funeral was conducted with all the Catholic ceremonies.⁶ The other two attended and acted very becomingly. We have since learned from a Canadian, who has crossed the country which they inhabit, that they belong to the nation of Flat-Heads, who, as also another called Black Feet, had received some notions of the Catholic religion from two Indians who had been to Canada and who had related what they had seen, giving a striking description of the beautiful ceremonies of the Catholic worship and telling them that it was also the religion of the whites. They have retained what they could of it, and they have learned to make the sign of the Cross and to pray. These nations have

⁵ General William Clark, principal with Meriwether Lewis in the overland expedition of 1804-1806 to the Pacific and at this period (1831) superintendent of Indian affairs west of the Mississippi. His residence in St. Louis was at the south-east corner of Olive and Fifth Streets, the site being now marked by a memorial tablet affixed to the building of the National Bank of Commerce. The church visited by the Indians was Bishop Du Bourg's cathedral of brick on the west side of Second Street between Market and Walnut.

⁶ One of the Indians, described in the Old Cathedral burial-register as "*Kee-peellélé ou Pipe Bard du Nez Percé de la tribu de Chopoweek Nation appelé Têtes Plates âgé d'environ quarante ans,*" died October 31, 1831. The other, Paul, "*sauvage de la Nation des Têtes Plates venant de la rivière Columbia au delà des Rocky Mountains,*" died November 7 following.

not yet been corrupted by intercourse with others. Their manners and customs are simple and they are very numerous. Mr. Condamine [diocesan priest of the St. Louis Cathedral] has offered himself to go to them next spring with another priest. In the meantime we shall obtain some further information of what we have been told and of the means of travel.⁷

To explain how these Indians of the Northwest came by the knowledge they seemed to possess of the Catholic religion, one must turn to an episode in the history of the Iroquois Indians. It was this famous tribe that laid waste the Huron Mission of New France, and sent Lallemand, Brébeuf and other Jesuit priests to martyrdom. Yet from the beginning some fruits of conversion had been gathered among them, chiefly those of the Mohawk and Onondaga branches, and there were Catholic Iroquois settlements at Caughnawaga and other points before the close of the seventeenth century. About 1816 a party of twenty-four Iroquois went out from Caughnawaga on the south bank of the St. Lawrence a few miles above Montreal to seek a new home in the distant West. Their wanderings brought them into the country of the Flatheads in the upper reaches of the Columbia Valley immediately west of the main ridge of the Rocky Mountains. Here, finding themselves welcome visitors, they settled down, intermarried with the Flatheads and were adopted into the tribe.⁸

⁷ Tr. from *Ann Prop.*, in Lawrence Palladino, S. J., *Indian and White in the Northwest* (2nd ed., Lancaster, Pa., 1922), p. 11. The various Flathead deputations to St. Louis are often confused. They were four in number and are correctly stated by De Smet, C. R., *De Smet*, I, 290. Cf. also Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of Oregon* (San Francisco, 1888), I, 54, 55.

⁸ Palladino, *op. cit.*, p. 8. The Iroquois probably arrived among the Flatheads later than 1814. According to Bishop Rosati's diary the two Flatheads of the 1839 deputation reached the Flathead country from Canada in 1816 (*SLCHR*, 2, 188). Ross Cox, an employee of the Northwestern Fur Company, who was among the Flatheads early in that year and left an account of their religious beliefs in his *Adventures on the Columbia River* (New York, 1832), makes no mention of any acquaintance on their part with Christianity, though he comments with praise on their virtuous habits. Father Mengarini in an unpublished Italian ms. (*Memoria delle Missioni delle Teste Pratte*, 1848, 22 pp., AA) states that the Iroquois "who were called whites only because they spoke French" arrived among the Flatheads in 1828. He says further that the first genuine whites to reach the Flatheads were Americans and these came in 1812(?) Mengarini, though writing at a date when the events in question were no doubt fresh in the memory of the tribe, confuses the various Flathead deputations. But he supplies some interesting details not found in Palladino. He names three Iroquois, Big Ignace (*Ignazio grande*), Little Ignace, so called to distinguish him from the preceding, and Peter. Besides these there was an elderly Canadian, Jean Baptiste Gerve (Gervais), and a "Creole." "As soon as these [five] had acquired some knowledge of the Indian language, they undertook to tell them [the Flatheads] a thousand things about the ways of the country of the whites and gave them their first knowledge of the true God and of our holy reli-

The Flathead or Salish tribe, the *Têtes-plats* of the Canadian trappers and traders, belong to the widely extended linguistic family known as the Salishan, to which they gave their name.⁹ At the dawn of the period of exploration tribes of Salishan stock occupied a territory that stretched from what is now western Montana across Idaho and Washington into British Columbia. The Salish proper or Flatheads were once

gion, then it was that the Flatheads began for the first time to distinguish right from wrong" (This last statement would seem to be at variance with Cox's testimony) Father Joset, complying with a request from the Jesuit General, Peter Beckx, wrote a narrative (not altogether accurate as regards the deputations to St. Louis) of the beginnings of the Rocky Mountain Missions (Joset à Beckx, December 29, 1868) "*Elles sont un des fruits des missions de l'ancienne Compagnie*" For details on the condition of the Flatheads before the arrival of the missionaries, cf. W. S. Lewis and P. C. Phillips (eds.), *The Journal of John Work, a chief-trader of the Hudson's Bay Company, during his expedition from Vancouver to the Flatheads and Blackfeet of the Pacific Northwest* (Cleveland, 1923).

Catholic Iroquois Indians find occasional mention in church records of the pioneer period. A group of them emigrated from the Rocky Mountain region to the site of Kansas City, Missouri, where they settled in the district subsequently known as the West Bottoms. Of the thirteen baptisms administered by Father Benedict Roux on February 23, 1834, the first recorded in the history of Kansas City, two were of Iroquois-Flatheads (as the register describes them), Francis Sasson Essassinary and Louis Sasson Essassinary. Moreover, the earliest recorded marriage within the limits of what is now Kansas City, Missouri, July 18, 1836, Father Van Quickenborne being the officiating priest, was that of two Iroquois Indians (or mixed-bloods), Benjamin Lagautherie and Charlotte Gray. Cf. Garraghan, *Catholic Beginnings in Kansas City, Missouri* (Chicago, 1919), pp. 67, 93. At the Kickapoo Mission Van Quickenborne was informed as early as 1836 of the Flathead desire for a Catholic priest. He wrote thence to some unknown correspondent: "In that country, so I am told, the Flathead nation, after receiving instruction from a Canadian doctor, observes a number of Christian customs, for example the keeping holy of Sunday and the prescribed fasts and abstinences of the Church. They have asked for a Catholic priest to instruct them in religion. With them are also living a great number of Algonquins and Catholic Iroquois come from Canada. They have married in that country and would like to have their marriages blessed and their children baptized. In spring they come together in a sort of fair [*rendezvous*] to make purchases from one another for the whole year. Then they scatter to live in family-groups. Every year a steamboat leaves St. Louis to penetrate into the heart of these Mountains, taking only three months to make the journey up and down. We regard it as an indispensable duty to profit by this occasion to send some one of Ours to encourage these good dispositions, until such time as we can do more in their behalf." Van Quickenborne à ———, Oct. 4, 1836 (AA).

⁹ Other Salishan tribes who figure in the history of the Rocky Mountain Missions are the Spokane (Zingomenes) and Kalispels, the latter popularly known as the Pend d'Oreilles ("Ear Drops"), both closely allied to the Flatheads and speaking practically the same language, the Coeur d'Alénes (Awl-Hearts or Pointed Hearts), Okinagans, Sanpoil (Sinpoil), Shuswaps (Shushwap), and the Colville or Kettle Fall (Chaudière) Indians.

an influential tribe in the present western Montana, settled chiefly around Flathead Lake and along the Flathead and Bitter Root Valleys Lewis and Clark, who passed through their country in 1805 and again in 1806, estimated their population at six hundred, but in 1853 this number had dwindled to three hundred¹⁰ Strangely enough, the Flatheads did not practice the peculiar artificial deformation from which they take their name, though the custom was in vogue among the tribes further west, especially the Chinooks¹¹ One may read in Irving's *Astoria* an account of the method employed by the Chinook Indians in flattening their children's heads¹² How the tribe officially known as the Flatheads came to have the epithet applied to them without any apparent foundation in fact has never been satisfactorily explained It has been conjectured that it was "given to them by their neighbors not because they artificially deformed their heads, but because, unlike most tribes farther west, they left them in their natural condition, flat on top" Again, it has been suggested that the name was bestowed upon them by the first Canadian visitors for the reason that slaves from the Pacific coast with flattened heads were found among them

Prior even to the coming of the missionaries the Flatheads had made a remarkable advance in ethical perception and practice An interesting glimpse into conditions in the tribe as far back as 1814 is afforded by the narrative of Ross Cox, who was impressed by its comparative freedom from the ordinary vices of Indian life¹³ It thus gave promise of a ready acceptance of the gospel message as soon as it should come within its reach The message came with the arrival among the Flatheads about 1816 of the above-mentioned party of Christian Iroquois from Canada The leader of this party, according to a well-authenticated Flathead account, was Ignace La Mousse, called also Big or Old Ignace, to distinguish him from a younger Indian of the same name who also finds mention in Flathead history. Ignace La Mousse gave the Flatheads their first notions of Catholic belief and practice He repeatedly went over with them the leading points of Catholic doctrine and taught them to say the Lord's Prayer, make the sign of the Cross, baptize their children and sanctify the Sunday¹⁴ The

¹⁰ Frederick Webb Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians* (Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, 1912), 2 415, art "Salish"

¹¹ Hodge, *op cit*, 2 465, art "Flathead", Cox, *op cit*, Chap XI

¹² Washington Irving, *Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise beyond the Rocky Mountains* (Philadelphia, 1836), Chap VIII

¹³ Cox, *op cit*, p 127 ff Cox went to Oregon in 1811 to enter the service of the Astors He was subsequently connected with the Pacific Fur Company and the Northwest Fur Company Washington Irving in his *Astoria* drew largely on Cox's narrative Cf also Bancroft, *Oregon*, 1 116

¹⁴ Palladino, *op cit*, p 9 Cf, however, note 15 Father Ferdinand Helias,

Indians took up his teaching with eagerness and made earnest efforts to put it into practice. Upon one point Ignace was particularly insistent, the urgency of having black-robos in their midst to teach them the white man's prayer. The result was that a quest for Catholic priests to bring among them the blessings of the religion they had learned about from their Iroquois instructor was eagerly taken up by the Flatheads¹⁵

who met Old Ignace in St. Louis in 1835, witnesses to his accurate knowledge of the catechism. Chittenden and Richardson (*De Smet*, 1 20) note the likelihood that the Flatheads in their intercourse with the Canadian half-breed traders and trappers, who were all Catholics, at least nominally so, had received from the latter their first knowledge of the Catholic Church. This view is also the one adopted by Clinton A. Snowden, *History of Washington: the Rise and Progress of an American State* (New York, 1909), 2 95. "The instruction given these people [Nez Percés at Walla Walla] by Pambrun is therefore quite sufficient to account for the visit of their representative to St. Louis. But whether this famous delegation was prompted to go east in search of religious light—as all other seekers for it have done—by the teachings of Pambrun or by the visit of "Old Ignace," it is reasonably clear that it was by the teaching of some Catholic or by suggestion of some one who was familiar with the Catholic form of worship. They habitually sought for robed priests and the ceremonies which had been described to them and readily recognized them when they saw them." In view of Mengarini's explicit statement resting on the testimony of the eye-witness, J. B. Gervais, there would seem to be no doubt that Old Ignace was the first religious teacher of the Flatheads.

¹⁵ Palladino, *op cit*, p. 9. Whether Ignace La Mousse was the Ignace Shonowane of Irving's *Astoria* (C XII) does not appear. Father Mengarini's Italian memoir of 1848 contains the earliest version (apart from De Smet's brief notice) which we possess of the traditional account, which he obtained by word of mouth from contemporary witnesses, especially J. B. Gervais. The memoir, which is not free from inaccuracies, has these particulars about Big Ignace: "Big Ignace especially may be considered to be the first whom God made use of to dissipate the thick darkness which up to that time had enveloped the minds of our Indians. His words, reenforced by very virtuous behavior (this latter being a thing quite difficult, I should almost say impossible to find among whites who live with the Indians), made a breach in the hearts of several, especially among the older ones, who spent not only days but sometimes entire nights in the tent of this precursor, as I may call him, in order to hear him talk of God, religion and especially baptism. Then it was that the Flatheads heard of certain white men clothed in black whose practice it was to instruct people, bring them to know God and all good things, and enable them to live after death. Every time he spoke to the Indians (so old Gerve [Gervais] told me recently), he would finish by saying 'what I tell you is nothing compared with what the black-robos (*robe nere*) know.' Ignace would not teach the Indians any prayers, as he was asked to do, for fear, as he said 'of changing the word of God.' [Palladino, p. 9, says the contrary.] Asked one day 'Why don't the black-robos come here,' Ignace replied, 'You must go and find them.'" Then turning to old Peter, principal Flathead chief, who died in 1841, Ignace petitioned him to send some of his nation to St. Louis for priests. This was done in the spring of 1831, the party consisting, according to Mengarini, of four Flatheads and two Nez Percés. At Independence two Flatheads and the two Nez Percés died,

To return, now, to the visit to St. Louis in 1831 of the party of Indians from the Northwest. An account current among the Flatheads represents them to have been a deputation from this tribe, who, at the instance of Old Ignace, had commissioned four of their number to undertake the perilous journey to obtain a Catholic priest. This version of the incident, resting apparently on a solid basis of Flathead tribal tradition cannot easily be set aside. On the other hand, there are indications that the Indians in question were not Flatheads at all but Nez Percés.¹⁶ Two of the party, it will be recalled, died in St. Louis. The burial record of one of the two who died in St. Louis describes him as a "Nez Percé of the Chopoweeke tribe called the Flathead nation." Moreover, William Walker, an educated Wyandot Indian, who, however, does not appear to have been in St. Louis at the time of the Indians' visit, though the contrary has been stated, but obtained his information about them at secondhand, described them as actually having flattened heads, a practice unknown among the Flathead or Salish tribe, though found to some extent among the Nez Percés. A third account represents the deputation as having come under a joint commission from Flatheads and Nez Percés together. The Nez Percés, it may be noted, were neighbors of the Flatheads, with whom they often came into contact. They are the main tribe of the Shapatian stock of Indians and were known in early times as the Chopunish or Shapatians. As in the case of the Flatheads, the name they bear is a misnomer, for the practice, common among some other Indian tribes, of piercing the nose to insert a piece of dentalium did not, as far as is known, obtain among them.¹⁷

What became of the two surviving members of the party of 1831 and whether they ever reached their home beyond the Rockies has never been ascertained.¹⁸ Inquiries made later on among the Flatheads failed to elicit any information concerning them. As to the whole affair, one thing seems reasonably certain. On the supposition that the four Indians came to St. Louis to ask for missionaries, they must have had in view Catholic ones and not those of any other denomina-

the rest returned in discouragement. These latter particulars are not accurately stated, as the deputation of 1831 or a part of it reached St. Louis.

¹⁶ "A letter written by one H. McAllister of St. Louis, April 17, 1833, in reference to this deputation [of 1831] states that it was 'from the Chopunnish tribe, residing on Lewis River, above and below the mouth of the Koos-koos-ka (Clearwater) river and a small band of Flatheads that live with them.' This information was apparently derived from General Clark. There are other authorities to the same end. The question is, therefore, a doubtful one as to who these Indians really were with the weight of evidence in favor of the Nez Percé identity, instead of the Flatheads of Father De Smet." CR, *De Smet*, 1 23.

¹⁷ Hodge, *op cit*, 2 65, art. "Nez Percés." Francis Haines, "The Nez Percé Delegation to St. Louis in 1831," *Pacific Historical Review*, 6 71-78 (1937).

¹⁸ The point is discussed in CR, *De Smet*, 1 24. Cf. also *supra*, note 15.

tion The death of two of their number under the circumstances narrated in Bishop Rosati's letter points to some previous acquaintance on their part with Catholic belief Moreover, Catholicism was the only form of Christianity they could possibly have become acquainted with in their native habitat, whether we suppose them to have been Flatheads or Nez Percés The only white people they freely came in contact with were Canadian trappers and traders, such as Nicholas Pambrun at Fort Walla Walla, and these were all Catholics, at least in name Moreover, as has been seen, Iroquois Indians or half-breeds from Canada brought among the Flatheads a knowledge of Catholic belief and practice and this knowledge could easily have been communicated to the near-by Nez Percés As to clergymen, whether Catholic or Protestant, none at this date, 1831, had as yet set foot in either the Flathead or Nez Percé country All the circumstances indicate, therefore, that the expedition of Rocky Mountain Indians to St. Louis in 1831, as far as one may suppose it to have had any religious purpose at all, was motivated by a desire to secure Catholic missionaries¹⁹

¹⁹ For further details on the Indian expedition of 1831 to St. Louis, cf. the following (1) Palladino, S. J., *op. cit.* The traditional and apparently trustworthy Catholic version put on record by one who knew the Flatheads by long and intimate contact in the capacity of missionary, Francis Saxa, eldest son of Old Ignace and well known to Palladino, having no doubt been one of his informants (2) Chittenden and Richardson, *De Smet*, 1 22-28 A scholarly discussion tending to support the Catholic side of the question and presenting evidence from non-Catholic sources not to be found in Palladino (3) Edward Mallet, "The Origin of the Flathead Mission of the Rocky Mountains," *RACHS*, 2 174-205 A careful and well documented treatment reaching the conclusion that the deputation of 1831 was not motivated by religious considerations but had a commercial or other secular purpose behind it (4) John Rothensteiner, "The Flathead and Nez Percé Delegation to St. Louis," in *SLCHR*, 2 183 *et seq.* A thoroughgoing analysis of the conflicting evidence bearing on the subject, the author establishing on a sound basis the religious character of the delegation of 1831, as having for its object the procuring of Catholic priests Two important testimonies cited by the author in support of his conclusion are those of Marcus Whitman and Gen. William Clark, superintendent of Indian affairs, St. Louis Whitman in his journal of 1835 witnesses that the Indians came to St. Louis in 1831 "to gain a knowledge of the Christian religion, as I received it from the traders under whose protection they came and returned He says their object was to gain religious knowledge For this purpose the Flathead tribe delegated one of their principal chiefs and two of their principal men, and the Nez Percé tribe a like delegation, it being a joint delegation of both tribes" General Clark's account is contained in a letter of E. W. Sehon, a St. Louis resident, reproduced in Bashford, *The Oregon Missions*, p. 13 "General Clark informed me that the cause of the visit of the Indians was Two of their number had received an education at some Jesuitical School in Montreal, Canada, and had returned to the tribe and endeavored, as far as possible, to instruct their brethren how the whites approached the Great Spirit A spirit of enquiry was aroused, a deputation was appointed and a tedious journey of three thousand miles

And yet by a curious issue of events a Protestant character was eventually given to the incident of 1831 with the result that a wave of non-Catholic missionary enterprise was soon set up in the direction of the Rocky Mountains. In the *Christian Advocate* of New York appeared under date of February 18, 1833, a letter from G. P. Disoway enclosing another from William Walker, the Wyandot interpreter, describing his alleged meeting with the Rocky Mountain Indians in November, 1831. Further correspondence on the subject appeared in the same journal, which was soon sending out fervid appeals to the Protestant religious world to dispatch missionaries to the benighted savages of Oregon. The form which the incident of 1831 now took in the Protestant press was that the Indians had come to St. Louis in search of the Bible, the "White Man's Book," which, to their great disappointment, they failed to find. In this connection there grew up a myth that on the eve of their departure from St. Louis the two surviving members of the party were given a banquet, at which one of them made an address deploring their failure to meet with the coveted book. The story was given wide currency in the Protestant press of the country though no trace of evidence for the genuineness of the address has ever been produced.²⁰ The fanciful oration, cleverly devised with a view to stimulate Protestant support for missionary enterprise beyond the Rockies, had its desired effect. Of its two paragraphs the second ran as follows:

My people sent me to get the "White Man's Book of Heaven." You took me to where you allow your women to dance as we do not ours and the book was not there. You took me to where they worship the Great Spirit with candles and the book was not there. You showed me images of the good spirits and the pictures of the good home beyond, but the book was not among them to tell us the way. I am going back the long and sad trail to my people in the dark land. You make my feet heavy with gifts and my moccasins will

was performed to learn for themselves of Jesus and Him crucified" (5). Cf. also Archer B. Hulbert, "Undeveloped Factors in the Life of Marcus Whitman," in James F. Willard and Colin B. Goodykoontz (eds.), *The Trans-Mississippi West*, (Boulder, Colo., 1930), p. 90. "[Rev. Samuel Parker's] Journal states that the so-called 'Four Wise Men of the West' were not commissioned by their tribes to go to St. Louis for a 'Book,' but went out of curiosity. This important piece of information was received direct from the Nez Percés. It was omitted from the published volume [italics Hulbert's own]." A. B. Hulbert discusses the topic further in *The Oregon Crusade Across Land and Sea to Oregon* (Stewart Commission of Colorado College and the Denver Public Library, 1935), p. 87 *et seq.*

²⁰ "It is said upon the questionable authority of Rev. H. H. Spalding, who went to Oregon with Marcus Whitman, that a clerk of the American Fur Company in St. Louis overheard the speech and wrote it up and sent it to his friends in Pittsburgh." CR, *De Smet*, I 24.

grow old in carrying them, yet the book is not among them. When I tell my poor blind people after we have snow, in the big council, that I did not bring the book, no word will be spoken by our old men or by our young braves. One by one they will rise up and go out in silence. My people will die in darkness and they will go a long path to other hunting grounds. No white man will go with them and no White Man's Book to make the way plain. I have no more words.²¹

In 1834, the year after the call for missionary aid to the Rocky Mountain tribes was first sounded in the columns of the *Christian Advocate* of New York, the Methodists sent out two missionaries, Jason and Daniel Lee, who arrived in the Flathead country, but without making a settlement there, as they proposed to do. This change of plan was occasioned by the reluctance of the Flatheads to accept Protestant missionaries in lieu of Catholic ones.²² The Lees, proceeding further West, opened a mission among the Canadians on the Willamette. They were followed in 1835 by Reverend Samuel Parker and Marcus Whitman, who were commissioned by the Presbyterian Board of Missions to investigate the prospects offered by the new missionary field in the Pacific Northwest.²³ At the Green River rendezvous Whitman turned back to carry to the board a report recommending the immediate dispatch of missionaries. In the following year, Whitman, who was a physician, and the Rev. H. H. Spalding, both of them accompanied by their wives, started from the East for Oregon. Dr. Whitman took up his residence among the Cayuse at Waiilatpu near the Walla Walla River while Spalding established himself among the Nez Percés at Lapwai. These non-Catholic missions among the Oregon Indians failed to realize the hopes entertained by their founders and were subsequently suspended.

The historic visit of the Flathead or Nez Percé Indians to St

²¹ CR, *De Smet*, I 25

²² Palladino, *op cit*, pp 21, 22. Daniel Lee and Joseph H. Frost, *Ten Years in Oregon* (1844), p 127, give other reasons for the failure of the Lees to take up work among the Flatheads. "Subsequent inquiries had furnished reasons to the missionaries that could not justify any attempt to commence among them [the Flatheads]. First, the means of subsistence in a region so remote and difficult of access were, to say the least, very difficult. Second, the smallness of their number. Third, the vicinity of the Black Feet, as well the white men's enemies as theirs, and who would fall upon the abettors of their foes with signal revenge. Fourth, a larger field of usefulness was contemplated as the object of the mission than the benefiting of a single tribe."

²³ Cf. Edward G. Bourne, *Essays in Historical Criticism* (New Haven, 1913), William Marshall, *Acquisition of Oregon and the Long Suppressed Evidence about Marcus Whitman*, 1911, Archer B. Hulbert, "Undeveloped Factors in the Life of Marcus Whitman," in *The Trans-Mississippi West*, 87-102.

Louis in 1831 had therefore for its direct result the establishment of Protestant missions in Oregon. It led to no immediate outcome on the Catholic side, though Father Matthew Condamine of the St. Louis cathedral had offered his services to Bishop Rosati for missionary work among the Flatheads. As to the St. Louis Jesuits, there is no evidence of any attempt having been made to engage their missionary services on this occasion. If such attempt were actually made, one can understand how it met with no success. The number of fathers available for the various activities of the Missouri Mission fell altogether below actual needs especially since the opening of the new St. Louis College in 1829. Hence, for the moment, distant missionary enterprise was not to be thought of. But the second deputation of Rocky Mountain Indians to St. Louis, that of 1835, brought the Jesuits distinctly into the movement. The two outstanding features of this deputation were that it certainly came from the Flatheads and that its avowed object was to procure Catholic priests.

When Dr. Whitman and the Rev. Samuel Parker arrived at the Green River rendezvous in 1835, they were met by a Flathead chief, Michael Insula, who had been deputed by his people to go forward and give the expected clergymen welcome. On finding these to be Protestant missionaries instead of the Catholic black-gowns he had expected to meet, Insula returned in great disappointment to his tribe.²⁴ The Flatheads now determined to send an agent to St. Louis who could plead in person with the Catholic ecclesiastical authorities for the favor of a priest. Their choice for the commission fell on Old Ignace, the Iroquois Indian who had given them their first lessons in Christianity. Ignace, who seems to have volunteered for the perilous commission, journeyed to St. Louis in the fall of 1835 without other company than that of his two little sons. The sons were baptized December 2 of the same year by Father Ferdinand Helias, S. J., who relates the incident in an autobiographical memoir.

At this juncture there arrived from the ends of the continent, from beyond the Rocky Mountains, from the country of the Pacific coast, an Iroquois with his sons, whom he wished to have instructed and baptized by our Fathers. This Indian ambassador from seven savage nations was very tall of stature and of grave, modest and refined deportment. Father Helias instructed the two sons, one 14, the other 10 years of age, who were of handsome figure and very intelligent. They understood a little French and their father, who was perfectly instructed, served them as interpreter. Their own language was that of the Flathead nation, their mother being of this tribe. She was married

²⁴ Palladino, *op cit*, p. 22. Parker in his journal (Auburn, 1846, pp. 81, 82) gives a different version of the reception accorded the Protestant missionaries at Green River.

to their father Ignace Petruſ according to the manner and rite of the Flathead nation. Father Helias baptized them in our chapel in the presence of Rev. Father P. J. Verhaegen, Rector of the College, and the professors Van Sweevelt and Pin, Father Isidore Boudreaux, then a student of the University, acting as god-father. They received the sacrament of regeneration with much devotion, their father on his knees in tears. At the father's request he [Helias] had given the name Charles to the older of the two and Francis Xavier to the other. The two youths were then brought to the refectory, while Father Helias remained alone in the church with Ignace, who confessed to him and edified him greatly by the fervent devotion with which he adored on his knees the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. He told Father Helias there were seven nations who had asked him to bring them a priest, namely, the Flatheads, Onapersé [Nez Percés], Panthères[?], Cottonais [Kutenai], Lespokans [Spokan], Cajous [Cayuse], Ochazères[?], in all about 6000 souls. Having partaken of a frugal meal, and carrying with them a load of presents from Father Rector, and a rosary and a medal from Father Helias, they returned to Liberty, Missouri, on the frontier of the state, where they counted on spending the winter with their [own] people[?]. He was very anxious to leave the two boys at college. Father Helias would very willingly have lodged them in his own room, but Father Rector did not think himself authorized to grant this favor. He [Ignace] offered Father Helias a dollar, which being refused, he made the same offer to Father Rector and with like result. Then, having earnestly recommended himself to our prayers and sacrifices, he took affectionate leave of the fathers, walking modestly out of the house without stopping through curiosity to look at anything on the way. This gave great edification to the students of the college.²⁵

Thus no priest accompanied Old Ignace when he left St. Louis with his two sons to return to his distant Rocky Mountain home.²⁶ His mission, beyond a promise received that a black-robe would be sent to the Flatheads if circumstances permitted, had been without success. Months passed and found the expectant Indians still disappointed. A fresh deputation to St. Louis was finally determined upon and dispatched in 1837. At its head went Old Ignace again, this time accompanied by three Flatheads and one Nez Percé. At Fort Laramie they were joined by a party of white men travelling east, one of them a lay helper in the Protestant missions, W. H. Grey, who was returning from Oregon. On reaching Ash Hollow on the North Platte, they met a band of hostile Sioux, who immediately attacked them. The whites were ordered to stand aside, as the Sioux had no intention of molesting them. Old Ignace, attired in civilized garb, was not recognized as an Indian and was ordered, accordingly, to stand off with the

²⁵ *Mémoires du R. P. Ferdinand Helias d'Huddeghem* (A)

²⁶ One of the two sons, Francis Saxa (i. e. Iroquois) or La Mousse, was living as late as 1903 on his ranch near Arlee, Montana.

whites This he refused to do as he was unwilling to abandon his Indian companions of the deputation Sharing in the resistance they made to the Sioux attack, he was with the three Flatheads and the Nez Percé massacred on the spot Thus perished by what one may fairly regard as a martyr's death Old Ignace, the Iroquois who had sown the seeds of Catholic faith among the Flatheads and merits accordingly the name of the Apostle of that tribe ²⁷

In the summer of 1839 a fourth and final attempt was made by the Flatheads to obtain a Catholic priest In a tribal council two young warriors, Pierre Gauché or Left-handed and Young Ignace, rose to their feet and offered to discharge the hazardous mission The offer accepted, they travelled to St Louis in company with a party of trappers apparently by way of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers Descending the Missouri, they passed by the Jesuit Potawatomi mission at Council Bluffs, where they made the acquaintance of Father De Smet, the man who in the designs of Providence was to realize the long-standing desire of the Flatheads for Catholic priests They then continued their journey to St Louis, which they reached in safety Here they succeeded in interesting Bishop Rosati and the Jesuits in the object of their visit Assured that a missionary would be sent out to the Rocky Mountains the following spring, they began their return journey from St Louis on October 20, 1839 Young Ignace halted at Westport to await the arrival of the promised missionary, while Pierre Gauché, journeying on all through the winter, arrived among the Flatheads in the spring of 1840 and announced to them the tidings of the coming of the black-robe

§ 2 DE SMET'S FIRST JOURNEY TO THE ROCKIES

On the day which followed the departure of the Indians from St Louis for their Rocky Mountain home Father Verhaegen wrote to Bishop Rosati

The two Indians from the Mountains have no doubt contributed to make your return to our midst pleasant and consoling They have come from so great a distance to beg for aid, which I cannot give with our slender personnel This circumstance, Monseigneur, might furnish you an occasion for

²⁷ Palladino, *op cit* Father Mengarini in his memoir on the Flatheads written in 1848 gives further details of the death of Old Ignace (AA) He adds the circumstance, not found in other accounts, that the American members of the party, on being questioned by the Sioux as to the identity of the Indians, replied that they were Snakes, not knowing that these were mortal enemies of the Sioux Cf also CR, *De Smet*, p 29 Father De Smet learned the particulars of Old Ignace's death from traders at Fort Laramie

addressing to our Very Rev Father General a letter recommending to him the nations who dwell on the banks of the Columbia and who were formerly evangelized by our Fathers, whose memory they preserve ²⁸

The letter which Rosati in compliance with Verhaegen's request addressed to the Jesuit General, John Roothaan, ran as follows

Eight or nine years ago [1831] some of the Flat-Head nation came to St Louis. The object of their journey was to ascertain if the religion spoken of with so much praise by the Iroquois warriors was in reality such as was represented, and above all if the nations that have white skin had adopted and practised it. Soon after their arrival in St Louis they fell sick (two of them), called for a priest and earnestly asked to be baptized. Their request was promptly granted and they received holy baptism with great devotion. Then holding the crucifix they covered it with affectionate kisses and expired.

Some years after [1835] the Flat-Head nation sent again one of the Iroquois nation [Old Ignace] to St Louis. There he came with two of his children, who were instructed and baptized by the Fathers of the College. He asked missionaries for his countrymen and started [back] with the hope that one day the desire of the nation would be accomplished, but on his journey he was killed by the infidel Indians of the Sioux nation ²⁹

At last a third expedition [Left-handed Peter and Young Ignace] arrived at St Louis, after a voyage of three months. It was composed of two Christian Iroquois. Those Indians, who talk French, have edified us by their truly exemplary conduct and interested us by their discourses. The Fathers of the College have heard their confessions and today they approached the holy table at high Mass in the Cathedral church. Afterwards I administered to them the sacrament of Confirmation and in an address delivered after the ceremony I rejoiced with them at their happiness and gave them the hope to have soon a priest ³⁰

They will depart tomorrow, one of them will carry the good news promptly to the Flatheads, the other will spend the winter at the mouth of Bear River, and in the spring he will continue his journey with the missionary whom we will send them. Of the twenty-four Iroquois who formerly emigrated from Canada, only four are still living. Not only have they planted the faith in those wild countries, but they have besides defended it against the encroachments of the Protestant ministers. When these pretended missionaries presented themselves among them, our good Catholics refused to accept them. "These are not the priests about whom we have spoken to you," they would say to the Flatheads, "these are not the long black-robed priests who have

²⁸ Verhaegen à Rosati, Oct 21, 1839 (C). Verhaegen's reference to the Columbia River Indians as having been evangelized by Jesuit missionaries was true only of the Iroquois.

²⁹ Incorrect. Old Ignace was killed on his way to St Louis in 1837.

³⁰ The Old Cathedral of St Louis on Walnut between Second and Third Streets is still standing.

no wives, who say Mass, who carry the crucifix with them!" For the love of God, my Very Reverend Father, do not abandon these souls!³¹

Father Verhaegen's own letter to the General on this occasion was an earnest plea for help with which to seize the great missionary opportunity now at hand

I was visited very recently by two Iroquois Indians of a group who have joined the Flatheads and four other tribes and now reside with them on the banks of the Columbia River. One of them carried about with him a little printed book in his own language which was got out by the enterprise of a certain priest.³² From this book he sang for us, and very well too, a number of sacred songs. Both made confession of their sins to one of our Fathers in French, as they were able to do, and on the same day on which they received Holy Communion from our Right Reverend Bishop they were strengthened in the faith by the reception in the Cathedral of the Sacrament of Confirmation. What I had very often heard from others these good men corroborated, namely, that the Indians dwelling beyond the Rocky Mountains are well affected towards our holy religion and could with little trouble be brought within the bosom of the Church. Considering the very great scarcity of priests among us I scarcely knew what to answer. Finally, after weighing the matter carefully and asking the opinion of the consultors, I promised them that next spring two Fathers would undertake a journey to that distant region in order to dwell for a space at least among those nations cultivated of old by our Fathers and bring them the aid they so sorely need. One of them immediately left to carry the glad tidings to his people, the other [Young Ignace] will pass the winter near Fort Leavenworth where he will await the coming of the Fathers. He will receive them on their arrival there by steamboat and will conduct them to a spot agreed upon where the other one has promised to be at hand at a designated time with a band of young warriors. I am desirous therefore to know of your Paternity what he wishes done by us on behalf of those poor creatures.³³

Writing at the end of 1839, Father Roothaan informed Verhaegen that he had already replied to the communication from the Bishop of St. Louis, assuring him he would make efforts to send the spiritual relief petitioned for. "Perhaps," so he wrote, "there are Fathers among you much better fitted to go on such an expedition than those who recently came to you from Europe."³⁴ As a matter of fact there was no lack of volunteers at St. Louis for the new missionary venture. Father Van de Velde, procurator of the Missouri Vice-province, as also Father

³¹ Tr. in Palladino (p. 28), from *Ann Prop.* Though dated a day before Verhaegen's letter, it was apparently written to carry out the latter's previous request.

³² The prayer-book was probably of Canadian origin.

³³ Verhaegen ad Roothaan, November 8, 1839 (AA)

³⁴ Roothaan ad Verhaegen, December 26, 1839 (AA)

Elet, rector of St. Louis University, had offered their services directly to the General. "Your Reverence's desire of going to this new mission of the Rocky Mountains," Father Roothaan replied to Van de Velde, "pleases me greatly, nor have I anything against it, if only the business accounts of your Vice-Province permit it."³⁵ The petition of Van de Velde was all the more significant that a few years later, when vice-provincial of Missouri, he was thought by De Smet to be lacking in sympathy for the Indian missions. Elet's appeal to the General was in characteristic vein. "Ever since the visit of the two Iroquois," he declared, "I began to be inflamed with my old desire of twelve years' standing, which weak health had indeed repressed but not extinguished, the desire, namely, of laboring for the salvation of the Indians. Having resorted to the method of election and to meditation on the rules for the discernment of spirits, in order that I might ascertain the divine will, I came to the conclusion that God's Spirit is moving me."³⁶ Your Paternity has no lack of men to supply my place in the University, especially since nearly everything here is now ordered according to the standards of our Society. Let your Paternity call to mind the difficulties we labored under in the beginning of the Mission and what things we endeavored to bear with patience through the heat and burden of the day, and so deign to accede to my request."³⁷ In the event neither Van de Velde nor Elet was to realize his desire for missionary service among the Indians.

Meantime, the appeal of the Bishop of St. Louis for missionaries to evangelize the Flatheads was being circulated in the Jesuit communities of Rome. Read in the refectory of the Roman College, it inspired Father Gregory Mengarini to offer himself to the Father General for the Rocky Mountain Mission. Father Roothaan's answer to Bishop Rosati assuring him of his willingness to furnish recruits for the new enterprise reached St. Louis in the course of 1840. But even before its arrival Verhaegen had taken steps towards the actual assignment of missionaries to the Flatheads. In November, 1839, the scholastics Duerinck and Van Mierlo were instructed to dispatch their theological studies in haste so as to be in readiness for ordination at an early date, after which they were to set out for the Rocky Mountains.³⁸ This choice was subsequently rescinded in favor of Father De Smet, who had been associated with Father Verreydt at the Potawatomi Mis-

³⁵ Roothaan ad Van de Velde, May 12, 1840 (AA)

³⁶ The *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius contain certain so-called "methods of election" and "rules for the discernment of spirits" which enable one to come to a correct decision in matters of importance affecting one's spiritual interests.

³⁷ Elet ad Roothaan, November 19, 1839 (AA)

³⁸ *Liber Consultationum Missionis Missourianae* (A)

sion of Council Bluffs since June, 1838 Ever since the Indians passed by Council Bluffs on their way to St Louis De Smet had been cherishing the hope that the choice of a missionary for the Flatheads would fall on him Without waiting for instructions from St Louis, he at last decided, with a view, it would seem, to receiving some needed medical attention, to descend from Council Bluffs to that city, where he arrived the last day of February, 1840, after a journey replete with hazards and hardships³⁹ He now received instructions from his superior to start out at the opening of spring for the Rocky Mountain country in order to ascertain the prospects held out for a permanent mission in that remote quarter.

In the houses of the Missouri Mission this initial effort of the Society of Jesus to get in touch with the Rocky Mountain tribes, around whom a certain atmosphere of holy romance had now begun to gather, awakened the liveliest interest The house-chronicler at the novitiate records a visit which De Smet paid to its community on March 19

We were privileged to have again in our midst that strenuous worker, Father De Smet, so that we might bid him goodbye, not, however, for the last time, as far as the novices are concerned, for they hope to obtain permission some day to go to the Rocky Mountains The Father entered into a contract with our Reverend Father Rector and through him with the entire community, by the terms of which the priests are to say a Mass every week for him and his new mission, while two of the scholastics are to recite the rosary every day for the same intention He, on his part, has pledged us, not vocal prayers, but a share in the fruit of his hard labors and a recompense in heaven The contract was mutually sealed by the religious embrace⁴⁰

Eight days later, March 27, 1840, De Smet set out from St Louis University on his first trip to the Rockies The University diarist is stirred with emotion as he records the event "The day eagerly desired of the Indians that dwell beyond the Rocky Mountains has dawned at last! For today Rev Father De Smet departed alone to carry to them the light of faith and announce to them the way of salvation Fortunate Indians! Thrice fortunate Father to be chosen by God from all eternity as the instrument of his mighty work! He will make smooth and open up the way not only, as I hope, for myself, slight and unworthy thing that I am, but for such others also as may be aflame with zeal for the honor and glory of God and the salvation of souls"⁴¹

³⁹ *Historia Domus Universitatis S Ludovici* (A)

⁴⁰ *Historia Domus Probationis S Stanislai* (E)

⁴¹ *Hist Dom Univ S Lud* Father Roothaan expressed surprise that Father De Smet was allowed to go without a companion-priest But the additional thousand dollars needed to meet the expenses of another priest could not be raised

The letters-patent from Bishop Rosati which De Smet carried with him set forth briefly the object of his mission

To all and several who shall examine these presents we make known and witness that Father Peter De Smet, priest of the Society of Jesus, most dear to us in Christ, deserving most highly of our diocese and influenced by zeal for the salvation of souls and the greater glory of God, has been chosen by Rev. Father Peter Verhaegen, Superior of the Missions of the same Society in Missouri and sent by us with all necessary faculties to visit and evangelize the various tribes of aborigines living beyond the Rocky Mountains, some of whom, in particular those called the Flatheads, have through deputies dispatched repeatedly to St. Louis signified a most ardent desire for the Catholic faith and have earnestly begged for a priest by whom they might be instructed. Therefore, in order to accede to the wishes of the little ones asking for bread and for a minister to break it unto them, we send this strenuous herald of the Gospel in very truth even to the ends of the earth, in the footsteps of the illustrious Apostle of the Indies, without sack or scrip, for he undertakes a most difficult journey replete with perils and is ready to lay down his life for his brethren, and we earnestly commend him to all the faithful and especially to our fellow-priests whom he shall happen to meet and we pray them lovingly to receive our most beloved missionary and in Christian charity cherish him in every possible way ⁴²

The first leg of the journey, St. Louis to Westport, was made by Missouri River steamer. At Westport, "jumping-off place" for the long journey across the plains, he joined the annual expedition of the American Fur Company. The party numbered about forty and was in charge of Captain Andrew Drips, well-known fur-trader and frontier figure of the day ⁴³ The route was over the Oregon Trail, "the Great Medicine Road of the whites"—in De Smet's words, "the broadest, longest, and most beautiful road in the whole world—from the United States to the Pacific Ocean" ⁴⁴ The most characteristic sights in scenery, fauna and flora to be witnessed along the famous highway were seized by De Smet, who had a flair for description, and given place in his graphic narrative of the journey. Thus are pictured the sagebrush, the buffalo, the prairie-dog, the prairie-wolf, Chimney Rock, Independence Rock, and the great Rockies themselves. These are "nothing but rocks heaped upon rocks, you think you have before your eyes the ruins of a whole world, covered with the eternal snows as with a shroud" ⁴⁵ On June 23 the caravan crossed by the South Pass from the east to the west side of the Continental Divide. "On the day following we passed from the

⁴² (A) The original text is in Latin

⁴³ CR, *De Smet*, 1 193.

⁴⁴ CR, *De Smet*, 2 671

⁴⁵ *Idem*, 1 214

waters tributary to the Missouri to those of the Colorado which flows into the Pacific Ocean by way of California.”⁴⁶ On June 30 the travellers arrived at the American Fur Company rendezvous on the Green River in what is now southwestern Wyoming. Here ten Flathead warriors were waiting to serve as an escort for the missionary to the main camp of the Flatheads and Pend d’Oreilles in Pierre’s Hole, famous as a rendezvous for participants in the fur-trade. Somewhere in what was subsequently known as “the prairie of the Mass,” on the banks of the Green River, De Smet said Mass on July 5, the first recorded celebration of the rite within the limits of Wyoming.

On Sunday the 5th of July I had the consolation of celebrating the holy sacrifice of the Mass *sub dio* [in the open air]. The altar was placed on an elevation and surrounded with boughs and garlands of flowers, I addressed the congregation in French and in English and spoke also by an interpreter to the Flatheads and Snake Indians. It was a spectacle truly moving for the heart of a missionary to behold an assembly composed of so many different nations, who all assisted at our holy mysteries with great satisfaction. The Canadians sang hymns in French and Latin and the Indians in their native tongue. It was truly a Catholic worship. This place has been called since that time, by the French Canadians, *la prairie de la Messe*.⁴⁷

De Smet’s reception by the Indians was an enthusiastic one. Nearly six hundred of them including the two head chiefs of the Flatheads and Pend d’Oreilles, both octogenarians, were baptized, the rest of the Indians were eager for the sacrament, but De Smet, not quite assured of their dispositions, put them off to a later occasion.⁴⁸ But he was strong in the conviction that the Flatheads offered every prospect for a superabundant spiritual harvest. He therefore assured them that they might look for a resident missionary the following spring and so began his homeward journey. A remarkable passage in his journal tells of his ascent of a high mountain whence one could clearly view Henry’s Lake and Mosquito or Red Rock Lake, ultimate sources respectively of the Columbia and Missouri Rivers. He sat astride, as it were, of two of the great watersheds of North America and the situation stirred him to pious reflection.

On the 22nd of July the camp came to Henry’s Lake, one of the principal sources of the Columbia, it is about ten miles in circumference. We

⁴⁶ *Idem*, I 215

⁴⁷ *Idem*, I 262. A marker has been set up by the Knights of Columbus on the spot as approximately determined. De Smet records that he said Mass regularly Sundays and feast days all the time he was in the mountains (CR, *De Smet*, I 230). He very probably said Mass at Fort Laramie.

⁴⁸ CR, *De Smet*, I 226

climbed on horseback the mountain that parts the waters of two great rivers, the Missouri, which is properly speaking the main branch of the Mississippi and flows with it into the Gulf of Mexico, and the Columbia, which bears the tribute of its waters to the Pacific Ocean. From the elevated spot at which I was I could easily distinguish Mosquito Lake [Red Rock Lake], source of one of the main branches of the north fork of the Missouri, called Jefferson River.

The two lakes are scarce eight miles apart. I started for the summit of a high mountain, for a better examination of the fountains that give birth to these two great rivers, I saw them falling in cascades from an immense height, hurling themselves with uproar from rock to rock, even at their source they formed already two mighty torrents, scarcely more than a hundred paces apart. I was bound to get to the top. After six wearisome hours, I found myself exhausted. I think I must have climbed more than 5,000 feet, I had passed snow drifts more than twenty feet deep, and still the mountain top was at a great height above me. I therefore saw myself compelled to give up my plan, and I found a place to sit down. The fathers of the Company who are in the missionary service on the banks of the Mississippi and its tributaries, from Council Bluffs to the Gulf of Mexico, came to my mind. I wept with joy at the happy memories that were aroused in my heart. I thanked the Lord that He had deigned to favor the labors of his servants, scattered over this vast vineyard, imploring at the same time his divine grace for all the nations of Oregon, and in particular for the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles, who had so recently and so heartily ranged themselves under the banner of Jesus Christ. I engraved upon a soft stone this inscription in large letters: *Sanctus Ignatius Patronus Montium Die Julii 23, 1840* ["St Ignatius, Patron of the Mountains, July 23, 1840"]. I said a Mass of thanksgiving at the foot of this mountain, surrounded by my savages who intoned chants to the praise of God, and installed myself in the land in the name of our holy founder.⁴⁹

Pursuing his journey De Smet travelled by way of the Yellowstone and Missouri with a single companion for guide, Jean-Baptiste de Velder, a Belgian of Ghent and erstwhile grenadier under Napoleon who had spent fourteen years trapping beaver in the mountains. December 31, 1840, the missionary was back again in the kindly shelter of St. Louis University, having left it for his first journey to the Rocky Mountains nine months before.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ *Idem*, I 229. This would appear to have been the first recorded Mass in Montana. According to the Rev. Michael A. Shine in *Nebraska State Historical Collections*, 16 212, De Smet said the first Mass in Nebraska Sunday, September 14, 1851, on the Great Council Plain in Scotts Bluff County. The statement probably needs correction. Father Christian Hoecken baptized at Bellevue, on the Nebraska side of the Missouri, as early as June, 1846 (*infra*, Chap. XXVI, note 88), on which occasion he also in all likelihood celebrated Mass.

⁵⁰ CR, *De Smet*, I 258.

§ 3 ST MARY'S MISSION AMONG THE FLATHEADS

The report which De Smet delivered to Bishop Rosati and Father Verhaegen on his return to St. Louis recommended strongly a permanent mission among the Flatheads. Everything indeed seemed to indicate that the time was ripe for such an enterprise and steps were accordingly taken to begin it in the spring of 1841. On January 15 Father Verhaegen discussed with his consultors the staff of the projected mission. The names of Fathers De Smet, Point, Mengarini, Walters, Verheyden and Cotting were canvassed, but no definite choice was made as it was thought expedient to give the matter further consideration. On March 4 the superior again laid the question before his consultors with the result that Fathers De Smet, Point and Mengarini were designated to begin the Rocky Mountain Mission, the first-named being appointed superior of the group. Father Cotting was also to be sent should De Smet decide to employ his services. Moreover, three coadjutor-brothers, Joseph Specht, William Claessens and a third to be selected by De Smet, were to be of the party.⁵¹ As the financial side of the venture presented grave difficulties, De Smet was permitted to go to New Orleans to solicit aid, and for the same purpose to enter into correspondence with some of the American bishops. He wrote to Father Roothaan on February 7: "I shall leave tomorrow for Louisiana, to beg there for the Mountain mission on this begging depends in great measure the beginnings of the enterprise. Journeys to the Mountains are very expensive. Each missionary needs a good horse, which costs from sixty to eighty dollars. Then pack-horses are needed to carry provisions and things. Arrived on the ground we shall have to build, start a farm and procure for the Indians whatever is absolutely necessary to work it." How successful were his efforts for aid De Smet made known to a correspondent.

On my arrival at St. Louis, I gave an account to my superior of my journey and of the flattering prospects which the mission beyond the Rocky Mountains held out. You will easily believe me what I tell you that my heart sank within me on learning from him that the funds at his disposal for missionary purposes would not enable him to afford me scarcely the half of what would be necessary for the outfit and other expenses of an expedition. The thought that the undertaking would have been given up, that I would not be able to redeem my promise to the poor Indians, pierced my heart and filled me with deepest sorrow. I would have desponded had I not already experienced the visible protection of the Almighty in the prosecution of this great

⁵¹ Brother George Miles, then stationed at the Potawatomi Mission, Council Bluffs, Iowa Territory, seems to have been Father De Smet's choice. Brother Charles Huet was to be the third coadjutor-brother attached to the party.

work My confidence in him was unabated Whilst in this state of mind one of my friends encouraged me to appeal to the zealous and learned coadjutor of Philadelphia [Francis Patrick Kemick] and to his indefatigable clergy I immediately acted upon the thought I did appeal and with what success the Catholic public already know To the Bishop, who gave his sanction to the plan of a general and simultaneous collection throughout his diocese, to the clergy of the different churches of the city, who so kindly interested themselves in this good work and proposed it to their congregations, to the generous people of Philadelphia, who so liberally responded to the call of their pastors, I return my sincere thanks and will daily beg the father of mercies to reward them with his choicest blessings

I must not omit to [make] mention of other generous contributors After having written to Philadelphia I was advised to visit New Orleans and recommend the cause of the Indians to the good Bishop [Blanc] of that city and to his clergy and people I did so The Bishop received me with great kindness, gave his approbation to a collection, and placed his name first on the list His clergy followed his example As I had only a few days at my disposal, I thought it was best to solicit subscriptions through several generous ladies who offered themselves for this purpose In the space of three or four days they collected nearly \$1,000 You have no idea with what spirit the pious portion of the people entered into the affair Almost every moment of my stay persons came to offer me something for the Indian mission Several ladies gave me various trinkets, such as ear-rings, bracelets, and ornaments of every description, others brought implements and articles, which will be of great use in the Indian country In a word, Reverend Sir, I left New Orleans with \$1,100 in cash and six boxes full of various and most useful articles From the Reverend Mr Duubin of Kentucky I received \$300, and the Reverend Jno O'Reilly remitted \$140, the amount collected in St Paul's Church, Pittsburg St Louis supplied the balance of what was necessary for the outfit, the expenses of the journey and the commencement of the establishment in the Indian country To the Bishops and to the zealous clergy and laity of Philadelphia and New Orleans, to the clergy and laity of other places who aided the good cause, in a word, to all the benefactors of the mission beyond the Rocky Mountains, I again return my sincere thanks ⁵²

Under the caption, "Directions for the new mission in the Rocky Mountains," Father Verhaegen drew up a memorandum for De Smet

A M D G

I do hereby constitute Rev Fr De Smet Superior of all the members of our Society that will accompany him to the above region

⁵² CR, *De Smet*, I 273 De Smet speaks elsewhere of his success in collecting in New Orleans, "which place I visited in person and which is always at the head of the others when there is question of relieving the necessities of the poor or showing compassion or munificence to any who may be in need of assistance" CR, *De Smet*, I 277

For the present I think that but one permanent residence should be formed among the Indians I desire, of course, that all the members remain together and form but one community However, should it be found necessary to establish two residences, I would permit only Father Point to reside with a brother at a distance from the main residence Fr Mengarini has but little experience in the ministry and should be applied to the study of the language and remain, of course, as much as possible, at home I entreat all my Brethren in Xt to be linked together by the strongest bonds of love and union, to be very punctual in the exercise of their religious duties and not to retard or impede by their faults the happy result of their glorious enterprise If all keep their respective rules punctually, their labors will be crowned with the most glorious success

I finally entreat them to remember me frequently in their fervent prayers

P J Verhaegen, S J
Vice Prov of the V[ice] Province
of Missouri ⁵³

The faculties granted to the FF [Fathers] by the right rev Bp of St Louis are also granted by the right rev Bp Loras for such parts as belong to his diocese ⁵⁴

For a while it looked as though the expedition would not get away for another year Verhaegen wrote to the General on April 15

Fathers De Smet, Point and Mengarini and the coadjutor-brothers, Miles, Huet and Specht are all ready for the journey and are anxiously awaiting news of the party of hunters without whose company they should be unable to travel owing to the snares and treachery of the Indians It is doubtful whether such a party will go out to the Rocky Mountains this spring according to annual custom and so I fear we shall have to defer the expedition to autumn or next spring Our mission meets with great favor here and there in the United States and in several places collections are being made to aid us In the single city of New Orleans Father De Smet, besides receiving gifts having a money value, collected \$1,000 This affair, so glorious to our holy religion, must be left then to Divine Providence We for our part will leave nothing undone to give it effect as soon as possible ⁵⁵

At length, on April 24 De Smet with Fathers Mengarini and Eysvogels, the last-named bound for the Potawatomi Mission of Council Bluffs, and Brothers Huet and Specht left St Louis ⁵⁶ That

⁵³ (A)

⁵⁴ As a matter of fact the missionaries were not to traverse any part of the diocese of Dubuque (or Iowa Territory), of which Loras was bishop

⁵⁵ Verhaegen ad Roothaan, April 15, 1841 (AA)

⁵⁶ Father Point and Brother Claessens joined the party at Westport *Diarium Universitatis S Ludovici* (A)

day Mengarini penned a brief note to Father Roothaan "The caravan has been found and today, April 24, feast of St Fidelis [of Sigmaringen], Protomartyr of the Propagation of the Faith, we are setting out for Westport where we shall find Father Point and thence proceed to the Rocky Mountains" ⁵⁷ After a seven-days' trip up the Missouri by steamer Westport was reached on April 30, it was left behind on May 10 Five days out on the Oregon Trail, May 15, De Smet wrote from the Kaw River to the General "Here I am five days on the way to the good Flatheads I come to throw myself with my dear brothers in Jesus Christ, Fathers Point and Mengarini and Brothers Huet, Claessens, and Specht, at the feet of your Paternity to beg a blessing on ourselves and our labors Aided by the grace of God, supported by the Holy Sacrifices of our Fathers and the good prayers of all our brethren, we shall brave every obstacle to fly to the conquest of souls" ⁵⁸

A letter of De Smet supplies a few personal data about his Jesuit colleagues Father Nicholas Point, forty-two, was a native of Rocroy in the Ardennes, France De Smet, mistakenly taking him to be a Vendean, wrote that he was, "as zealous and courageous for the salvation of souls as his compatriot La Roche Jacquelin was in the service of his lawful sovereign" Father Gregory Mengarini, twenty-nine, an Italian, "was specially selected by the Father General himself for this mission on account of his age, his virtues, his great facility for languages, and his knowledge of medicine and music" William Claessens, a Belgian, twenty-nine, was a blacksmith, Charles Huet, also a Belgian, thirty-five, a carpenter, and Joseph Specht, a German, thirty-two, a tinner and factotum The lay brothers, added De Smet, "were all three industrious, devoted to the missions and full of good will" ⁵⁹

For a space of four days the missionaries camped on Soldier Creek, an affluent of the Kaw, in the immediate neighborhood of the Kaw Indian village Here they had Mass in their tent, this satisfaction not having previously been theirs since they left Westport On a visit to the Kaw village De Smet made the acquaintance of White Plume, the Kansas chief pictured by Washington Irving in his *Adventures of Captain Bonneville* The missionaries counted in their party Thomas Fitzpatrick, well-known scout and mountain-man and a former head of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, who had conducted Marcus Whitman and his wife across the plains in 1836, John Gray, hunter,

⁵⁷ Mengarini à Roothaan, April 24, 1841 (AA)

⁵⁸ De Smet à Roothaan, May 15, 1841 (AA)

⁵⁹ CR, De Smet, I 278 Huet and not Specht was probably the tinner of the party, at any rate the former was an expert tinner and did notable work on the St Louis cathedral as also on the St Louis court-house

an Englishman named Romaine, and five teamsters⁶⁰ At the Kaw River John Bidwell's party, some fifty strong, with which the Jesuits were to travel, completed its organization All in all the caravan that was now to set out for the Rockies numbered seventy souls, "fifty of whom were capable of managing the rifle" "It will be understood," Bidwell wrote in his journal, "that Fitzpatrick was captain of the missionary party and pilot of the whole" It is interesting to note that of those making up the personnel of this expedition at least five wrote accounts of it which are now in print, namely, the three Jesuit priests, Bidwell, and Joseph Williams, a Methodist clergyman bound for lower Oregon. Bidwell went to California and there as pioneer, philanthropist and statesman made a distinguished record in the history of the state.

It was customary for parties crossing the plains to organize into an association of some sort with officers This was done by the present group on May 18, the result being that T H Green was elected president, John Bidwell, secretary, and John Bartleson, a Missourian, captain Bidwell's journal has this entry for May 14 "This morning the wagons started off in single file, first the four carts and one small wagon of the missionaries, next, 8 wagons drawn by mules and horses and lastly five wagons drawn by seventeen yoke of oxen" On June 2 a meeting was held at which complaint was made that the missionaries were going too fast, but it was impossible, so Bidwell reported, "to leave Mr. Fitzpatrick" His journal for July 30 records "Travelled about five miles and camped Guess what took place Another family was created! Widow Gray, who was a sister to Mrs Kelsey, was married to a man who joined our company at Fort Laramie, his right name I forget, but his everywhere name in the mountains was Cocrum He has but one eye Marriage ceremony performed by Father De Smet" This would seem to have been the earliest known marriage performed by a clergyman within the limits of Wyoming

The relations between Father De Smet and the non-Catholic members of the party were of the pleasantest Bidwell in particular conceived the highest opinion of him and in later years recorded this ap-

⁶⁰ "A Journey to California" reproduced in C C Royce (ed.), *John Bidwell, pioneer, statesman, philanthropist A biographical sketch* (Chico, California, 1906) Bidwell's journal is dated March 30, 1842 Hubert H Bancroft, *History of California* (San Francisco, 1886), 4 265-272, has an account of the overland party of 1841, which, he says, consisted of "about 48 men in all with some 15 women and children" He lists several narratives of the journey, most of them manuscript, written or dictated by members of the party, including John Bidwell, Josiah Belden, Joseph B Chiles and Charles Hoffer The Bancroft list does not include the printed accounts by Williams, De Smet (CR, *De Smet*, 1 272-288), Point (WL, 12 4-22, 133-137) and Mengarini (WL, 17 302-306)

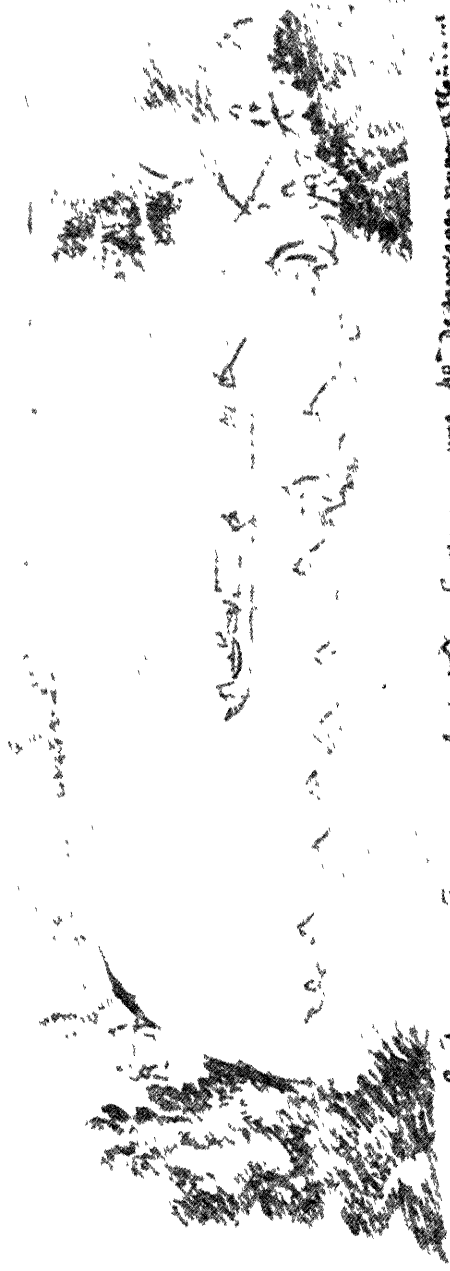


On the Oregon Trail, 1841 Negotiating a muddy ravine. From book of original drawings by Nicholas Point, S J Archives of the Missouri Province, S J, St Louis

15 km

Passage de la rivière des Kankas - voir le passage de la photo n° 10

Les Indiens Kankas
sont les seuls
qui habitent
sur la rive gauche
de la rivière.



Les Indiens Kankas habitent à la suite du passage - une 40 de passage nous attendent
de l'autre côté - après nous avoir vu débarquer ils nous ont dit de leur donner un guide à leur village
pour nous mener à la grande rivière de notre arrivée.

On the Oregon Trail, 1841 Crossing the Kansas River From book of original drawings by Nicholas Point, S J Archives of the Missouri Province, S J, St Louis

preciation "[He was] genial, of fine presence and one of the saintliest men I have ever known, and I cannot wonder that the Indians were made to believe him divinely protected. He was a man of great kindness and great affability under all circumstances, nothing seemed to disturb his temper" ⁶¹ Joseph Williams, the Protestant minister from Indiana on his way to Oregon, was also impressed with De Smet's courtesy and kindness. He wrote in his journal "There were about 20 wagons belonging to the expedition drawn by oxen. One of the company was a Catholic priest, a Mr. De Smidt [De Smet], who was extremely kind to me and invited me to come and eat supper with him that night and next morning brought me some venison. He appeared to me to be a very fine man" ⁶² Mr. Williams, so De Smet describes him, was a man of "ingenuous simplicity." He was "neither a Methodist, a Protestant, nor a Catholic—not even a Christian," maintaining that all religions or no religion at all might be equally pleasing in the eyes of God. "For the proof of his doctrine he relied (strange to say) on the authority of St. Paul, and particularly on this text *Unus Dominus, una fides* [one Lord, one faith]. In fact, these were the very words with which he greeted us the first time he saw us, and which formed the subject of a long valedictory discourse which he delivered in one of the meeting-houses of Westport, previous to his departure for his western Mission. By whom was he sent? We have never ascertained. His zeal frequently induced him to dispute with us, it was not difficult to show him that his ideas, with the exception of one, were vague and fluctuating" ⁶³ Though the Jesuits made no converts among their associates on the journey, they had accomplished some gratifying results. "Though Americans are slow to change their creed," records De Smet, "we had the consolation to relieve our travelling companions of a heavy load of prejudice against our holy religion. They parted from us exhibiting signs of respect and veneration, nay even of preference for Catholicity" ⁶⁴ "Oddly enough," comments the editor of Williams's narrative, "these three writers, De Smet, Bidwell and Williams separated before they had traversed two-thirds of the journey to pursue their routes towards different goals. De Smet turned North at Fort Hall to join the Flatheads, Bidwell left the party at Bear River to traverse the deserts west of Salt Lake and find his way to the open Sacramento Valley, while Williams with about twenty-five others made his way

⁶¹ Cited from *Century Magazine*, November, 1890, in CR, *De Smet*, I 114.

⁶² Joseph Williams, *Narrative of a Tour from the State of Indiana to Oregon Territory in the years, 1841-42 With an introduction by James C. Bell* (New York, 1921), p. 33.

⁶³ CR, *De Smet*, I 297.

⁶⁴ *Idem*, I 297.

over the Snake River desert and Blue Mountains to the Oregon settlements near the mouth of the Willamette.”⁶⁵ Some of Bidwell’s party on meeting a group of travellers returning from California with discouraging reports of that country had turned back in their steps. When he left the Oregon Trail at Soda Springs on the Bear River, August 11, his company, instead of its original strength of fifty, numbered only thirty-four. On August 10 De Smet with two or three Flathead Indians started off early in the evening for Fort Hall about fifty miles distant. On the 14th, eve of the festival of the Assumption, he was at the fort, a Hudson’s Bay Company post commanded by Francis Ermantinger, who gave him a cordial welcome.

Although a Protestant by birth, this noble Englishman gave us a most friendly reception. Not only did he repeatedly invite us to his table, and sell us, at first cost, or at one-third of its value, in a country so remote whatever we required, but he also added, as pure gifts, many articles which he believed would be particularly acceptable. He did more—he promised to recommend us to the good will of the Governor of the honorable English Hudson Bay Company, who was already prepossessed in our favor, and, what is still more deserving of praise, he assured us that he would second our ministry among the populous nation of the Snakes, with whom he has frequent intercourse. So much zeal and generosity give him a claim to our esteem and gratitude. May heaven return to him a hundredfold the benefits he has conferred on us!⁶⁶

At Fort Hall the missionaries met the vanguard of the Flatheads, which had travelled eight hundred miles to give them welcome. De Smet’s graphic pen after sketching some of the more interesting figures in this party of Indians recounts the manner in which the tribe had spent the interval between his first and second visits.

They had prayed daily to obtain for me a happy journey and a speedy return. Their brethren continued in the same good disposition, almost all, even children and old men, knew by heart the prayers which I had taught them the preceding year. Twice on every week day, and three times on each Sunday, the assembled tribe recited prayers in common. Whenever they moved their camp, they carried with them, as an ark of safety, the box of ornaments left in their custody. Five or six children whom I had baptized went to heaven during my absence, the very morrow of my departure, a young warrior whom I had baptized the day previous died in consequence of a wound received from the Black Feet about three months before. Another, who had accompanied me as far as the fort of the Crows, and was as yet but a cate-

⁶⁵ Joseph Williams, *op cit*, Introduction.

⁶⁶ CR, *De Smet*, 1 294. De Smet met Ermantinger again in 1846, this time in the Canadian Rockies. CR, *De Smet*, 2 542.

chumen, died of sickness in returning to the tribe, but in such happy dispositions that his mother was perfectly consoled for his loss by the conviction that his soul was in heaven. A girl about twelve years of age, seeing herself on the point of dying, had solicited baptism with such earnestness that she was baptized by Peter the Iroquois, and received the name of Mary. After having sung a canticle in a stronger voice than usual, she died, saying "Oh how beautiful! I see Mary, my Mother." So many favors from heaven were calculated to instigate the malice of hell. The enemies of salvation had accordingly attempted to sow the cockle among the good grain, by suggesting to the chiefs of the tribe that my conduct would be like that of so many others, who, "once gone, had never returned." But the great chief had invariably replied "You wrong our Father, he is not double-tongued, like so many others. He has said 'I will return,' and he will return, I am sure." The interpreter added that it was this conviction which had impelled the venerable old man, notwithstanding his advanced age, to place himself at the head of the detachment bound for Green River, that they had arrived at the rendezvous on the 1st of July, which was the appointed day, that they had remained there till the 16th, and would have continued to occupy the same position had not the scarcity of provisions obliged them to depart. He stated also that the whole tribe had determined to fix upon some spot as a site for a permanent village, that, with this view, they had already chosen two places which they believed to be suitable, that nothing but our presence was required to confirm their determination, and they relied with such implicit confidence on our speedy arrival that the great chief, on starting from Green River, had left there three men to await us, advising them to hold that position until no longer tenable.⁶⁷

Some time after they had left Fort Hall behind them the missionaries recrossed the Continental Divide to the Beaver Head River, one of the sources of the Missouri. Near this stream they met the main body of the Flatheads led by Little Chief Insula, afterwards baptized Michael "on account of his fidelity and courage."⁶⁸ "The tribe had the appearance of a flock crowding with eagerness around their shepherd. The mothers offered us their children and so moving was the scene that we could scarcely refrain from tears. This evening was certainly one of the happiest in our lives. The hopeful thought that we would soon behold the happy days of the primitive Christians revive among these Indians filled our minds."⁶⁹ Meanwhile, to improve the leisure hours of the journey Father De Smet set Father Point, who was an adept in drawing, at work on plans for the projected mission-buildings. Muratori, historian of the famous Paraguay missions known as "reductions," was drawn upon for suggestions. "We had made it [Muratori's work]," says De Smet, "our *Vade Mecum*." Later he wrote in regard

⁶⁷ *Idem*, I 293

⁶⁸ *Idem*, I 304

⁶⁹ *Idem*, I 305

to his plans for the Flathead Mission "All this is to be executed in conformity with the method formerly adopted in the missions of Paraguay."⁷⁰

§ 3 ST MARY'S MISSION AMONG THE FLATHEADS

The party now moved over the main ridge of the Rockies, which separates eastern from western Montana, and following the course of Deer Lodge Creek and Hell-Gate River, which latter they named the St Ignatius, they passed by the location of the present Missoula and thence for a distance of about twenty-eight miles up the Bitter Root Valley, the home of the Flatheads. Here, at a point on the right bank of the Bitter Root River, between the site of the modern Stevensville and old Fort Owen, they halted, September 4, 1841, the feast of Our Lady of Mercy. It was their journey's end, on this spot they were to set up St Mary's Mission among the Flatheads, the first Catholic Indian mission in the Pacific Northwest.

The locality was not an unknown one in the history of western exploration. Lewis and Clark had come down the valley in 1805 on their memorable journey to the coast, deflecting west through the Lolo Pass to make their way through a great maze of mountain defiles into the Clearwater basin. As late as 1890 a woman of the tribe was living who clearly recalled the coming of the great explorers to the Bitter Root eighty-five years before.⁷¹ The valley was a natural fortress. North-south mountain ranges, intricate mazes of snow-crowned rock, flanked it on either side while at its foot branched out to the right Hell-Gate Defile, which was the only practicable route over the main ridge of the Rockies into the buffalo country on their eastern slope. The French Canadians with their gift for expressive nomenclature gave it the grim name *Porte d'Enfer* or Hell-Gate, probably because through it the Blackfeet were wont to make their murderous forays into the Flathead country.⁷² Hell-Gate Canyon linking up with Clark's Fork of the Columbia formed a trunk-line of Nature's making which put the Rocky Mountain region in communication with the lower Columbia Valley. Indian trails inevitably pursued this natural route, which was also to be the one followed by two great railroad systems, the Northern Pacific and the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul. At the mission-site the Bitter Root Valley was some twelve miles wide. Dr. Suckley, an American army surgeon connected with Governor Stevens's exploring party, who made a reconnaissance in 1853 of the country between the two forts, Owen and Vancouver, described it as "very fertile, watered by cool,

⁷⁰ *Idem*, I 330

⁷¹ Peter Ronan, *Historical Sketch of the Flathead Indian Nation from the Year 1813 to 1890* (Helena, Montana, 1890), p. 41

⁷² Elliot Coues (ed.), *History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, I 1071.

sparkling brooks and surrounded by lofty and picturesque mountains

The soil of the valley is exceedingly fertile. Cattle do not generally require fodder in the winter the snow is so light. All the numerous streams abound in fine trout. In the valleys and on the mountains, bear, deer, elk, beaver and mountain-sheep are abundant.”⁷³ Lieutenant John Mullan, builder of the pioneer wagon-road between Fort Benton and Walla Walla, was especially impressed by the mildness of the climate. “Bitter Root Valley well merits the name of the Valley of Perennial Spring. The fact of the exceedingly mild winters in the valley has been noticed and remarked by everyone who has ever been in it in the winter season.”⁷⁴

So intimately had the Virgin Mother been associated in the eyes of the missionaries with the various incidents that preceded their arrival at the mission-site that they were led to name the new establishment in her honor.

After a journey of four months and a half on horseback through the desert, and in spite of our actual want of bread, wine, sugar, fruit, and all such things as are called the conveniences of life we find our strength and courage increased, and are better prepared than ever to work at the conversion of the souls that Providence entrusts to our care. Next to the Author of all good things, we returned thanks to her whom the church reveres as the Mother of her Divine Spouse, since it has pleased the Divine goodness to send us the greatest consolations on several days consecrated to her honor. On the feast of her glorious Assumption [August 15] we met the vanguard of our dear neophytes. On the Sunday within the Octave [August 22], we, for the first time since my return, celebrated the Holy Mysteries among them. On the following Sunday [August 29] our good Indians placed themselves and their children under the Immaculate Heart of Mary, of which we then celebrated the feast. This act of devotion was renewed by the great chief in the name of the whole tribe, on the feast of her Holy Name [September 12]. On the 24th of September, the feast of our Lady of Mercy, we arrived at the

⁷³ *Report of the Secretary of War communicating the several Pacific railroad explorations* U. S. 33d Cong. 1st Sess., House Executive Document, no. 129, p. 275.

⁷⁴ *Idem*, p. 348. The alleged mildness of the winters in the Bitter Root Valley is not borne out by the testimony of the missionaries who, on the contrary, speak of their severity. Father Mengarini wrote in his old age that a chill came over him whenever he recalled the cold at St. Mary's so vivid was the impression it left upon him. “We wrapped ourselves in several blankets and then in a buffalo-robe, yet in the morning we awoke to find robe and blanket frozen into one piece. We crept out of our frozen shell and set it before the fire to thaw, and this we did daily through the long winter months.” *Memoirs in WL*, 17:397. In the winter of 1846-1847 the temperature fell to 30 Reaumur and the deep snows prevented some sorely needed supplies from reaching the mission. “The cold is excessive,” Mengarini wrote from the Bitter Root in 1847. “In 1842 it was 24 below by Reaumur's thermometer almost steadily from November 15 to February 20 and in the winter of 1846 it was 27 below zero at various times even down to March.”

river called the Bitter Root, on the banks of which we have chosen the site for our principal missionary station. On the first Sunday of October, feast of the Rosary [October 3] we took possession of the promised land, by planting a cross on the spot which we had chosen for our first residence. What motives of encouragement does not the Gospel of the present Sunday add to all these mentioned before? Today too we celebrate the Divine Maternity [October 3^d] and what may we not expect from the Virgin Mother who brought forth her son for the salvation of the world. On the feast of her Patronage [October 8], we shall offer by her mediation to her Divine Son, twenty-five young Indians, who are to be baptized on that day. So many favors have induced us unanimously to proclaim Mary the protectress of our mission and give her name to our new residence.⁷⁵

Two or three weeks' journey below the Flatheads at Waulatpu near Walla Walla, Marcus Whitman and his wife Narcissa were at this time bravely pursuing their missionary experiment among the Cayuse. News of the coming of the Jesuits to the Bitter Root trickled down to them, not pleasant news as the correspondence of Mrs. Whitman reveals. She wrote in October, 1841:

The company of the Jesuits, twelve in number, consisting of three priests, three novitiates, and their pilot started from St. Louis. Their pilot is Fitzpatrick, the same that commanded the party we came with from the States. This company came as far as Fort Hall. They then go with the Indians to the Flathead country or Pend d'Oreille. It is not known where they will settle, but it is reported that they expect to locate themselves somewhere in this region and in the same language that part of our missionaries are occupying.

Now we have Catholics on both sides of us and, we may say, right in our midst, for Mr. Pambrun [at Walla Walla], while he was alive, failed not to secure one of the principal Indians of this tribe to that religion and had his family baptized. He acts upon his band and holds from us many who would be glad to come and hear us. And then the Indians are acted upon constantly through the servants of the [Hudson's Bay] Company, who are all, scarcely without exception, Catholics.

We feel no disposition to retreat from our work, but hope to stand our ground, if such a thing be possible. Fitzpatrick is expected here, when he has accomplished his piloting for that company and is said to return to the States this fall, if so, I hope to send this by him.⁷⁶

Dated five days later than the preceding is another letter of Mrs. Whitman's, in which she noted "The Jesuit Mission from St. Louis under the care of Father Smidt [De Smet], late missionary to the Otoes [Potawatomi], as I am informed, near Council Bluffs, has been

⁷⁵ CR, *De Smet*, I 315

⁷⁶ *Transactions*, The Pioneer Oregon Association, 1890, p. 131

established and houses are building, but the exact location I cannot give you It yet remains to learn its effects”⁷⁷ A year later Mrs Whitman wrote again “Romanism stalks abroad on our right hand and on our left and with daring effrontery boasts that she is to prevail and possess the land I ask, must it be so? The zeal and energy of her priests are without a parallel and many, both white men and Indians, wander after the beasts Two are in the country below us and two far above in the mountains”⁷⁸

That Dr. Whitman was equally alarmed with his wife over what seemed an impending danger to the Protestant cause in Oregon through the advent of the Jesuits is made clear by his correspondence In 1842 he made his famous ride back to the states for the purpose, so it was later alleged, of saving Oregon for the United States In the spring of 1843 he was on his way back to the mountains, a member of the great outgoing party of immigrants of that year, which fiction represents as having been mustered by him for the purpose of outnumbering the British settlers in Oregon and thereby saving that highly promising country for the Union From the Shawnee Mission School, near Westport, Whitman wrote May 27, 1843, to a friend “Lieut Fremont of the U S Engineer Corps goes out with about thirty men to explore for the government and expects to return this fall His men are Canadian voyageurs mostly and himself a Catholic Two Papal priests [Adrian Hoecken and Peter De Vos] and their lay helpers are along and Father De Smet has gone back in order to go to Europe to bring others by ship I think, however, the immigrants who are going out, will be a good acquisition It will call on Christians to labor for their good What a pity a good minister was not with us to go along at once My expectations are high for that country” On May 28, Whitman confided similar fears to another correspondent “I want you to get Dr. Smith’s [De Smet’s] Indian Sketches It can be found at the Catholic Book Store You will see what way the Society of Jesus do their missionary work and what we have to contend with in Oregon”⁷⁹ Again, on May 30, he wrote from the Shawnee Mission “De Smet’s business in Europe can be seen, I think, at the top of the 23rd page of Indian Sketches, you will see by his book, I think, that the papal effort is designed to convey over the country to the English We cannot at all

⁷⁷ *Idem*, p 150

⁷⁸ Letter of August 23, 1842, cited in *Publications*, Oregon Historical Society, 1893, p 249

⁷⁹ *Transactions*, Pioneer Oregon Association, 1890, pp 177, 179 Frémont was not a professed Catholic, though he came of Catholic stock According to P-G Roy, *La Famille Frémont* (Levis, Canada, 1902), the elder Frémont, Louis-René, was a native of Quebec On the other hand, Allan Nevins, *Frémont, the West’s Greatest Adventurer*, I, states that Frémont’s father was not a Canadian but a French refugee

feel it just that we are doing nothing while worldly men and papists are doing so much" ⁸⁰ No one may question the great services rendered by Marcus Whitman to Oregon in the days of its painful emergence from the wilderness, but the program of Indian missionary enterprise outlined by him and his co-religionists did not prove abortive on account of the opposition which, as he imagined, was to be raised against it on the Catholic side. Moreover, that De Smet and his Jesuit associates designed to assist in turning over the Oregon country to the British was a whimsical misconception of the facts. De Smet's strong American sympathies are revealed in a letter anent the Oregon question written by him to Senator Benton of Missouri ⁸¹

The De Smet letters go into much detail on the conduct of the Flathead neophytes during the opening years of St. Mary's Mission. Here are the words in which he sums up the results achieved before

⁸⁰ Cited in *RACHS*, 40:121. The passage in the *Indian Sketches*, p. 23, referred to by Whitman cannot be identified. While Blanchet and his clergy as Canadian subjects may have been sympathetic to Great Britain while title to the country was still in dispute, there is no evidence that such was the case with the Jesuit missionaries. Still Whitman wrote as late as November 5, 1846, to Rev. L. P. Judson: "Mark you, had I been of your mind I should have slept and now the Jesuit papists would have been in quiet possession of this, the only spot in the western horizon of America not before their own[!]. They were fast fixing themselves here and had we missionaries no American population to come in to hold on to give stability it would have been but a small work for them and the friends of English interests, which they had also fully avowed, to have routed us and then the country might have slept in their hands forever. Time is not so short yet but it is quite important that such a country as Oregon should not on one hand fall into the exclusive hands of the Jesuits nor on the other under the English government." *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 2:200. Whitman's correspondence with Greene, secretary of the American Board of Foreign Missions (Boston), reveals his constant preoccupation with the idea that Oregon must be made safe for Protestantism. Thus in his letter of April 8, 1845: "I hope it will not be left for this the only spot in the western coast of America where Protestantism can soon gain a footing to be added to the Jesuit dominions of this coast." Cf. missionaries' correspondence, American Board of Foreign Missions (Boston), transcripts in Newberry Library, Chicago. Basing his conclusions on evidence supplied by the doctor's correspondence, Archer B. Hulbert has advanced the theory that the real motive of Whitman's daring ride of 1842 was to induce eastern Protestants to settle in Oregon and by their numbers and influence strengthen the Protestant cause in that region. "Not until the 1843 migration got under way from the Missouri River and he saw and accompanied it westward, is there a line in Whitman's many letters indicative of international rivalry for Oregon, but there are whole letters to indicate his anxiety over interdenominational rivalry. California and Canada being Catholic, Dr. Whitman saw in Oregon the one chance left for Protestantism to gain a foothold on the American Pacific Coast. To take it for granted that he was thinking in national terms while using only denominational terms is inconsistent." *Trans-Mississippi West*, p. 94.

⁸¹ CR, *De Smet*, 2:486.

the end of 1841, recording at the same time how heaven seemed on one occasion to come to close quarters with an Indian boy

On my return, the 8th of December, I continued instructing those of the Flatheads who had not been baptized. On Christmas day I added 150 new baptisms to those of the 3rd of December, and thirty-two rehabilitations of marriages, so that the Flatheads, some sooner and others later, but all, with very few exceptions, had, in the space of three months, complied with everything necessary to merit the glorious title of true children of God. Accordingly on Christmas eve, a few hours before the midnight mass, the village of St. Mary was deemed worthy of a special mark of heaven's favor. The Blessed Virgin appeared to a little orphan boy named Paul, in the hut of an aged and truly pious woman. The youth, piety and sincerity of this child, joined to the nature of the fact which he related, forbade us to doubt the truth of his statement.

Little Paul died towards the end of May, 1847, after a few hours of sickness brought on by eating poisonous herbs. He was cut down, so Father Ravalli wrote on June 29, 1847, to the General, none too soon, for the moral infection which shortly after by a strange dispensation of Providence spread through the body of the tribe would probably have numbered him among its victims.

In the fall of 1841 Father De Smet journeyed to Fort Colville on the Columbia to obtain supplies for the mission and in the following spring he descended to Fort Vancouver to discuss his plans for future work in Oregon with Father Blanchet, vicar-general of the Bishop of Quebec, and with the chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, John McLoughlin.⁸² In October, 1842, he left Oregon for St. Louis to obtain additional helpers and material aid for his missionary projects, Father Point going at the same time to the Coeur d'Alènes. Father Mengarini with two coadjutor-brothers was thus left alone with the Flatheads. In September, 1843, Father De Vos, relieved of his office of master of novices at Florissant, came to join him. In 1844 Mengarini went down to the Willamette, leaving De Vos in charge of the mission. On the former's return the same year De Vos was sent to the Willamette, where he did excellent work among the whites and even among the Indians of the lower Columbia. Mengarini, again at the head of the mission, continued to direct its destinies to its collapse in November, 1850. In November, 1844, he welcomed an associate-worker in the person of Father Zerbinatti, who had come out over the Oregon Trail with Fathers Joset and Soderini. Zerbinatti's career in the mountains was soon brought to an abrupt end. Mengarini relates in his memoirs that on his return to St. Mary's in 1844 from Fort Vancouver he

⁸² *Idem*, I 370.

brought with him a Canadian named Biledot, who was to set up mills, grist and saw, at the mission ⁸³ In May, 1845, the grist-mill was in operation On September 15 the saw-mill was tested for the first time with more or less satisfactory result On the evening of that day Father Zerbinatti was missing from the little group Presently anxious searchers found him drowned in the waters of the Bitter Root, in which apparently he had gone to bathe He was replaced at the mission by Father Ravalli, who remained on its staff until it closed its doors

What had been accomplished for the Flatheads in a material way in the first five years of the mission is told by De Smet in a letter dated Flathead Camp, on the Yellowstone River, September 6, 1846

After an absence of about eighteen months, employed in visiting the various distant tribes and extending among them the kingdom of Christ, I returned to the nursery, so to speak, of our apostolic labors in the Rocky Mountains Judge of the delight I experienced, when I found the little log church we built five years ago about to be replaced by another, which will bear comparison with those in civilized countries, materials, everything ready to commence erecting it the moment they can procure some ropes to place the heavy timbers on the foundation Another agreeable surprise, however, yet awaited me, a mill had been constructed, destined to contribute largely to the increasing wants of the surrounding country It is contrived to discharge the twofold charitable object of feeding the hungry and sheltering the houseless The flourmill grinds ten or twelve bushels in a day, and the sawmill furnishes an abundant supply of plank, posts, etc., for the public and private building of the nation settled here Indeed, the location stood much in need of so useful a concern The soil yields abundant crops of wheat, oats and potatoes—the rich prairie here is capable of supporting thousands of cattle Two large rivulets, now almost useless, can, with a little labor, be made to irrigate the fields, gardens, and orchards of the village The stock at present on this farm consists of about forty head of cattle, a fast-increasing herd of hogs and a prolific progeny of domestic fowl In addition to the mill, twelve frame houses, of regular construction, have been put up Hence you can form some idea of the temporal advantages enjoyed by the Flatheads of St. Mary's village ⁸⁴

The significance of the mission in the pioneer history of western Montana is in the circumstance that it was the earliest nucleus of ordered civilized life within its limits "These," it has been written in reference to the fathers' arrival in 1841, "were the first wagons and oxen brought to Montana . . . Probably the first farming attempted in our Territory was in the spring of 1842 by the Fathers of the Mission This year they raised their first crop of wheat and potatoes The same year the first cows were brought from the Hudson's Bay Company's post at Fort Col-

⁸³ *WL*, 18 143

⁸⁴ *CR*, *De Smet*, 2 570

ville on the Columbia River”⁸⁵ As to the saw mill, Palladino is authority for the statement that Father Ravalli fabricated the saw out of discarded wagon-tires⁸⁶ Ravalli added to his knowledge of medicine a turn for mechanical ingenuity and skill as Major John Owen was to find out to his advantage We read in the latter’s journal for September 1, 1868 “Rev’d Father Rivalli last evening brot home My Compd [compound] Microscope the adjusting screen of which had been out of order he fixed [it] for Me He is a perfect genius and a good man”⁸⁷

§ 4 CATHOLIC ORIGINS IN THE LOWER COLUMBIA VALLEY

The first Catholic priests to visit Oregon Territory, since organized into the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana (west of the Rocky Mountains) were Francis Norbert Blanchet and Modeste Demers, both of the diocese of Quebec They arrived at Fort Vancouver, the principal post of the Hudson’s Bay Company, one hundred miles above the mouth of the Columbia, November 24, 1838, and the following day said Mass there, thus inaugurating the work of the Catholic Church in the Pacific Northwest.⁸⁸

At the time the two missionaries reached Oregon the title to that spacious territory was in dispute between Great Britain and the United States Practically it was controlled by the agents of the Hudson’s Bay Company, which after succeeding to the interests of the short-lived Pacific Fur Company of John Jacob Astor and then amalgamating with the Northwest Fur Company, dominated the whole Northwest with its trading-posts as centers of influence Of these, there were some ten or twelve, the most important being Forts Vancouver, Walla Walla, Colville and Okinagan, all on the Columbia, the first one hundred, the last-named six hundred and ten miles approximately from the mouth

⁸⁵ *Montana Historical Collections*, 2 90 “It cannot be said, although no high degree of civilization among the savages followed their efforts, that De Smet and his associates were not fearless explorers and worthy pioneers who at least prepared the way for civilization and (were) the first to test the capability of the soil and climate of Montana for sustaining a civilized population” Hubert H Bancroft, *History of Washington, Idaho and Montana* (1890), p 605

⁸⁶ Palladino, *op cit*, p 60 “Through the persistent efforts of Father Ravalli, the two Brothers, and a French Canadian, a miniature milling-plant, the first grist-mill in Montana, was constructed, where the tiny burrstones made to run by water-power were turning out excellent flour, though the amount was barely sufficient in the beginning to supply that small Indian community”

⁸⁷ Owen, *Journal, etc*, 2 179

⁸⁸ Shea, *History of the Catholic Church in the United States*, 4 311 Archbishop Blanchet’s *Historical Sketches of the Catholic Church in Oregon, 1838-1878*, first published in 1878, are reprinted in Clarence E Bagley (ed), *Early Catholic Missions in Old Oregon* (Seattle, 1932), 1 9-141

of the great waterway At all these posts there were small groups of French-Canadian Catholics in the employ of the company Further, at the time Fathers Blanchet and Demers arrived in the country there was a settlement of twenty-six Catholic families on the Willamette, some fifty miles above its mouth, and another of four Catholic families on the Cowlitz, at a point forty-five miles above the mouth of that river The Willamette is a tributary of the Columbia, emptying into the latter from the south a few miles below the site of old Fort Vancouver, while the Cowlitz enters the Columbia from the north, about thirty miles below the same site From the Catholic settlement on the Cowlitz to Fort Nesqually at the southern extremity of Puget Sound was a distance of only seventy miles ⁸⁹

Father Blanchet, whom Bishop Signay of Quebec appointed his vicar-general for Oregon, set to work at once to relieve the spiritual needs of the district entrusted to his care At Cowlitz he erected a small building to serve as presbytery and church on land set apart by the Hudson's Bay Company for the Catholic mission Thence he proceeded to the Willamette Valley, where at the Canadian settlement subsequently called St Paul's he found already erected a similar structure seventy by thirty feet in size The first Mass at St Paul's was said January 6, 1839 "These were the pioneer churches of Washington and Oregon" ⁹⁰ Blanchet and Demers did not by any means confine their ministrations to the Catholic whites, they endeavored also to evangelize the numerous tribes along the Willamette, Cowlitz and Columbia Rivers and in the vicinity of Puget Sound. As a medium of instruction, they began to familiarize themselves with the so-called Chinook jargon, which was a mixture of the real Chinook language with French, English, Algonkin and imitative sounds, all fused together into a vehicle of expression of very general use among the Indian tribes of the lower Columbia Valley ⁹¹ Two priests, however, fell far short of the number required for so extensive a field and Father Blanchet as vicar-general accordingly petitioned the Bishop of Quebec for reenforcements ⁹²

In answer to this petition Bishop Signay decided to send two young priests, Langlois and Bolduc, to Oregon. The unwillingness, however, of the Hudson's Bay Company to furnish them passage to the West in one of its convoys, a favor it had extended to the two pioneer

⁸⁹ De Smet, *Oregon Missions*, p 19

⁹⁰ Shea, *op cit*, 4 311

⁹¹ Shea, *op cit*, 4 312

⁹² The Quebec church authorities inquired of Father Chazelle, S J, of Montreal whether he could send a priest of the Society, "of American origin," to the Columbia Cazeau à Chazelle, June 12, 1840 Quebec Archdiocesan Archives

priests, Blanchet and Demers, made it necessary for the prelate to send them by some other route. Believing that the route followed by De Smet might be taken also by the two priests, Signay addressed a letter of inquiry to Bishop Rosati of St. Louis.

I was much edified to learn that your lordship has recently sent one of your priests to carry the light of the Gospel to the savages who inhabit that part of the United States territory which lies west of the Rocky Mountains, and that you would have given this courageous missionary a companion had you been better supplied with priestly laborers. May the Lord of the harvest give you the means to extend and perpetuate the work which you have begun.

As for me, I was able, with God's help, in the spring of 1838, to send into the British territory beyond the Rocky Mountains, two priests belonging to my diocese, Messrs. Blanchet and Demers, to assume charge of a considerable number of Canadians who have settled there and to labor for the conversion of the natives. These courageous missionaries give me the most consoling reports of the eagerness shown by the Indians to be instructed, and urge me to send them helpers, adding that they need no fewer than six assistants to meet the needs of their charge. But, besides its not being possible for me to send so large a number, I have reason to believe that the Hudson Bay Company, which has the fur trade in all that vast territory, will not be so favorable to our work as it was at first. It was willing to give transportation to our two missionaries from Montreal to Vancouver, on the Columbia river, but it does not seem disposed to accord a like favor to those who might want to follow them and share their labors. Seeing ourselves, therefore, confined pretty much to our own resources and being unable to stand the immense expense that would be entailed by the transfer of the missionaries through the interior of the country for a distance of more than 1800 miles, we must try to get them to their destination by some other route.⁹³

This communication of the Bishop of Quebec reached St. Louis during Rosati's absence from his episcopal see on an *ad limina* visit to Rome. It was answered by Father Verhaegen as administrator of the diocese during the Bishop's absence.

I received your pleasant letter of November 19 several days ago. Our worthy bishop being at present in Rome, I shall give you the information which your lordship asks of him. One of our Fathers left in the early part of last spring for the region lying west of the Rocky Mountains, and according to a letter which he had an opportunity to send me when he reached the foot of those mountains, I have reason to believe that he reached there without accident. The object that I proposed to myself in sending him was not to station him there, but to satisfy the Flatheads, who for more than five years have been asking the favor of being visited by a priest, and to satisfy myself in regard to the dispositions of these Indians and of others living in that region. Upon his return (and I look for it at the beginning of

⁹³ RACHS, 19 314

next summer) we shall decide definitely whether or not to establish a permanent mission there. We shall be guided entirely by the report that he gives us. I was aware, my lord, that there were two priests in the British territory, and the hope which I entertained that our zealous Father De Smet would meet with them there helped me greatly to a decision to allow him to go all alone. How delighted I should be, my lord, if you could increase the number of your priestly laboreis! The obstacles to sending missionaries there and the expense of the journey are immense, but your zeal for the salvation of souls, my lord, will triumph over them. Here are the answers to your questions. Ordinarily, there are two steamboats a year which go to the Yellow Stone (*la Roche Jaune*), and from there to the mountains is not a great distance, but those who leave for the mountains do not make use of these opportunities, because a large number of mules is needed to continue the journey from the Yellow Stone, and these mules for transporting baggage and travelers cannot be carried aboard a boat. Those persons who wish to go farther than the Yellow Stone and *to cross the mountains* have but one opportunity a year, in the early spring, about the 15th of March. At that time a party is made up at St. Louis. The members of it leave here by boat and stop at *Westport* or *Independence*, near the western frontier of Missouri. There they procure horses, mules, provisions, etc., etc. and make the rest of the journey by land. As to the expenses from here to the mountains, you would have to allow nearly four thousand francs [eight hundred dollars] for each missionary. There is no difficulty about securing permission to join one of these parties, priests especially have *none* whatever. The expenses of a journey for a *missionary* from Washington to St. Louis would not exceed two hundred and fifty francs, unless he should have baggage for the transportation of which he would have to pay. If your lordship decides to send helpers to the reverend gentlemen who are already laboring in the vineyard, we shall be happy to render the missionaries any service in our power.

P. S. I have unsealed my letter to tell you, my lord, that Father De Smet has just returned from the mountains. Everything appears favorable to our project. It is, therefore, very probable, not to say certain, that some Fathers will leave here in the month of March. The good Father did not see the reverend gentlemen, but he wrote to them.⁹⁴

Though Father De Smet and the two pioneer priests of Oregon did not meet on the occasion of the Jesuit's first journey to the mountains in 1840, they were brought into mutual communication by letter. A somewhat vague report that Catholic missionaries had arrived among the Flatheads led Father Demers, while on a missionary trip to the upper Columbia country, to indite a letter dated, Camp of the Pend d'Oreilles, August 6, 1840, and addressed to the "*Reverendes Prêtres, Missionnaires Catholiques, Aux Têtes-Plates*." Said Demers

Though I have not as yet the pleasure of knowing your names, I eagerly take the opportunity which is presented to send you news of the two poor

⁹⁴ RACHS, 19 317

missionaries of the Columbia, knowing that I am writing to Catholic priests, ministers of our holy religion, who have generously come to sacrifice themselves for the salvation of the savages. With what joy and contentment have I learned of your arrival among the Flatheads! ⁹⁵

On August 10, four days later than the date of Demers's communication, De Smet addressed a note from the Jefferson Fork of the Missouri River to Blanchet, announcing his arrival in the mountains and the object of his visit. His letter reached Blanchet apparently at St Paul's on the Willamette.

Your Reverence will be glad to learn that Mgr Rosati, Bishop of St Louis, in concert with my provincial Superior of the Society of Jesus in Missouri and in compliance with the desires often repeated, of the Flat-Heads, Pend d'Oreilles and a great number of Nez Percés, has sent me to the Rocky Mountains to visit these missions. I have found the two first in the best desirable disposition, well resolved to stand by the true children of Jesus Christ. The few weeks I had the happiness to pass among them have been the happiest of my life and give me the firm hope, with the grace of God, to see soon in this country, so long forsaken, the fervor of the first Christians. Since I am among them I have three, four and five instructions daily. They cannot be tired, all come to my lodge at the first ringing of the bell. They are anxious to lose none of my words relating to these instructions on these heavenly subjects, and if I had the strength to speak to them they would willingly listen to me whole days and nights. I have baptized about 200 of their little children and I expect to baptize in a short time 150 adults ⁹⁶

Shortly after the arrival of De Smet and his party in the Bitter Root Valley in the autumn of 1841 he received a communication from Blanchet. Written from Fort Vancouver, several hundred miles to the west of the Jesuit Flathead Mission, it enters into interesting details concerning the status of Catholicism in the lower Columbia Valley and concludes with an earnest appeal to De Smet to establish a missionary post in that part of Oregon.

Blessed be the Divine Providence of the all-powerful God who has protected, preserved and restored you safely to your dear neophytes.

I congratulate the country upon the inestimable treasure it possesses by the arrival and establishment therein of the members of the Society of Jesus. Be so kind as to express to the Reverend Fathers and Brothers my profound veneration and respect for them. I beg of God to bless your labors, and to continue your successful efforts. In a few years you will enjoy the glory and consolation of beholding through your means all the savages residing on the head waters of the Columbia, ranging themselves under the standard of the

⁹⁵ CR, *De Smet*, 4 1551

⁹⁶ Palladino, *op cit*, p 34

Cross I do not doubt but that our excellent governor, Dr McLoughlin, will give you all the assistance in his power. It is very fortunate for our holy religion, that this noble-hearted man should be at the head of the affairs of the honorable Hudson Bay Company, west of the Rocky Mountains. He protected it before our arrival in these regions. He still gives it his support by word and example, and many favors. As we are in the same country, aiming at the same end, namely the triumph of the holy Catholic faith throughout this vast territory, the Rev Mr Demers and myself will always take the most lively interest in your welfare and progress, and we are convinced that whatever concerns us will equally interest you . . .

Judge then, Sir, how great are our labors and how much it would advance our mutual interest, were you to send hither one of your Rev Fathers, with one of the three lay-brothers. In my opinion, it is on this spot that we must seek to establish our holy religion. It is here that we should have a college, convent, and schools. It is here that one day a successor of the Apostles will come from some part of the world to settle, and provide for the spiritual necessities of this vast region, which, moreover, promises such an abundant harvest—Here is the field of battle, where we must in the first place gain the victory. It is here that we must establish a beautiful mission. From the lower stations the Missionaries and Rev Fathers could go forth in all directions to supply the distant stations, and announce the word of God to the infidels still plunged in darkness and the shadows of death. If your plans should not permit you to change the place of your establishment, at least take into consideration the need in which we stand of a Rev Father and of a lay-brother to succor us in our necessities.⁹⁷

To this petition of the vicar-general of the Bishop of Quebec was joined another of the same tenor from Dr. John McLoughlin, chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company with headquarters at Fort Vancouver, of which he was the founder. Though not openly professing Catholicism at this date, he extended a most cordial invitation to Father De Smet to lend aid to the two Canadian priests then laboring in lower Oregon. "I am fully convinced that the most effectual mode to diffuse the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church in this part of the world is by establishing it on a good foundation in the Willamette and Cowlitz among the settlers—as the Indians will join themselves in what they see done by the whites . . . But if one of you with one or two of the lay brothers could come to assist Messrs Blanchette and Demers till their reinforcement came from Canada, it would be an immense benefit to religion."⁹⁸

Both to procure supplies for the Flathead Mission and to confer with Fathers Blanchet and Demers as well as with Dr. McLoughlin in regard to the plans they had broached in their communications,

⁹⁷ De Smet, *Letters and Sketches*, p. 229.

⁹⁸ CR, *De Smet*, 4, 1555.

De Smet undertook a journey to the lower Columbia in the spring of 1842. At the Little Dalles he had the sad experience of seeing five of his boatmen drowned by the upsetting of a skiff in the whirlpool waters of the Columbia. By a kindly dispensation of Providence he was not himself in the boat at the moment, having a few moments before gone ashore to walk along the bank. At Fort Vancouver, where he arrived June 8, he had the happiness of meeting Blanchet and Demers. "A scene here ensued so affecting and edifying," records Archbishop Seghers, "that it drew tears from the eyes of the only witness present, Father Demers, from whose lips we received the moving narrative. No sooner had Father De Smet descried the vicar-general than he ran to prostrate himself at his feet, imploring his blessing, and no sooner had the Very Rev. Blanchet caught sight of the valiant missionary than he also fell on his knees, imploring the blessing of the saintly Jesuit."⁹⁹ "Rev. Father De Smet made his appearance at Vancouver at the beginning of the current month," Blanchet informed the Bishop of Quebec. "Mr. Demers, who happened to be there, accompanied him to St. Paul where he spent eight days with us forming plans best calculated to further the work of the Lord in this country." And to Bishop Rosati of St. Louis Blanchet wrote at the same time. "Mr. Demers and myself have finally had the consolation of seeing Reverend Father De Smet. Everything he has told us of the mission among the Flatheads has filled us with joy because of the prodigious blessings and graces which accompany the apostolic labors of this holy missionary. I cannot but wish to see in the Columbia [Valley] an increase in the number of priests of the Society of Jesus, so fervent and so filled with the spirit of their calling." Later, October, 1842, Blanchet wrote to the Bishop of Quebec. "I rejoice to see that this country is going to fall in regard to spirituals under the learned and enlightened direction of the Jesuits."¹⁰⁰

After a careful survey of the situation, De Smet determined to follow the advice of Blanchet and McLoughlin and open in the Willamette Valley a residence of the Society of Jesus which might serve as headquarters and base of supplies for all the Jesuit missions in Oregon. To obtain the vice-provincial's sanction for this important step and to solicit from him permission to make a trip to Europe in the interests of the new missionary field in the Pacific Northwest, De Smet now resolved on returning to St. Louis. The appointment of a bishop for Oregon was also a matter which he undertook to urge with the proper authorities. Turning his face once more to the East, he travelled by

⁹⁹ Cited in Palladino, *op cit*, p. 50

¹⁰⁰ Blanchet à Signay, June 24, 1842, Blanchet à Rosati, June 20, 1842, Blanchet à Signay, October 28, 1842. Quebec Archdiocesan Archives

way of the Flathead Mission, where he left instructions for the opening of missions among the Coeur d'Alènes and the Kalispels. After months of painful journeying he reached St. Louis in October, 1842.

On the last Sunday of October, at twelve o'clock, I was kneeling at the foot of St. Mary's altar in the Cathedral offering up my thanksgiving to God for the signal protection he had extended to his poor, unworthy servant. From the beginning of April I had travelled 5,000 miles. I had descended and ascended the dangerous Columbia river. I had seen five of my companions perish in one of those life-destroying whirlpools, so justly dreaded by those who navigate that stream. I had traversed the Willamette, crossed the Rocky Mountains, passed through the country of the Blackfeet, the desert of the Yellowstone, and descended the Missouri, and in all these journeys I had not received the slightest injury. "*Dominus memor fuit nostri et benedixit nobis*"¹⁰¹

A few days later than De Smet's arrival in St. Louis Father Verhaegen made appeal to the General for aid in the new missionary venture.

Our good and zealous Father De Smet arrived here last month in excellent health. Knowing the great interest which your Paternity takes in the success of the great mission which he has commenced beyond the Rocky Mountains I hasten to forward the relation which he has sent me [Fourche à Madison, 15 Aout, 1842]. He begs me to tell you, Very Reverend Father, that he will write to you in a few days.

The details he has given us about the Indians of the far away regions which have become the theater of his apostolic labors have filled our hearts with the sweetest consolation. All our Fathers burn with the desire of accompanying him thither next spring. How I regret not being able to yield to the entreaties which some are making to me to obtain this favor. The thing seems to me impracticable. Everywhere, but especially in the colleges, there are complaints of lack of personnel. Be so good, then, dear Father, as to think of this fine work. As Father De Smet will leave only next April, the Fathers whom your Paternity will send us can easily arrive here before that time. Three Belgian Fathers would do wonders on this mission.¹⁰²

§ 5 A CATHOLIC HIERARCHY IN OREGON

A letter from Bishop Signay of Quebec to Bishop Rosati of St. Louis, December 31, 1842, states that the principal matter discussed between Fathers Blanchet and De Smet at their meeting of June, 1842, was the ecclesiastical organization of Oregon Territory and its erection into a diocese. To interest the American prelates in this project and

¹⁰¹ CR, *De Smet*, I 402

¹⁰² Verhaegen à Roothaan, November 1, 1842 (AA)

secure aid for the proposed diocese were, according to the Bishop of Quebec, the chief reasons that led De Smet to return to St. Louis in 1842. Having asked Rosati his opinion as to the limits of the diocese and in particular whether it should embrace any territory east of the Rocky Mountains, Signay went on to say

Reverend Father De Smet is in my opinion the man best suited for the place and this by reason of his capacity as a missionary, his knowledge of the country, and his relations with a great number of influential people in Europe who are in a position to lend aid to his missions.

It would also be in place to come to some understanding as to the name which the projected diocese is to bear and perhaps as to the place in which the new bishop is to establish his see. Your Grace must have received from Father De Smet either *viva voce* or in writing the information which my Vicar-General has forgotten to send me.

I have omitted to say to your Grace when speaking of the choice of a bishop for Oregon Territory that Mr. Blanchet, who might be considered in this connection, earnestly begs to be passed over. I only wish the rules of the Society of Jesus will put no obstacle in the way of Father De Smet's acceptance of this dignity.¹⁰³

This letter of the Bishop of Quebec to Rosati was answered by his coadjutor, Bishop Peter Richard Kenrick, who expressed the opinion that neither De Smet nor any other Jesuit would accept the new bishopric of Oregon. The Quebec prelate thereupon wrote to Kenrick, March 14, 1843.

Since your lordship judges that neither Father De Smet nor any other Jesuit priest would accept the burden of the diocese west of the Rocky Mountains, the erection of which we are about to request, it is necessary that Mr. Blanchet, in spite of his repugnance, consent to accept it. I shall therefore make it my duty to recommend him to the Holy See for the episcopate, at the same time that I solicit the erection of the new diocese. But for this I shall wait until the Fathers of the Council which is to be held at Baltimore next May have resolved to recommend the same priest to the Holy See in order that this onerous charge shall be given him. I am sure your lordship will inform me on the subject before your return to St. Louis.

I think that the proposed diocese should include all the territory between the arctic circle on the north, California on the south, the Rocky Mountains on the east and the Pacific Ocean on the west, and that the bishop who is to bear the burden of it should take his title from Vancouver, which is the headquarters of the Hudson Bay Company's establishments beyond the Rocky Mountains and from which it is easier to hold communications with all parts of the country. However, Father De Smet, who has been in those

¹⁰³ Signay à Rosati, December 31, 1842. Quebec Archdiocesan Archives. A letter of the Bishop of Quebec, April 27, 1841, to the Propaganda petitions that the Mission of the Columbia be placed under another bishop.

parts, may perhaps entertain a different opinion from mine on these two points, and I shall be very glad if he make it known to your lordship so that I may act accordingly in my request to the Holy See

I think it right, my lord, to leave to you the charge of taking the necessary measures with His Grace, the Archbishop of Baltimore, for the realization of our plans in favor of the poor faithful and the unbelievers in Oregon territory I shall wait to write to Rome until after you shall have had the goodness to let me know to what conclusion you have come ¹⁰⁴

The Fifth Provincial Council of Baltimore assembled in May, 1843 Concerning the Church in Oregon it recommended to the Holy See the erection of a vicariate-apostolic west of the Rocky Mountains, and notwithstanding the well-known unwillingness of members of the Society of Jesus to accept of ecclesiastical dignities except under a special charge of obedience, it forwarded to Rome the names of three Jesuit fathers of the vice-province of Missouri as competent to discharge the duties of the proposed vicariate The motives determining this action of the council are revealed in a communication from Bishop Kenrick to the Bishop of Quebec

In accordance with the promise I made you, in answer to Your Grace's letter of March 12th, I have the honor to inform you that the Council just closed at Baltimore recommended that the Holy See form a vicariate-apostolic west of the Rocky Mountains in the territory called Oregon Three names were submitted to the Holy See for choice They are

- Father Pierre de Smet, of the Society of Jesus,
- “ Nicholas Point, of the same Society,
- “ Pierre Verheyden, of the same Society

The motive which determined the fathers of the Council to recommend the erection of a vicariate-apostolic rather than a bishopric was the difficulty about fixing upon a see for the new bishop, because of the differences between our two governments with regard to Oregon They believed it best to ask the Holy See to confide the new vicariate to a Jesuit, and especially to Father De Smet, because they considered that this mission, in order to succeed, should be entrusted principally to the Jesuits, so that these good fathers may interest themselves more and more in it and send it further aid True it is that the Jesuits do not usually accept the episcopal dignity, but it was thought that this difficulty would not hold good when it is a question of a mission among the Indians I hope, my Lord, that this action on the part of the Council will meet with your approval and that you will support it at Rome with the weight of your authority ¹⁰⁵

The Bishop of Quebec did not hesitate to express his acquiescence in the choice made at Baltimore He wrote to Kenrick

¹⁰⁴ Signay à Kenrick, March 14, 1843 Tr in *RACHS*, 19 321, 322

¹⁰⁵ Kenrick à Signay, Philadelphia, May 29, 1843 Tr in *RACHS*, 18 460

Although I had already forewarned Mr Blanchet that he might expect to be burdened with the care of the diocese that there is question of erecting beyond the Rocky Mountains, I nevertheless make it my duty to support the decision of the Fathers of the Baltimore Council with the Holy See, because I consider that our holy religion can but gain more advantages therefrom. Yet, as I had invited my colleagues in Canada to sign testimonial letters in favor of Mr Blanchet, I am forwarding these letters to the Holy See with a request in favor of this missionary in case it be judged not appropriate to force the Jesuit Fathers recommended for the episcopate by the Council, to accept a dignity which is almost prohibited them by the rules of their Society

as to what concerns the bishop to whom the proposed diocese shall be confided, I shall be all the more content that the recommendation of the Council be followed, as Mr Blanchet shows much opposition to the great dignity that it is desired to confer upon him ¹⁰⁶

In the event Blanchet and not De Smet, the nominee at Baltimore, was appointed to the new Vicariate-apostolic of Oregon, which Gregory XVI created by a brief dated December 1, 1843 ¹⁰⁷ The vicariate embraced "all the territory between the Mexican province of California on the South, and the Russian province of Alaska on the north" and extended "from the Pacific Ocean to the Rocky Mountains" ¹⁰⁸ Various circumstances combined to make Blanchet and not De Smet the incumbent of the new vicariate. The *terna* forwarded by the Baltimore council was submitted by the Sacred Congregation to Father Grassi, assistant for Italy to the Jesuit General, who was asked to report his opinion. Grassi had some acquaintance with American affairs, having been for some years superior of the Maryland Mission. His opinion was that Blanchet would be a better choice than De Smet ¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the latter, who was then in Rome, appealed directly to Father Roothaan to make effort to save him from the dignity that was being prepared for him. On the occasion, a few years later, when it was falsely rumored

¹⁰⁶ Signay à Kenrick, June 12, 1843. Tr. in *RACHS*, 19, 323, 324.

¹⁰⁷ Signay in his letter of June 12, 1843, to Kenrick had recommended the erection beyond the Rocky Mountains of a regular diocese rather than a vicariate-apostolic.

¹⁰⁸ Shea, *op cit*, 4, 316.

¹⁰⁹ Acta S. Congr. Prop., 1843 (Archives of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, Rome). "Il P. Pietro De Smet Gesuita, nativa del Belgio Fondatore della Missione dei Selvaggi nel Territorio del Oregon, converrebbe molto bene all'ufficio di Vicario Apostolico. 2. Il P. Point Gesuita francese non sarebbe a proposito se P. Verheyden e ancora troppo giovane (Sentimento de M. Rosati, Vescovo di S. Luis dimodata a Parigi)." Father Grassi's report to the Congregation is dated July 16, 1843. September 18 the Congregation recommended that Oregon be erected into a vicariate-apostolic with Blanchet as bishop. The Pope, Gregory XVI, approved September 24, 1843.

that certain members of the Society were deprecating the appointment of Canadians to bishoprics, Father Roothaan wrote to an American superior "It is known at the Propaganda that I refused for Father De Smet, conformably to his desire as also to the line of conduct I have set myself, the title of Vicar-apostolic of Oregon and that it was in pursuance of the very idea suggested to me by Father De Smet himself that Bishop Blanchet was chosen" ¹¹⁰

Writing from Quebec in July, 1843, Bishop Signay had advised Blanchet that he was the choice of the Canadian bishops for the new see

Despite your repugnance to accepting this dignity, of which we are fully aware, a recommendation was drawn up and signed by the bishops of Upper and Lower Canada. But now the Council recently convened in Baltimore, which took this important matter under consideration, adopts a different stand from the one we were expecting. Bishop Kenrick, the Coadjutor of St. Louis, who from the very first had been of the opinion of Father De Smet, informs me that the Fathers of the Council petition that a vicariate-apostolic be erected west of the Rocky Mountains instead of a diocese and this by reason of the difficulty of fixing the see of the new bishop in view of the differences existing between the two governments. Moreover, persuaded that the missions of Oregon, if they are to succeed, ought to be entrusted to the Jesuits, they ask for Father De Smet as bishop, having sent his name to Rome together with those of two other Jesuits. In addition to this information from Bishop Kenrick we know from other sources that Father De Smet is at present in Rome. We have no doubt that if Father De Smet or some other Jesuit accepts the episcopate you will be very glad of it for we know how you dread its burden. However, if the contrary happens, we persist in our intention to recommend your name and have actually forwarded it to Rome. We have sent to Rome our recommendation in your favor together with the supplication by which, with the Council of Baltimore, we ask for a bishop for Oregon although we differ from that august assembly as to the title which the new bishop ought to take ¹¹¹

Political conditions have sometimes to be reckoned with in the appointment of bishops as was probably the case in the present instance. To the Baltimore prelates De Smet, an American by adoption, probably appeared a more prudent choice than Blanchet, a Canadian, as the Church's representative in a country then in dispute between Great Britain and the United States. Perhaps Bishop Kenrick hints at this consideration in a letter to his brother prelate of Quebec

¹¹⁰ Roothaan à Boulanger, Nov. 26, 1847 (AA) Palladino (*op. cit.*, p. 55), without indicating his source of information, says that De Smet was spared the episcopal office as the result of his own protest and that of the Father General.

¹¹¹ Signay à Blanchet, July 13, 1843. Quebec Archdiocesan Archives.

I share your Grace's satisfaction in regard to Mr Bachelet [Blanchet], whose merits I am perfectly aware of, thanks to the information furnished by Father De Smet I would have chosen him myself and it was only from a motive of prudence that the Fathers of the recent Council refrained from recommending him to the Holy See ¹¹¹ The information your Grace has in regard to Father De Smet's journey is quite correct He did not come to St Louis but has returned to his Mission by sea Very likely the intelligence communicated to you by the Bishop of Heliopolis is true, as this good Father takes a very lively interest in everything that concerns Mr Bachelet [Blanchet] I do not doubt that under the direction of this zealous ecclesiastic now raised to the episcopate and with the cooperation which the Fathers of the Society of Jesus will lend him, religion will make new gains in that far-away country ¹¹²

Meantime Father Blanchet, at world's end in the wilds of Oregon, was long in receiving word of his appointment Under date of April 12, 1844, the Bishop of Quebec sent him the news

Although the Fathers of the Council of Baltimore recommended the Holy See to commit the care of it [the new vicariate-apostolic] to Father De Smet, he showed himself so reluctant that he has succeeded in escaping the burden they wished to lay upon his shoulders only to have it fall back upon the worthy founder of the mission, which has just been erected into a vicariate-apostolic If I deserve any blame for having sought to have you made the recipient of a dignity which you are so far from ambitioning, the good Father

¹¹¹ "What do you think of a bishop for the Rocky Mountains? Father De Smet thinks it highly necessary, and he was the bearer of a letter from a respectable clergyman who is the pastor of a congregation on the Wallamette, a tributary to the Columbia, in which he urges Bishop Rosati to use his influence in getting Father De Smet appointed Bishop of that region, whereas the latter holy missionary thinks Rev Mr Blanchet, the clergyman in question, the fittest person in the world for the contemplated or rather the proposed see I have had to send the letter to Bishop Rosati to Rome and would be glad to profit by your views before expressing my own, which are favorable to the appointment of M Blanchet and in which Bishop Rosati, as he is fond of making bishops, might at once act" Kenrick to Purcell, January 1, 1843 (I)

¹¹² Kenrick à Signay, March 21, 1844 Quebec Archdiocesan Archives Cardinal Acton had already written Signay September 26, 1843 "The Holy See has deigned to listen to your prayers and to afford you relief in your apostolic labors by appointing an ecclesiastic to take in charge the extensive territory of the Columbia and by choosing for the episcopal dignity the same individual whom your lordship in his wisdom had sent to that great mission and who had been recommended by the worthy Bishops of Canada to the Congregation When the decrees shall have been prepared, your lordship will receive official advice of the choice of Monseigneur Blanchet for the Columbia, but I think I can assure you that his Holiness has fully approved the decision of the Propaganda" Acton à Signay, September 26, 1843 Quebec Archdiocesan Archives The brief of appointment was dated December 1, 1843

deserves much more, for he has worked harder than myself to have it conferred on you. As he is on the ground you can show your resentment over it at your convenience ¹¹³

This communication from the Bishop of Quebec reached Blanchet on November 4, 1844, several weeks after his meeting with De Smet on the latter's return from Europe in August, 1844. On November 25 of the same year, by which time De Smet was already in the mountains, Blanchet wrote to him:

The Bishop of Quebec has told me that he is not the only one who worked to have the burden of the episcopate fall upon me, that you have had as much to do with it as himself and that I must throw the blame on you in particular. Well, I say it in all good humor, Reverend Father, you have done me a bad turn. In your efforts to avoid it [the episcopate] you should, knowing my attitude, have reserved the embarrassment for some one else besides your friend. You have, then, failed as a friend, you will have a share also in the responsibility and in the account which you must one day render for this mistake. The affair is, alas! consummated. I must go ahead and leave even tomorrow for Europe! Aid me at least with the assistance of your prayers, help your friend to get out of the fix as handsomely as he can. Do not abandon me in the moment of danger, come to my assistance with all your good Fathers and dear Brothers.

The Mission of Oregon is erected into a vicariate-apostolic and I am the very unworthy vicar apostolic. We lack Sisters, Brothers of the Christian Schools, priests, Fathers for the Indians and for the Americans. I am going to seek them. Better now than later on. This journey costs me a good deal, but I offer up as a sacrifice the repugnance I feel in regard to it.

Mr. Demers stays part of the time at the Wallamet. The Falls will then be deprived of a missionary as will also be Tualate^[?], where there are many Americans very well disposed. It is the same with Yanhill. Father De Vos will try to visit this last post. Vancouver is going to be without a priest unless Father De Vos allows a Father to go there. The Fathers say that they are sent for the Mountains, that they belong to the States and not to British territory, to settle within the limits of the latter they would need the permission of Very Rev. Father General. As a result, no mission in the Bay [Puget Sound] or in Caledonia. What then, are the Fathers going to do? What will

¹¹³ Signay à Blanchet, April 12, 1844. Quebec Archdiocesan Archives. Cf. also Signay à Kenrick, February 24, 1844. "I am inclined to believe that Reverend Father De Smet went to Rome last summer, that he left nothing undone to get rid of the burden they wished to impose upon him and that it was at his solicitation that Mr. Blanchet has been substituted for him. I shall send Mr. Blanchet the document of the Roman Curia next spring through the service of the Hudson's Bay Company." Cf. also words of the Coadjutor-bishop of Quebec, June, 1843: "*Je sais que le R. P. De S. a prié le Coadj. de St. L. de le [Blanchet] recommander au Concile comme très digne d'être promu à cette dignité.*"

become of the Indians? Should the ministers come, they will take complete possession of them

See, Reverend Father, what you can do for the Indians I recommend to you the Mission of the Bay and that of Caledonia, next, a Father for a mission on the Columbia river near Mr McKay's [?] farm Please come down early in the spring and take measures with Rev Father De Vos They tell me Father Soderini speaks English, he would do well at the Falls General McCarver has spoken to me of the impression made upon him by reading Dr Milner's lectures Dr Long has received a similar impression Mr Clark, thoroughgoing minister though he be, has also read this work I dare say that with the influence you have you would gain over all the Americans in a year or two, if you were to reside with them

Remember me to your Fathers in the Mountains as also to your dear Brothers Be also kind enough to recommend me to the prayers of your good Indians They will never forget that you have been their first Father, that in this regard they owe you their salvation Nor, shall we, on our part forget what gratitude the country owes you for the journeys, the hardships and fatigues in so great a number to which you have exposed yourself for the glory of God In vain has the devil been wishing to show his vexation, to rise up and scold you, the good is done, he will remain humiliated The Fathers and Sisters are there and will go on doing good, and the benefits and advantages which the country derives therefrom, we owe under God to you The Lord has inspired you, given you courage and strength Success has crowned the work Once again be pleased to accept my very lively gratitude as also that of this country in general ¹¹⁴

Blanchet's route to Montreal where he was to receive consecration was a circuitous one Having crossed the Columbia bar on December 5, he sailed by way of Honolulu, Cape Horn, Liverpool and Boston, the voyage lasting six months From London he addressed a letter to Father Roothaan, May 29, 1845

The mission or rather the vicariate-apostolic of Oregon ought to be very dear to you since it numbers a dozen of your children, Reverend [fathers] of the Society of Jesus Appointed to the high dignity of vicar-apostolic of the country and accepting it only with regret so as not to retard the good that must be done, I decided to proceed to Canada and thence to Europe in the interests of my vicariate I have proposed especially to visit the Holy City and throw myself at the feet of the Holy Father to offer him the homage of a

¹¹⁴ Blanchet à De Smet, November 25, 1844 (A) Signay, now Archbishop of Quebec, wrote to Blanchet "How you must have been comforted to see coming to your aid five disciples of St Ignatius and several excellent nuns all burning with desire to second you in your work I hope Father De Smetd will have relieved you of all your scruples and that you have made your sacrifice with a generous heart" Signay à Blanchet, April 15, 1845 Quebec Archdiocesan Archives In the event the Puget Sound district was never included in the Jesuit field of operations, at least in De Smet's time. There is no record that he ever visited it.

deep veneration. Another motive was that I might discuss with you, Reverend Father, the sending of twelve more Fathers to Oregon. But my financial means are so straitened that I shall have to renounce this purpose of mine and do by letter what could be done much better *viva voce* . There is question of getting possession of several very important Indian posts before the Protestant missionaries come and sow error. These posts are: 1st New Caledonia, situated to the north of the Columbia river, 300 leagues from Fort Vancouver, towards the sources of the Frazer River. The Indians of the country have received the faith, have had their children baptized and beg earnestly for a priest. 2nd Puget Bay [Sound], which is to the west of the above mentioned Caledonia and on the Pacific seaboard. There also the Indians have received the faith, have had their children baptized and cry aloud for missionaries. Four would be needed in New Caledonia, two in Puget Bay, one on Vancouver Island, two on Queen Charlotte Island, which is very populous and as large as England. 3rd Walla Walla, 80 leagues from Fort Vancouver on the Columbia, and also a very important post. The Protestant ministers who are some distance away are taking away from us such Indians as have received the faith. Either there or close by we should need three or four missionaries. If to all this you add the establishment of Lake St Ignatius [St Paul's], a college, the serving of three posts or settlements of American farmers, the charge of the parish of St Paul, of the convent in the same place, and also of Fort Vancouver and of St Francis Xavier at Cowlitz, you will have some small idea how pressing it is to increase the number of missionaries in my vicariate-apostolic. Be so kind then, Reverend Father, as to see what you will be able to do for me this year and how many new Fathers you can let me have. It would be very serviceable if some among them knew English, otherwise your Fathers in Oregon find themselves hampered in their operations, not having been sent, so they will say, except for the Flathead country in the Rocky Mountains, a region more than 200 leagues from Fort Vancouver. Furthermore, they feel also a repugnance to establishing themselves close to the Columbia or to the north, which is supposed British territory, so it would be very well that your Fathers be at liberty to establish themselves and to go and work wherever need presses most.

Please to accept, Reverend Father, the assurance of my lively gratitude for the services which your Reverend Fathers have begun to render to my vicariate, which will be entirely Catholic if we only set to work in good season.¹¹⁵

In Montreal, July 25, 1845, Father Blanchet was consecrated Bishop of Drasa *in partibus*.¹¹⁶ Proceeding to Europe where he enlisted recruits, including seven Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, for the new missionary-field in Oregon, the Vicar-apostolic on his arrival in Rome represented to the Holy See the necessity of sectionizing his

¹¹⁵ Blanchet à Roothaan, May 29, 1845 (AA)

¹¹⁶ Blanchet's original titular see of Philadelphia had been changed to that of Drasa to avoid confusion with the American see of the same name.

vast vicariate. In a memorial of some sixty pages which he presented to the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda he embodied a rather startling plan, in view of the mere handful of Catholics in the territory, for the erection of the vicariate into an archdiocese with metropolitan see at Oregon City and with seven suffragan sees dependent thereon.¹¹⁷ Clearly he expected that the Catholic population of Oregon was about to go forward by leaps and bounds. "In these last years," said the memoir, "the civilized population has increased at a rapid rate. Present-day events are daily hastening development and it is certain that in a few years we shall count populous towns, where now are found barely a few settlers grouped around a trading-post. Whatever happens, the policy of the United States is to seize the disputed territory by the actual fact [of settlement]." In a letter from Rome to Bishop Turgeon, Coadjutor of Quebec, the Oregon prelate explained that for the moment only three sees should have incumbents, those, namely, of Oregon City, Walla Walla and Vancouver Island. The other sees were to be filled as need demanded. The plan was similar to the one adopted by the Propaganda in regard to Australia. Incidentally, Blanchet expressed the view that the missions of Paraguay and California owed their fall to lack of bishops and native priests.¹¹⁸

In accordance, therefore, with Blanchet's plan, somewhat modified, Gregory XVI by a brief dated July 24, 1846, erected the archiepiscopal see of Oregon City and the dioceses of Walla Walla and Vancouver Island, together with the districts of Nesqually, Fort Hall, Colville, Princess Charlotte and New Caledonia. Of these, Vancouver Island, Princess Charlotte, New Caledonia and a part of Colville were in British territory. Simultaneously with the creation of the new dioceses, Father Demers, the companion of Father Blanchet in his pioneer labors in Oregon, was appointed to the see of Vancouver Island, and charged, moreover, with the administration of the two other districts lying in British territory. At the same time, Father Magloire Blanchet, a canon of Montreal and a brother of Archbishop Blanchet, was named to the see of Walla Walla, besides being charged provisionally with the districts of Fort Hall and Colville. The metropolitan see of the entire province was fixed at Oregon City, founded at the Falls of the Willamette by John McLoughlin. The remarkable thing about these ecclesiastical arrangements is their elaborateness, in contrast to the small Catholic population and the few priests in the Oregon country at this period. The archdiocese of Oregon City was the first to be organized

¹¹⁷ A copy of the memoir is in the Quebec Archdiocesan Archives.

¹¹⁸ Blanchet à Turgeon, May 18, 1846. Quebec Archdiocesan Archives. As a matter of fact, the missions both in Paraguay and California were virtually destroyed by unfriendly governments.

in the United States after that of Baltimore. It antedates in origin the archdiocese of St. Louis, which was erected in 1847.¹¹⁹

The Blanchet memorial touches on the work of the Jesuits in Oregon. In view of the new ecclesiastical organization which he proposed the prelate thought their central establishment at the Willamette to be "superfluous," though it was originally at his instance that it had been opened.¹²⁰ "It will on the contrary be of infinite advantage to transfer it to some point in the vast country which I shall propose to your Eminences to entrust to the zeal of those indefatigable workers. This will be a very effective means in their hands of adding to the four flourishing Christian centers they already possess under the titles of St. Mary, St. Joseph, St. Peter and St. Michael."¹²¹ At this point will be the permanent residence of the particular bishop of the country as also the base on which they can support themselves so as to give to those same missions the stability that will insure their future" (p. 20). The missionary area which it was proposed to assign to the Jesuits is described

It would be possible to assign to the Reverend Fathers of the Society of Jesus the immense territory formed by uniting three of the projected bishoprics [Walla Walla, Fort Hall, Colville], this being the jurisdiction proposed for Walla Walla. The four missions of the Jesuits are to be found in that region. It may be that at first your Eminences will find that in dividing up the entire territory I assign too great a share to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. That would be true if there was question of a country already evangelized for some time back. But our missions are only beginning, those that depend on Walla Walla are, it is true, in a better state than the missions to the north of Oregon [New Caledonia]. Still even there the work is so far barely sketched out and hence there is no impropriety in letting all this ground be broken by such zealous missionaries. When later on some thousands of Christian converts at different points will permit of the territory being divided in reality as for the present it will be divided in principle, the missionaries, and in default of them, the provincial council will bring the matter to the attention of your Eminences. I shall even make this avowal, namely, that in view of the immense weight of responsibility laid upon me, I thought I might in the beginning demand even more from these indefatigable workers. As I already pointed out, I had authorized them to settle in the Willamette in the district which today I reserve exclusively for other workers. I realize now the impossibility which confronts the Society of Jesus of supplying even approximately all these needs. I accordingly acquiesced very readily in the views which the Very Reverend Father General set before me so wisely in a letter

¹¹⁹ Shea, *op. cit.*, 4, 318, 319. *Catholic Almanac*, 1850.

¹²⁰ Father Roothaan also thought the Willamette establishment superfluous and had so expressed himself to Bishop Blanchet.

¹²¹ The three Jesuit missions actually established in Oregon at this date were the Sacred Heart, St. Mary's and St. Ignatius.

of rather recent date. The domesticated Indians, the Flatheads, and the surrounding tribes are quite enough, so he said to me in speaking of the missions which the Society might undertake. There is work enough there to keep a good many missionaries employed, and may God grant that we find it possible to keep up what has been started without taking on new and far-reaching engagements (p. 55).

At the time Archbishop Blanchet drew up his memorial canonical relations between the bishops and the religious orders were not as clearly defined as they are at present. It was a matter that gave him much concern and he wrote from Rome to the Coadjutor of Quebec: "I am willing to have the rights and jurisdiction of bishops in regard to regulars clearly determined in order to avoid the disagreements of which I hear incessant talk. I have just put my hand on a brief which is very helpful in this connection and shall send your Lordship a copy."¹²² As to Blanchet's appeal to the Jesuit General for twelve additional priests for Oregon, it could not under the circumstances have met with a literal response, not through any disinclination on the General's part to extend the aid requested, but through sheer lack of available men. As it was, Blanchet was to bring with him on his return to Oregon three Jesuit priests and the same number of Jesuit coadjutor-brothers. With regard to the impression made by the zealous prelate on Father Roothaan, it found expression in a letter addressed by him to Father Joset: "For the rest I don't conceal my fears that difficulties may arise with his Grace. He is indeed a very pious man, but one very much under the sway of imagination, who indulges a good deal in theory and weighs less the practical side of things. Hence, he is unsteady and changeful and often hesitates considerably. Of such character does this excellent man appear to be not only in my own opinion but in that of other persons here and these of the highest standing. I recommend that your attitude towards him be one of the utmost humility and modesty after the example of St. Francis Xavier."¹²³ In August, 1847, Archbishop Blanchet was again in Oregon with a party of twenty-one recruits, including three Jesuit fathers, Menetrey, Goetz, Gazzoli and three coadjutor-brothers, Savio, Bellomo and Marchetti(?).

On September 3, 1847, only a few weeks after the return of Archbishop Blanchet to Oregon, his brother, Magloire, who had been consecrated Bishop of Walla Walla, arrived at his see in the wilderness after a six months' journey over the Oregon trail, of which he has left an interesting narrative.¹²⁴ Within his jurisdiction were located all the

¹²² Blanchet à Turgeon, March 27, 1846. Quebec Archdiocesan Archives.

¹²³ Roothaan ad Joset, June 7, 1846 (AA).

¹²⁴ A translation of the narrative or journal is in the *Illinois Catholic Historical Review*, 9: 208.

Jesuit Indian missions of the Oregon country and close relations would therefore naturally be established between him and the missionaries. As a matter of fact, his stay at Walla Walla was destined to be short. In November, 1847, only a few months following his arrival at Walla Walla, occurred the Whitman massacre, in consequence of which the Oregon authorities ordered all missionaries to retire from the district. In 1850 the see of Walla Walla was suppressed, the administration of this territory being placed in the hands of the Archbishop of Oregon City. A new diocese was thereupon erected, that of Nesqually (subsequently Seattle), to which Bishop Blanchet was transferred. His relations with the Jesuit missionaries in the mountains were accordingly short-lived, but long enough to give promise of their readiness to lend him aid as far as circumstances permitted in the general work of the diocese. From St. Paul on the Willamette, where he was a guest of his brother after the Whitman tragedy, he wrote to the Archbishop of Montreal:

Meanwhile arrived Father Joset, superior of the Reverend Jesuit Fathers. I presented him with thirty-six questions, which I requested him to answer. They were upon everything that had been done and that remained to be done. He answered on the spot and terminated his remarks with these words: "Though I think it to be of greater advantage to consolidate the missions now established, from which [as centers] we shall be able to work more solidly and effectively for the salvation of our neighbors' souls, this will not prevent us from being ready to employ ourselves with all our energy in whatever work your Lordship may be pleased to occupy us." Everything seemed to be going on satisfactorily and for my part I was pleased with Father Joset and the rest.¹²⁵

§ 6. RECRUITS FOR THE MOUNTAINS

In October, 1842, Father De Smet had arrived in St. Louis from Oregon to seek men and supplies for the new missionary field he had opened up beyond the Rockies. As a preliminary step in his efforts to engage the sympathy and support of the Catholic public for the Indian missions thus set on foot, he published in Philadelphia in 1843 *Letters and Sketches with a Narrative of a Year's Residence Among the Indian Tribes of the Rocky Mountains*, the first of the many absorbing records of missionary adventure that were to come from his pen. Already in the spring of that year Marcus Whitman was writing back from the Oregon Trail to a friend in the East urging him to procure a copy of the book and thereby acquaint himself with Jesuit missionary enterprise in Oregon.¹²⁶ Early in the same year, 1843, as the result of personal appeals

¹²⁵ A. Blanchet à Bourget, March 3, 1848. Montreal Archdiocesan Archives.

¹²⁶ *Transactions*, Pioneer Oregon Association, 1870, p. 179.

made in most of the large cities of the country, including New Orleans, Boston, Louisville, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia and New York, De Smet had got together the sum of five thousand dollars. With this fund he was enabled to outfit a party of three recruits for Oregon, Father Peter De Vos, lately master of novices at Florissant, Father Adrian Hoecken, brother of Christian Hoecken, the Potawatomi missionary, and Brother Peter McGean. He conducted the party in person, April, 1843, as far as Westport, whence he returned to St. Louis to make preparations for a journey to Europe, the first of the many he was to undertake in behalf of the Indian missions he loved so dearly.¹²⁷

Meantime the Jesuit party he had escorted to the frontier pushed out over the Oregon Trail, forming part, at least for some of the distance, of "the great emigration" of 1843, in which figured Peter H. Burnett, Jesse Applegate and Marcus Whitman. "Two papal priests and their lay-helpers are along," Whitman wrote back to the East, "and De Smet has gone back in order to go to Europe and bring others by ship."¹²⁸ At the Kansas River crossing, where now is Topeka, the emigrants made use of Pappan's (Papin's) Ferry, a crude platform of planks which sometimes sank in mid-stream. Here Burnett met the Jesuits, later erroneously naming De Smet for Hoecken in his memoirs. "At Kansas River crossing we met Fathers De Smet and De Vos, missionaries to the Flathead Indians."¹²⁹ Here also, at the Kansas crossing, George Wilkes, one of the emigrants, made the acquaintance of the Jesuit priests. "On the 30th two Catholic missionaries arrived at the ford. They were pilgrims through the wilderness on a mission of faith to the Flathead Indians. We treated them with every observance of respect and cheerfully lent them the assistance of our raft."¹³⁰ Father De Vos had sent word ahead to Father Mengarini at St. Mary's asking him to meet the party and conduct it through the last stages of the journey. This Mengarini did, taking along with him Young Ignace as a guide. On the eastern slope of the Rockies, the father made an interesting discovery, as he relates in his memoirs. "Some days before this we had discovered one of the sources of the Missouri. It was on the top of a high hill, the soil was very moist and a large stream of water was issuing from

¹²⁷ A domestic diary kept at St. Louis University records that the party which left St. Louis April 25 included three coadjutor-brothers. Two of the number were going to Jesuit missions in Kansas.

¹²⁸ *Transactions*, Pioneer Oregon Association, 1890, p. 177.

¹²⁹ *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 5, 68.

¹³⁰ George Wilkes, *A History of Oregon, Geographical and Political, etc. To which is added a Journal of the events of the celebrated emigrating expedition of 1843* (New York, 1845), p. 73.

the ground, on the outer side of the hill, but a few rods away, so near in fact that with a ploughshare I could unite the two, was one of the sources of the Columbia."¹³¹

While De Vos and his companions were thus making their way across the plains to the farther side of the Rockies, De Smet set sail from New York, June 7, 1843, in company with Archbishop Hughes. In Belgium and Holland he went from city to city collecting in a few months money and material to the value of one hundred and twenty-five thousand francs. An appeal for volunteers for the Oregon Missions addressed by the General to the Jesuit provinces of continental Europe brought a few recruits. Of the number, Fathers Joseph Joset, a Swiss, Pietro Zerbinatti, a Neapolitan, Tiberius Soderini, a Roman, and Brother Vincentio Magri, a Maltese, were promptly sent to America. Father Joset having met the Italian members of the party in Lyons, all proceeded to Havre where on March 20 they took ship in a sailing-vessel bound for New Orleans, Father Zerbinatti acting as superior of the party during the voyage. Out at sea contrary winds were so strong for a spell that during ten days the vessel made scarcely any progress at all and fifty days were gone before they reached port. In the course of the voyage the priests found ample opportunities to exercise their zeal. There were daily catechism classes for the children of the poor emigrant families and Mass and sermon on Sundays. One sailor-boy of nineteen was instructed daily for a month in preparation for his first holy communion. On Easter day some of the passengers received the Holy Eucharist, but a number failed to do so out of human respect, so at least it seemed to Joset. "In these and other ways of like sort," wrote the ardent young missionary, "we tried as well as we might to spread about us the good odor of Christ."¹³²

St. Louis was reached on May 18, the trip up the Mississippi from New Orleans taking seven days. As the season was too far advanced to permit of their proceeding at once to the mountains, the party remained in St. Louis until the following spring. They started thence on April 23 for Westport, whence they took the now well-beaten emigrant route over the Oregon Trail.¹³³ A narrative of the trip by Father Joset supplies graphic details of some of the experiences that befell the travellers as they made their way west over the famous highway.¹³⁴ De Smet and

¹³¹ *WL*, 18 37

¹³² Joset ad Roothaan, July 10, 1843 (AA)

¹³³ Father Soderini did not accompany the others to the mountains but went there later after having been assigned temporarily to the Sugar Creek Mission.

¹³⁴ Joset à ——— (AA). The letter is addressed to some unnamed father in Switzerland and belongs to the end of 1844 or beginning of 1845. Very probably an unabridged version of Joset's letter of February 22, 1845, addressed to Father Fouillot and published in *Ann Prop* 18 504-517.

others told of the hundreds who perished by the wayside, unable to reach their journey's end Joset makes us assist at the last moments of some of the victims

After the rainy season came that of death Our camp was like a travelling hospital Several young people attacked by consumption were going to seek health in the Mountains Among them was one recently married who had torn himself from the bosom of his family to undertake this long journey He was a convert, a fervent Catholic, who went to the sacraments every month He was resigned in advance "I don't understand," he told me, "how one can live without the assistance of religion, we are going in search of health, but if in place of health it is God's will that we should find death, it will be a sad outcome for such as are not enlightened by faith" After having given him the sacraments, I remained with him at his wagon until his last sigh The next day a Requiem Mass was said and a cross with inscription planted on the grave

The second was a young Methodist or Anabaptist I visited him frequently during his sickness, he showed himself greatly pleased to see me and listen to the explanations I gave him on our holy religion One day when he was suffering more than usual I asked him whether he shouldn't like to receive baptism, he received it in answer to his request During the several days he continued to live he showed excellent dispositions as well as a desire to know the Catholic religion better He died at a moment when no one was attending him and was buried with the rites of the Church We looked upon him as a Catholic by reason of the sentiments he had given expression to

The third died on a hill, where, overtaken by a storm, we had been obliged to camp without a fire He belonged to a Catholic family and had shown himself a model of patience, making no complaint except that he was a burden to everybody He had received Communion a few days before I heard his confession again, gave him Extreme Unction and the last absolution and did not leave him until he had given up his soul The funeral ceremonies were repeated so often that [ms ?] The last one I assisted was a Protestant of good family and distinguished manners He always showed himself exceeding polite towards us Catholics he held in esteem He was already in his agony when I was told of the danger My ministrations were limited to suggesting to him acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition and abandonment to the divine will Several times when I asked him to wink with his eyes if he understood me, he gave me at once the desired signal, which led me to believe that he retained consciousness until his last moment In all these circumstances the little English I had learned in St Louis proved very useful to me All the sick and the people of our camp generally knew no other language So you see, Reverend Father, that this part of our journey was not the gayest possible We advanced only at a snail's pace Six full weeks were necessary for us to cover a distance that ordinarily takes only six days and even then we were obliged to unload our conveyances of all unecessaries in order to make our way

The fauna and flora met along the way did not escape Joset's observing eye

Only a half an hour ago while on the prairie our people had killed a rattlesnake. This reptile is very common in these parts, but people don't fear it as much as we might imagine in Europe. There is no danger except when it is surprised. In Paris they made me take along some liquid ammonia as an infallible specific against the bites of venomous beasts of whatever kind, but here it is superfluous. Divine Providence here spreads about the remedy in greater abundance than the disease. It is called blackroot, the stem is very much like the *tragophagon* of your meadows, its yellow head, which turns black when ripe, rises about on all sides above the other grasses so that it is easy to find it. You pound the dry root and spread it on the bite.¹³⁵

Joset was led to expect from letters of Father De Smet, who returned to Oregon in the summer of 1844, that the latter might meet him at Green River and conduct the party across the mountains. When De Smet failed to appear at Green River, as a matter of fact he was only just then arriving in lower Oregon from Europe, Joset had to look about for a guide. One such did offer his services, but, besides asking a fee of a hundred dollars for the thirty-five days needed to complete the journey, he also demanded upkeep all the way for his family of seven. This meant an expense very much greater than Joset was either able or willing to incur, and he determined to push on without a guide. He had not gone far when a kindly Providence came to his assistance.

On the eighth of September, feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, I was going some distance ahead of my little caravan, as my custom was, to find a good place for dinner, when I saw coming towards me a man clothed in the fashion of the whites, but wearing his hair long, after the manner of the Indians. As is usually done, we shook hands. Great was my joy when I heard him return my "*bon jour*." I asked him whether he was a Canadian. "I am an Iroquois." "Do you know St. Mary's?" "I have just come from it." "Your name?" "Ignace." I should find it impossible to tell you the joy I felt at the word "Ignace." I don't know whether it would be any greater at sight of an angel descending from heaven to become our guide. He was truly an angel sent by the Blessed Virgin, he came *nesciens quid faceret* [unaware what he was doing]. He was the same Ignace who was not afraid to journey with a single companion to St. Louis to ask for Black Robes in the name of the Flatheads and who had conducted thence Father De Smet, he was the same Ignace who had accompanied Father De Smet on his return to

¹³⁵ *Idem*. Chittenden and Richardson were unable to identify the "blackroot" mentioned by De Smet as a specific for snake-bite. CR, *De Smet*, 2: 663. But cf. *infra*, Chap. XXVIII, § 13, for *oryngium aquaticum*, the Potawatomi cure for snake-bite.

St Louis and had brought thence Fathers De Vos and Hoecken, the missionaries' guide, and a devoted man, who knew the country perfectly, so that all we had to do thenceforward was to follow his lead

The party had been disappointed in not meeting Father De Smet at Green River, whatever hopes they entertained of meeting him at least at Fort Hall likewise ended in disappointment Beyond Fort Hall the route would bring them through the lands of the Blackfeet, "the Arabs of this region," Joset called them, "with whom neither peace nor truce is possible" The teamsters and even Ignace himself shrank from the unpleasant prospect But Joset reasoned with himself that it was God's affair after all, His will and not their own caprice had brought them into the desert, there was nothing therefore to do but go ahead and leave the issue in His hands Joset succeeded in communicating his courage to the rest and so his little party of seven, himself and Father Zerbinatti, Brother Magri, Ignace, a Canadian, and two Mexicans put out from Fort Hall Providence, which they had trusted, did not disappoint their hopes, they traversed the Blackfeet country without unpleasant incident and reached their destination on the Bitter Root safe and sound "Finally on October 5 we passed Hell Gate On the 6th, Holy Rosary Sunday, we celebrated Mass on the banks of the river On the 7th in the church of St Mary's we recited the Te Deum which was followed by a Mass of Thanksgiving Thanks to the kindly care of Providence, in which we had placed all our hope, this last stage of our journey, which in everybody's opinion was the most perilous of all, was not only the most successful, but even the pleasantest" ¹³⁶

§ 7. THE WILLAMETTE RESIDENCE

On January 9, 1844, Father De Smet sailed out of the port of Antwerp on the chartered brig *Infatigable*, having with him five Jesuit recruits for Oregon, Fathers John Nobili, Michael Accolti, Anthony Ravalli, Louis Vercruysse and Brother Francis Huysbrecht, together with six sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame de Namur Cape Horn was rounded on March 20 and on July 28 the coast of Oregon came into view On July 31 the dangerous bar at the mouth of the Columbia was crossed but only after an experience that threatened for the moment to make an end of the passengers in the very last leg of their seven months' voyage On August 5 the *Infatigable* cast anchor before historic Fort Vancouver on the north bank of the Columbia a few miles above the mouth of the Willamette Waiting to receive the

¹³⁶ Joset à ——— (AA) Joset is mistaken in saying that young Ignace accompanied De Smet to St Louis and thence conducted De Vos and Hoecken to the West

party as they landed were Dr John McLoughlin, the Hudson's Bay Company's chief representative in the Pacific Northwest, his Indian wife, James Douglas, McLoughlin's chief aid, and Dr Forbes Barclay, the fort's physician¹³⁷ De Smet, who had left the party after they entered the Columbia to precede them in a skiff to the fort, rejoined his fellow-travellers before they disembarked to bring them tidings he had picked up of missionary achievement during his absence from Oregon—all the Coeur d'Alènes, so it was said, converted and six hundred baptisms among the Indians of New Caledonia

On the eve of the Assumption the group set out for St Paul, some fifty miles above on the Willamette, under escort of Vicar-general Blanchet, who had come down to give them welcome "Our little squadron," records De Smet, "consisted of four canoes manned by the parishioners of Father Blanchet, and our own sloop. We sailed up [down?] the river and soon entered the Willamette, the waters of which flow into the Columbia. As night approached, we moored our vessels and encamped upon the shore." The spot was apparently within the limits of what is now the city of Portland. On the morrow, festival of the Assumption, De Smet aided by the nuns erected a small altar at which Blanchet celebrated Mass, all the others communicating. "Finally, the 17th, about eleven o'clock, we came in sight of our dear mission of Willamette. A cart was prepared to conduct the nuns to their dwelling, which is about five miles from the river. In two hours we were all assembled in the chapel of Willamette to adore and thank our Divine Saviour by the solemn chanting of the Te Deum, in which all hearts and lips joined with lively emotion"¹³⁸ "The Church," Sister Loyola, superior of the nuns, wrote in her journal for August 17, "is not a bad resemblance of the stable of Bethlehem"¹³⁹ It was in truth an historic structure, having been built in 1836 by the Canadian settlers two years before the priests came among them, and was the oldest log church in the Pacific Northwest. It was dedicated to Catholic worship January 6, 1839, by Blanchet. Demers had taken up residence in the Cowlitz Valley, Washington, since October 13, 1839, opening there the Church of St Francis Xavier. St Paul was the earliest Catholic establishment in Oregon proper¹⁴⁰ Four miles below St Paul was Cham-poeg, which became prominent in early Oregon politics

¹³⁷ CR, *De Smet*, 2 447

¹³⁸ *Idem*, 2 447, 448

¹³⁹ *Notice sur le Territoire et sur la Mission De L'Oregon suivie de quelques lettres des Soeurs de Notre Dame etablies à Saint Paul du Wallamette* (Brussels, 1847), p 124. This work is translated in C B Bagley (ed.), *Early Catholic Missions in Old Oregon* (Seattle, 1932), 2 1-122

¹⁴⁰ Edwin V O'Hara, *Pioneer Catholic History of Oregon* (Portland, Oregon, 1911), pp 36-38

As it happened, the Jesuits arrived on the scene at the very moment that the Methodist mission on the Willamette, founded by Daniel and Jason Lee in 1834, had just suspended operations after ten years of unproductive labor involving great expense. Though a chance to buy the Methodist holdings now presented itself, something more desirable was shortly found. It was De Smet's design, first suggested to him by Blanchet, to open on the Willamette a house that might serve as base of supplies for all the Jesuit missions in Oregon. Twelve days after his arrival at St. Paul a choice property was in his possession. "Monseigneur Blanchet," he informed Father Roothaan, August 29, 1844, "has given me a fine piece of land, an English square mile in extent at a half league from his mother-house." In a letter to his brother Francis, dated October 9, 1844, he enters into details about the property.

The Methodists, indeed, offered to sell me their Academy, which is a sufficiently large and handsome house but entirely destitute of wood and arable land. In this perplexity Mr. Blanchet relieved me by a generous and disinterested offer. He proposed to examine the property belonging to the mission, and take such portions of it as I should judge most proper for our projected establishment. We accordingly set out on this new excursion, but we had scarcely proceeded two miles when we came to a point uniting every desirable advantage. Picture to yourself an immense plain extending southward as far as the eye can reach, on one side the snowy crests of the gigantic Hood, Jefferson or Molchis and St. Helen's (the three highest peaks of Oregon), towering majestically upward, and losing themselves in the clouds, on the west the limpid waters of two small lakes, on whose beautiful shores the beaver, the otter and the muskrat sport in careless security, heedless of our presence. The elevation on which we were standing, gradually sloping downward and forming a charming amphitheatre, extended to the borders of one of the lakes.

I hesitated not a moment in selecting this spot for the mother mission of St. Francis Xavier. The sweet recollections of our first establishment on the Missouri returned to my mind, and the remembrance of the rapid progress of the Mission of St. Stanislaus, near St. Ferdinand, whose branches now extend over the greater part of Missouri, Ohio, Louisiana, reaching even the Rocky Mountains, and penetrating to the western boundary of America, led me to breathe a fervent prayer, that here also might be formed a station, whence the torch of faith would diffuse its cheering light among the benighted tribes of this immense territory. We have also a fine view of the Willamette river, which in this place makes a sudden bend, continuing its course amidst dense forests, which promise an almost inexhaustible supply of materials for the construction of our mission-house. In no part of this region have I met with a more luxuriant growth of pine, fir, elm, ash, oak, button-ball [sycamore] and yew trees. The intervening country is beautifully diversified with shadowy groves and smiling plains, whose rich soil yields abundant harvests, sufficient for the maintenance of a large establishment. Besides these

advantages, there are a number of springs on one side of the hill, one of which is not more than 100 yards from the house, and it will probably be of great use hereafter. Having now made choice of the locality, we commenced without delay the erection of the buildings. The first thing to be done was to clear the ground by cutting away the underbrush and isolated trees, after which, with the aid of the inhabitants, we constructed three wooden buildings, covered by a single roof of ninety feet, these were to serve as workshops for the brother blacksmith, carpenter and joiner.

Besides these, a house, forty-five by thirty-five feet, is now under way. It is to be two stories, and will be the dwelling-house of the missionaries.¹⁴¹

On October 3, 1844, De Smet left the Willamette residence, which he named for St. Francis Xavier, to revisit his missions in the mountains. Sister Loyola's journal for that date records "Reverend Father De Smet, to whom we are obliged for attention and benefits which we shall never be able to acknowledge, has just bid us good-bye. Though prepared for his departure we feel it keenly."¹⁴² The residence now received a new superior in the person of Father De Vos, who had just come down from the Flatheads. On October 17 he said the first Mass in the convent chapel, distant "a half league from the Jesuit Residence." "We shall have holy Mass every day," Sister Loyola notes in her journal, "and an instruction on Sunday by one of the Reverend Fathers of the Society of Jesus."¹⁴³

Father De Vos's management of affairs at St. Francis Xavier's was not considered to be satisfactory and he was transferred in May, 1845, to Oregon City. He was replaced by Father Michael Accolti, whose subsequent career in Oregon was largely identified with the management of this projected general headquarters for the missions. Fathers Vercruysse and Ravalli on their arrival in Oregon were first attached to St. Francis Xavier's, where they busied themselves in learning English. In 1848 Accolti with Brothers Savio and Marchetti made up the little community at the Willamette. When he left for his visit to California in 1849, he was replaced by Menetrey as acting-superior. On his return to Oregon, as superior of the Oregon Missions, he again resided at St. Francis Xavier's, in which he took the keenest interest all the years he spent in the Willamette Valley.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ CR, *De Smet*, 2:449. A little lake on or near the property was named for St. Ignatius. St. Francis Xavier's was sometimes referred to as the establishment "au Lac Ignace."

¹⁴² CR, *De Smet*, 2:454. *Notice sur Oregon, etc.*, p. 126. The sisters' account records that Father De Smet had taught them English during the long voyage to America. Sister Loyola's journal gives October 7, as the date of De Smet's departure from St. Paul, De Smet's own date is October 3.

¹⁴³ Father De Vos had been master of novices at Florissant and had come out to the mountains with Father Adrian Hoecken in 1843.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *infra*, § 6.



MISSION OF ST. PAUL A WALLAMET

- 1 Cathédrale et maison de l'archevêque
- 2 Résidence de l'archevêque
- 3 Village de St. Joseph
- 4 Cathédrale de Notre-Dame
- 5 Résidence de l'archevêque
- 6 Ferme de St. Joseph
- 7 Ferme de St. Joseph
- 8 Ferme de St. Joseph
- 9 Ferme de St. Joseph

Catholic Mission of St Paul on the Willamette, Oregon Territory Jesuit residence of St Francis Xavier (5) From De Smet's *Les Missions d'Oregon* (Ghent, 1848)

Though Father De Smet in his letter to the General represented the Willamette farm as a gift from Father Blanchet, it was not strictly such, at least one gathers so from correspondence of the period. As a matter of fact the property appears to have been government land, to which the vicar-general could not personally enter valid claim as he had already taken up land to the full legal amount. At the same time he acted no doubt in good faith in the transaction, the circumstances of which are not clear. He probably possessed at least an inchoative right to the property and this right he meant to convey to De Smet. To the original section or mile-square plot were later added a few adjoining pieces acquired by purchase from neighboring settlers while Father Demers, vicar-general during Blanchet's absence from the country after his appointment as bishop, ceded to the fathers a part of Blanchet's own claim, good fertile land, whereas the fathers' actual property was said to be poor for farming. When Archbishop Blanchet returned to Oregon after his consecration, he declined to ratify the cession of land made by his vicar-general to the Jesuits during his absence unless the latter confirmed the right conceded by De Smet to the diocesan clergy to cut wood on the fathers' farm, which was apparently rich in timber. This right De Smet had granted first for ten years and later indefinitely over the protest of De Vos, who thought it unwise to allow a lien of this nature to be fixed on Jesuit property. Father Joset, De Smet's successor as superior of the missions, took the position that De Smet was without authority to grant the right in question and he reported the case to the Father General. What adjustment was made of the point at issue does not appear. Sometime before February, 1846, the Willamette claims, comprising the St. Francis Xavier farm, were duly registered at the land office. In pursuance of advice received from Dr. Long, secretary of the provisional government and a convert of Father De Vos's, the claims were not entered in De Smet's name, as the latter was never more than a transient in the lower Oregon country and had not acquired a domicile therein.¹⁴⁵

The project of a "mother-house," as De Smet chose to call it, at the Willamette had at first received Father Roothaan's unqualified approval. "Here," he wrote, "must be the residence of the Superior, who from this point will extend aid to the missionaries and correspond with Europe. The Superior should have at least one companion with him in this Residence."¹⁴⁶ But in August, 1846, less than two years after the Willamette house had been opened, Father Roothaan authorized Joset to suppress it as an economic burden and useless for the pur-

¹⁴⁵ Joset à Roothaan, February 5, 1849 (AA). Accolti à De Smet, February 1, 1846 (A).

¹⁴⁶ Roothaan à De Smet, November 2, 1843 (AA).

pose intended. Now that the Oregon boundary question had been settled, better and quicker communications were to be opened up between Missouri and the upper Columbia Valley, where all the Jesuit Indian missions were located. A smaller residence might be maintained at the Willamette, but a genuinely central residence, whither the missionaries could retire to recuperate, ought to be located at a point really central with reference to the various posts.¹⁴⁷ These views of the General were fully shared by Joset, who in 1849 drew up for him a very neatly tabulated statement lucidly setting forth the pros and cons on the question of continuing the Willamette residence. The cost of maintenance was excessive, one-half the available funds of the mission being swallowed up by this single house. The location was singularly inconvenient, being fifty miles at least up the Willamette so that missionaries from Europe arriving at Fort Vancouver had to pay sixteen dollars or more additional fare to get to it. The residence was in fact in a sort of wilderness with almost no settlers in the neighborhood and, with the Bishop and his clergy also living at St. Paul, there was scant opportunity for the exercise of the ministry. In fact the situation was not such as to edify the laity, who were puzzled to see so many of the clergy gathered together in this out-of-the-way corner. On the other hand it might be difficult to find a purchaser especially as the property was encumbered by what Joset called a "servitude," apparently the right granted the secular clergy by De Smet to cut timber within its limits. As a compromise solution of the problem Joset suggested that some or other father, the superior or procurator of the missions for instance, might winter at the Willamette, the place being vacated during the remainder of the year.¹⁴⁸

On the other hand, the residence and its prospects always found a persistent defender in Father Accolti. Over and over again he represented to the General that with two or three efficient coadjutor-brothers at his service, he could make the Willamette farm yield a substantial revenue, two or three thousand dollars or more. In 1850 he petitioned the General for a "carpenter brother, 3 farmer-brothers and a Father who is a good manager." He was confident that with this help the farm would bring four or five thousand a year. His correspondence all these years touches repeatedly on the superior merits of the Willamette property and the promising outlook of the residence. Thus in a letter of 1850 to the Father General "Mr. Mathi, one of the leading members of the Oceanic Company, is here. He went to visit our Residence of St.

¹⁴⁷ Roothaan à Accolti, August 31, 1846 (AA). Blanchet wrote from Rome to Archbishop Bourget of Montreal, March 27, 1846 "*Le Père General a fort blâmé l'établissement du PP au Willamette*" Montreal Archdiocesan Archives.

¹⁴⁸ Joset à Roothaan, 1849 (AA).

Francis Xavier at the Willamette. He is in the utmost admiration of this establishment, whether on account of its unique position or the fertility of the soil and the improvements made."¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, Accolti like De Smet, whose dreams he inherited, saw in the Willamette property a promising location for a future Jesuit college and novitiate. "This country [of Oregon]," he assured Father Roothaan in May, 1848, "is going to become in a very short time one of the richest and most flourishing [sections] of the Union."¹⁵⁰ To Father Van De Velde he gave this account of the Willamette farm:

I live here in this residence in the quality of procurator of the Missions with two Italian coadjutor-brothers, Savio and Marchetti. We have a property here which is perhaps the best we could possibly possess in all Oregon. Every one who comes here has the same opinion about it. The farm is on such an excellent footing that few things are lacking to make it a superb one. Circumstances do not allow me for the present to draw from it more produce than is necessary for our own support, but it could yield much more with the aid of a few coadjutor-brothers, whom we do not happen to have. As regards the future it would be a highly interesting point for the Society and I believe that our young Jesuit folk of the United States would not regret coming to exercise their zeal in this quarter of the world a trifle remote though it be.¹⁵¹

In the event the residence of St. Francis Xavier failed to realize the hopes of its founder that it would become a general administrative center for the missions of the Pacific Northwest. It lay at too great a distance from the western slope of the Rockies, where the missions were located with the result that difficulties could not fail to be felt in the communication of orders and the transfer of supplies.

In 1852 Accolti, in response to Archbishop Blanchet's solicitations, took up his residence with a coadjutor-brother in Oregon City and there assumed charge of the Catholic parish of that growing town. The change was a wise one for it placed him in a position to handle more effectively as superior the temporal business of the missions. Mengarini with three brothers to care for the farm was left at St. Francis Xavier's. In pursuance of an order of Father Roothaan issued in 1852 the Willamette property was to be sold at the first opportunity and the residence closed. By this time Accolti himself had become disillusioned as to its future usefulness. He wrote to Father Murphy at St. Louis:

According to the disposition of his Paternity and the wishes of our Fathers and mine too, the Residence of St. Francis Xavier will be sold

¹⁴⁹ Accolti à Roothaan, August 18, 1850 (AA)

¹⁵⁰ Accolti à Roothaan, May 1, 1848 (AA)

¹⁵¹ Accolti à Van de Velde, April 29, 1848. (AA).

because it is in such a predicament as to require the employment of a great many persons without any relation to the present (and I think also the future) spiritual benefit of the country Oregon City is the most suitable place for us to attend to exercises which are more conformable to our vocation than husbandry and so benefit our neighbors¹⁵²

A description of the Willamette farm with interesting speculations on Oregon of the future occur in the same letter to Father Murphy

Some three months ago we were bargaining with a wealthy gentleman for the sum of \$22,000. But some misunderstanding having occurred about the terms of payment our bargain was dissolved before being closed. If any gentleman of your acquaintance in the States would make good investment of his money, let him come here with \$20,000 and I will put into his hands the best farm and the best spot that exists in the whole extension of this valley, nay in the whole [of] Oregon. I assure you that there is no humbug at all in what I state. This is the opinion of all persons who have visited the place and—what is of more authority—this is the opinion even of Mr. Preston, the Surveyor General of the Territory, this the opinion of his subservient [assistant] surveyors, who have seen the country from East to West and from North to South. At the end of a broad prairie encompassed by large oak and towering fir-trees, a beautiful two-story house (45 x 35 ft.) lays [*sic*] on a commanding prominence directly sloping and converging in the shape of a magnificent amphitheatre, the arena of which meets in its extremity with a lake of fine water, which bathes the surrounding ever-green shores, about two hundred feet distant from each other, and then with a gentle current empties into the Wallamette River through a rivulet formed by its never deficient waters. The outside walls of the house are of square logs well tied together by mortices and sheltered with weather boards against the intemperies [inclemencies] of the seasons. The whole of the building is distributed into fifteen rooms, of different dimensions according to their destination. The intermediate partitions are of brick and each room is provided with a substantial and comfortable brick chimney. About 200 acres out of 640 of the best land in the territory and giving every year an averaging revenue of \$2500 should be a very good inducement for any husbandman ambitious of growing fat and wealthy. Not only the fields but even almost all the prairies within that claim are secured with good and substantial fences all round against the incursion of strange roving cattle. A large barn of 100 x 50 ft. with thrashing floor of 30 x 30 feet, one of [ms ?] two story granary substantially made with square logs afford all the conveniences which would be wished in a well established farm. Stables for horses and cattle, bakery with brick oven, carpenter and blacksmith shops, and two or three other log houses very convenient for storing in everything. Besides that a thrashing machine, a good fan-mill and every other agricultural instrument. Horses and oxen teams, about ten or twelve first-rate American milking cows. Hogs and pigs of every de-

¹⁵² Accolti to Murphy, November 8, 1852 (A)

scription and of excellent breed. In addition to all this a splendid and large garden constantly irrigated by three or four rivulets springing out from the middle of the impending slope and running down in whatever direction you please. But what gives more value to the place is the vicinity of the River Willamette and the opportunity of sending down the produce by steamer without any inconvenience at all. The Reverend Father De Smet, though he is not entirely acquainted with the improvements therein made subsequently to his departure from this country (as for example large and deep ditches all around the fields made by skilful Irish hands) still he could better than I do, give you a full description of this singular and romantic place . . .

Oregon is now and with more reason in a few years will be the best farming country in the Union. Besides other advantages, the salubrity of its climate will always attract a great many other emigrants from other states, on that account, far inferior to this Territory. The only thing which formerly made problematic the progress and prosperity of its country was the want of a market place for exchanging our produce. But the discovery of gold mines in California has dissipated all doubts about it. San Francisco is and will constantly be open to receive our produce with the most desirable advantages could be wished. I will give you a correct statement of the present market "*per summa capita*" Wheat \$3 00 per bushel, oats, \$1 50, and \$2 00, flour \$10 00 and \$12 00 a hundred lbs, pork 30¢ a lb, beef from 12 to 15cts a lb and so forth. The gold mines of Oregon in addition to those of California increase every day the amount of demands for supplies, so that the industrious farmer will always have a good chance of exchanging his produce with fine gold dust at any rate. Another property of our soil is its aptness for the raising of fruit-trees of every description. I have tasted here apples of such a quality as to compete with the best which could be afforded by our well conducted orchards of Italy. Pears, cherries, peaches, apricots, etc all grow well in this country, and what is more striking is that almost all the fruit trees are raised from seed and not by inoculation, without giving to the fruits that sourness which is observed in other countries. Vines also are of a very luxurious growing. Nevertheless my impression is that, tho' they will supply our tables with delicious grapes, still they will never fill up our tumblers with foaming wine to bring onto our table parties the loquacious jollity of France and Italy.

It took Oregon long to come into its own as one of the great farming states of the Union, but it is interesting to see how its present agricultural development was clearly foreseen and confidently predicted by Father Accolti in the early fifties. As to the Willamette farm, which he extolled in such glowing terms, it was disposed of by the Jesuits before the end of the fifties when the residence of St. Francis Xavier, De Smet and Accolti's dream of a general headquarters for the Rocky Mountain Missions, definitely passed from the scene.

§ 8 THE KALISPEL MISSION OF ST IGNATIUS

The most important of the missions opened by the Society of Jesus among the Rocky Mountain tribes was to be St Ignatius of the Kalispel. The Flathead and Coeur d'Alène posts disappeared in the occupation of the Indian country by the whites, the Kalispel mission still survives to carry on the tradition of Jesuit missionary enterprise and zeal inaugurated by De Smet. In the range of activities carried on from it as a center and in the physical equipment of buildings, lands, and other facilities for prosecuting its work, St Ignatius outdistanced its sister-missions by a wide margin.

The Kalispel are of Salish stock and speak practically the same language as the Flatheads. By the Canadian trappers and traders they were named the Pend d'Oreilles or "Ear-drops"¹⁵³. The Pend d'Oreilles formerly occupied lands along the river and around the lake of the same name, Clark's Fork of the Columbia being also known as the Pend d'Oreille River. Moreover, at the period the missionaries came on the scene, two divisions of the tribe were recognized, the Pend d'Oreilles of the Upper Lake (Flathead) and those of the Lower Lake (Pend d'Oreille) or simply the Upper and Lower Pend d'Oreilles. The last named group is the one described in De Smet's letters as the Kalispel of the Bay, the term Bay being applied to an extensive prairie lying on the north side of the Pend d'Oreille River about thirty or forty miles above its junction with the Columbia. Together the Upper and Lower Kalispel numbered about a thousand souls.

De Smet's first meeting with the tribe was in the autumn of 1841 on his first journey to Fort Colville. He found them already instructed a little in a religious way through the initiative of a young Kalispel who had met him on his first trip to the Flatheads in 1840 and had learned from him a few prayers and points of Catholic doctrine.¹⁵⁴ Further instruction was now imparted, twenty-seven children were baptized and hopes held out to the Kalispel of soon receiving a resident priest. The remarkable thing about all the mountain tribes was their readiness from the beginning to accept the teaching of the missionaries. In the spring of 1842 De Smet while on his way from the Flatheads to Fort Vancouver again came in contact with the Kalispel. He found them still persevering in their good dispositions of the pre-

¹⁵³ Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*, 1 647, art "Kalispel"

¹⁵⁴ CR, *De Smet*, 1 346. The first priest among the Pend d'Oreilles was Father Demers, who addressed a letter to De Smet from a Pend d'Oreille camp, August 6, 1840. CR, *De Smet*, 4 1551. Demers's visit to the tribe antedated any contact made with it by De Smet.

ceding autumn and baptized sixty adults¹⁵⁵ Finally, he met them for a third time in November, 1844, at which juncture Adrian Hoecken was already installed as resident priest of the Kalispel The outlook for the tribe was most encouraging, Hoecken giving a flattering account of the tribe as material for the missionaries to work upon. This sturdy Hollander now in his fortieth year was taking his first steps in what was to be a long and distinguished missionary career. He came of a family which had the distinction of giving seven of its members to the service of the Church His brother, Christian, like himself a Jesuit of the vice-province of Missouri, was at the moment resident missionary among the Kansas Potawatomi, in which capacity he displayed an efficiency and zeal that make his name a notable one in the history of that tribe Adrian Hoecken's years in the mountains were almost entirely spent with the Kalispel He was the Kalispel missionary *par excellence* He shaped the destinies of the first St Ignatius as superior all the years it was maintained and moved with the Indians to the second and greater St Ignatius in western Montana, of which he may be reckoned the founder One must even call him founder of the first St Ignatius unless the credit of having been such is to go to De Smet himself

De Smet's stay with the Kalispel on the occasion of his visit of November, 1844, was brief for he was eager to return to the Flatheads before the winter set in He proceeded up Clark's Fork by canoe but the ice soon began to gather in the river, making further navigation impossible, and he was forced to return to the Kalispel, with whom he spent the winter of 1844-1845 Christmas day was kept by the Indians with noteworthy demonstrations of religious fervor¹⁵⁶

At the beginning of February, 1845, Father De Smet set out from the Kalispel camp to renew the attempt made in the preceding November to reach St Mary's Mission Arriving among his beloved Flatheads, he had the happiness of celebrating with them the solemnity of Easter, on which day he administered holy communion to the greater part of the tribe Moreover, three hundred Upper Kalispel, the greater part of them adults, belonging to the station of St Francis Borgia, received the sacrament of baptism¹⁵⁷ Meanwhile the Kalispel of the Bay were anxiously awaiting De Smet's return Accordingly, shortly after Easter, as the snow was fast disappearing from the ground,

¹⁵⁵ CR, *De Smet*, I 370 For the attitude of the missionaries in regard to Indian baptisms, cf *infra*, Chap XXVI, § 1, note 13, § 5 Adults were not baptized without a reasonable measure of instruction

¹⁵⁶ *Idem*, 2 468

¹⁵⁷ *Idem*, 2 472 The station of St Francis Borgia among the Upper Pend d'Oreilles was on the left side of the Flathead River (Clark's Fork) some miles below Flathead Lake.

he began the descent of Clark's Fork in a frail canoe guided by two Indians. In a few days, such was the impetuosity of the current, he was back again with the Kalispel. One feature of the so-called Bay or Prairie where they resided was a large-sized grotto, to which De Smet gave the name of New Manresa, in memory of the famous cave in Spain in which Ignatius Loyola spent the first days of his conversion in prayer and penitential exercises. The grotto, so De Smet was at pains to note, could be fitted up at small expense for a church. Immediately on his return to the Bay, he set about in company with Adrian Hoecken and some of the chiefs examining the locality with a view to choosing a permanent site for the mission. "We found a vast and beautiful prairie, three miles in extent, surrounded by cedar and pine, in the neighborhood of the cavern of New Manresa and its quarries and a fall of water of more than two hundred feet, presenting every advantage for the erection of mills. I felled the first tree and after having taken all necessary measures to expedite the work, I departed for Walla Walla, where I embarked in a small boat and descended the Columbia as far as Fort Vancouver" ¹⁵⁸

The Indians began at once to build at the place designated for the mission and to open fields. On Ascension Day, 1845, Hoecken administered baptism to more than a hundred adults. When De Smet revisited the Kalispel the following July, he found they had already put up fourteen log houses, besides a large barn, had the timber prepared for a church and had upward of three hundred acres in grain enclosed by a substantial fence. The whole village, men, women and children, had worked most cheerfully. "I counted thirty head of horned cattle—the squaws had learned to milk the cows and to churn, they had a few hogs and some domestic fowls. The number of Christians had doubled since Christmas, 1844" ¹⁵⁹

The first farming operations at St. Ignatius met with reverses that augured badly for the future, but the Indians were plucky and persevering and in the long run they achieved a considerable measure of success ¹⁶⁰. Even before the missionaries arrived they had learned the

¹⁵⁸ CR, *De Smet*, 2 474. The site of the first St. Ignatius Mission was on the right bank of Clark's Fork of the Columbia "some forty miles below Lake Pend d'Oreille." Charles W. Frush, "A Trip from the Dalles of the Columbia in Oregon to Fort Owen, Bitter Root Valley, Montana, in the spring of 1858," in *Montana Hist. Coll.*, 2 341. "The usual place of residence of the Kalispels—that in which the Reduction of St. Ignatius is now established—is an extensive prairie called the Bay of the Kalispels, thirty or forty miles above the mouth of Clark or Flathead River." CR, *De Smet*, 2 461. The mission-site was a short distance west of the eastern boundary-line of Washington.

¹⁵⁹ CR, *De Smet*, 2 471.

¹⁶⁰ The following account of the initial efforts of the Kalispel in farming is

art of raising potatoes, which they did in common fields and not in plots individually owned¹⁶¹ The plan worked so well that the missionaries on their arrival made no attempt to change it, the larger fields which were now laid out were regarded as tribal property and were worked by all hands together. In many cases individuals who had started to farm on their own account gave up this plan and went to work in the common fields The first crops were sown in the spring of 1845 Then came unusually high water inundating the fields, the potatoes were lost, but the wheat and barley were saved though the harvest was barely enough to provide seed for the following year. "Far from being discouraged, they showed themselves ready to begin over again with fresh ardor, at the first word from the Father they undertook to surround with fences a space at least ten times more extensive than the first field" In 1846 more than a hundred acres were sown Again there was high water and a good part of the fields was reduced to the condition of a marsh The animals and the young Indian workers sank knee-deep in the mud while in the flooded section two plows were in constant use for fifteen days, the Indians behind them keeping up their courage all the time with song "Our countrymen in Europe," relates Father Joset, "will take in hand more painful tasks, but never on a more miserable diet Summer floods had deprived them [the Indians] of roots and a snowless winter had not given them a single deer so that to support the fatigue to which they were in no wise accustomed they were reduced to pine-moss cooked with a little *gamache*, a meal of which no beggar would care to taste" If the following year should also be one of high water, the Indians' patience, so Joset believed, would be taxed beyond endurance Lake Roothaan (Priest's Lake) did indeed begin to rise that year and, with it, its outlet, Priest's River The Indians had recourse to prayer Every Saturday Mass was said and the litanies were chanted to secure the Virgin Mother's protection Prayer had its answer and the mission fields were left undamaged by the water Then, taking a leaf from past experience, the Indians broke ground for a new field on the hillside near the village "What a joy for our dear neophytes," exclaims Joset, "to look down from the top of their hill on the fruits of their labor and to see it prosper and promise a more and more abundant harvest" But a barn for stacking the crops was still lacking Father Hoecken was reluctant to ask the Indians to do any further work as they were worn with

based on Joset's *Memoire sur Les Missions Catholiques de la Haute Columbia*, 31 pp., 1847 (Ms) (AA)

¹⁶¹ "They had already taken a step toward the civilized life by attempting the cultivation of potatoes They offered me [De Smet] some, which were the first I had seen since I left the United States" CR, *De Smet*, I 347

previous labor and underfed. But Brother McGean with Hoecken's permission made an appeal to them. The response was instant. In fifteen days the Indians had raised a barn more than a hundred feet in length and after a like interval of time the roof was on.

Some went of their own accord to the top of the mountain to cut, saw and split the timber for the shingles. Others brought them in on their own horses. The chief himself with some others cut them into shape and put them into place on the new building. In fifteen days everything was finished. Best of all, in spite of pressing hunger they performed this task amid songs and shouts of continual joy.

Then came the harvest, a season of enjoyment everywhere. But the missionary was not without disquiet. He had only a very small number of families. Some of the Indians seeing such a quantity of grain to cut began to lose heart, "you won't finish before the winter," they said. But the chief, who knew his people, believed it would be finished in a month. Now the grain was ripe and had to be garnered without delay. Everyone set to work. All sorts of cutting instruments were made use of. Some, unable to procure themselves a knife or something of the sort, pulled the grain up with much effort and fatigue. The Brother made himself a sort of wagon, segments from a big tree serving as wheels. He had hard work carrying off the grain as fast as they cut it. His aids were the children too small to engage in the harvest. If any one of their number was too lazy to help of a morning to search for the oxen, he was deprived that day of the honor of getting on top of the jolting vehicle. This was stimulus enough to stir them all. In fewer than fifteen days the harvest was finished and they began thereupon to enjoy the fruit of their labors.

With the plentiful crops now secure, famine was at an end. At the chief's suggestion the grain was threshed by the young men and winnowed by the women. In addition to bread, meat would likewise be at hand in abundance as fifteen hundred dead deer had been brought in by the Indians. It would no longer be necessary for the Indians to live on moss, "the excess of misery," as Joset described it, nor would the missionary have to undergo the torture of listening to the cries of hungry babes with no means in his power to relieve them. Thus the summer of 1847 proved a turning-point in the economic status of the Kalispel.

The mission buildings, as they appeared in the spring of 1849, are described by Father Hoecken. The church, begun in 1847 and still unfinished, was of square logs and measured sixty-five by thirty-five feet with walls twenty feet high. The Indians were immensely pleased, for them the rude structure was a St. Peter's. If it were only finished and furnished, it would not be out of place among the whites. "I have seen many a church in the States by no means preferable to it." A three-

section wooden house built in 1845 contained kitchen, dormitory, refectory and an office where the Indians could meet and transact their affairs with the missionary. There was a second house with quarters for the superior of the mission, "poor but not unbecoming." Also, a carpenter-shop, a barn built in 1846 with the generous dimensions of one hundred and four feet by twenty, and a stable thirty by twenty-five. "The lands of these Indians are all sterile and little suited to farming, moreover the prairie is exposed to floods in May and June. God has indeed blessed our labor. No mission has produced such crops of grain as ours, though it is the last in point of time. This is admitted by Rev. Father Superior [Joset] and the Brothers agree." The mission stood under the shadow of a hill or bluff. Joset was fearful that some day the hill would slip from position and wreck the buildings, but Hoecken thought the apprehension groundless as the hill appeared to him as firm as rock. An unpleasant feature was the severe winters, more trying than those among the Coeur d'Alènes. While Hoecken wrote, March 22, there were ten feet of snow on the ground. Ordinarily all farming operations were restricted to April and May. It was useless to do any sowing in the fall. In fine, a better site for the mission seemed desirable, but none such was available in the Kalispel country.¹⁶²

In 1853, the year before this pioneer outpost of civilization in eastern Washington was moved to what is now western Montana, Dr. George Suckley, an army surgeon with Governor Stevens's exploring expedition, sought hospitality at its doors, leaving on record in the pages of a government report an informing picture of what he saw. Though his account embraces some details already set before the reader, it is here reproduced, as it makes plain what had been accomplished at the first Kalispel mission-post during the ten years it was maintained. Governor Stevens in introducing the account in his report (1855) to President Pierce comments "It would be difficult to find a more beautiful example of successful missionary labors." Dr. Suckley wrote

[Nov. 25, 1853] I walked up to the door of the mission-house, knocked and entered. I was met by the reverend Superior of the Mission, Father Hoecken, who in a truly benevolent and pleasing manner said "walk in, you are welcome we are glad to see the face of a white man." I introduced myself and the men and stated that I had come all the way from St. Marys by water after a journey or rather voyage of twenty-five days, that I was out of provisions and tired. He bade me welcome, had our things brought up from the boat, an excellent dinner prepared for us and a nice room to sleep in and treated us with the cordiality and kindness of a Christian and

¹⁶² Hoecken ad Roothaan, March 25, 1849 (AA).

a gentleman In these kindnesses the Reverend Father Mennetree [Mene-trey] and the lay-brother, Mr Magean [McGean] cordially took part—all uniting in their endeavors to render us comfortable and make us feel at home

When they came the country was one vast wilderness The missionaries found it hard to live Their food consisted principally of camas roots and dried berries, which at best contained but very little nourishment They raised some wheat which they boiled in the beard for fear of waste—parching some of the grain to make a substitute for coffee After this they slowly but steadily year by year increased in welfare Each year added a small piece to their tillable ground They then obtained pigs, poultry, cattle, horses, agricultural implements and tools Their supplies of tools, seeds, groceries, clothing, etc are shipped direct from Europe to the Columbia River There are two lay-brethren attached to the mission One of them Brother Francis [Huybrechts] is a perfect jack of all trades He is by turns a carpenter, blacksmith, gunsmith and tinman—in each of which he is a good workman The other, Brother Magean [McGean], superintends the farming operations They both worked hard in bringing the mission to its present state of perfection, building successively a wind-mill, blacksmith and carpenter's shops, barns, cow-sheds, etc, besides an excellent chapel in addition to a large dwelling house of hewn timber for the missionaries The church is quite large and is tastefully and even beautifully decorated I was shown the handsomely carved and gilded altar, the statue of "Our Mother," brazen crosses and rich, bronzed fonts, work which at sight appears so well executed as to lead one to suppose that they have all been imported But no, they are the result of the patient labor and ingenuity of the devoted missionaries, and work which is at the same time rich, substantial and beautiful Works of ornament are not their only deeds A grindstone, hewn out of the native rock, and moulded by the same hand which made the chisel which wrought it, a blacksmith's shop, bellows, ploughshares, bricks for their chimneys, their own tobacco-pipes turned with the lathe out of wood and lined with tin—all have been made by their industry In household economy they are not excelled They make their own soap, candles, vinegar, etc and it is both interesting and amusing to listen to the accounts of their plans, shifts and turns in overcoming obstacles at their first attempts, their repeated failures, their final triumphs The present condition of the mission is as follows Bldgs—the house, a good substantial, comfortable edifice, the chapel, a bldg sufficiently large to accomodate the whole Kalispel nation, a small bldg is attached to the dwelling-house—it contains a couple of sleeping rooms and a workshop, a blacksmith's shop and a store-room for the natives These are all built of square or hewn lumber Besides these are a number of smaller outbuildings built of logs for the accomodation of their horses and cattle during the winter and an excellent root-house The mission-farm consists of about one hundred and sixty acres of cleared land Wheat (spring), barley, onions, cabbage, parsnips, peas, beets, potatoes and carrots are the principal products The Indians are especially fond of carrots Father Hoecken says that if the children see carrots growing they must eat some Says he, "I must shut my eyes to the theft because they cannot, cannot resist the temptation" The Indians are

very fond of peas and cabbage, but beets and particularly onions they dislike. The other production of the farm are cattle, hogs, poultry, butter and cheese. Around the mission-buildings are the houses of the natives. They are built of logs and hewn timber and are sixteen in number. There are also quite a number of mat and skin lodges. Although the tribe is emphatically a wandering tribe, yet the mission and its vicinity is looked upon as headquarters. To Lake Roothaan long celebrated for the superior quality and the vast number of its beaver they go to catch the latter animal and to hunt deer.¹⁶³

The circumstances which led to the transfer of the Kalispel Mission of St. Ignatius from Clark's Fork to the neighborhood of Flathead Lake in the Upper Pend d'Oreille country are nowhere clearly set forth in the missionary records and correspondence. At all events the first location was quite undesirable, as already pointed out. It was poor farming land and even at that subject to frequent inundations, besides, a more central position with reference to the other mountain tribes was needed. The Indians themselves petitioned for the removal of the mission to a site which they had selected as meeting their wishes and which fell within the limits afterwards laid out for the Jocko reservation in western Montana. This country, the habitat of the Upper Kalispel, was, says Palladino, "a favorite resort of other tribes winter and summer, since it abounded in game, fish, roots and berries, the staples of Indian life, and furnished the best grazing for their ponies."¹⁶⁴ Later the Flatheads of St. Mary's Valley were removed to the Jocko, where in addition to the Pend d'Oreilles, Upper and Lower, were also gathered many bands of the Kutenai. These three tribes, all of Salish stock and speaking the same language with slight variations, formed in fact a confederacy and as such were dealt with by Governor Stevens in the Hell-Gate treaty of 1855, which Father Hoecken signed as witness. Thus the new St. Ignatius became the permanent rendezvous of three of the five principal tribes among whom De Smet had initiated his missionary program, the Coeur d'Alènes and the Kettle Falls Indians still clinging to their old homes. In a letter addressed to De Smet the Kalispel missionary, Adrian Hoecken, relates the founding of the new St. Ignatius.

It was proposed, during the summer of 1854, to begin a new mission about 190 miles northeast of the Kalispels, not far from the Flathead lake, about fifty miles from the old mission of St. Mary's, among the Flatheads, where a convenient site had been pointed out to us by the Kalispel chief, Alexander, your old friend, who often accompanied you [De Smet] in your travels in the Rocky Mountains. Having set out from the Kalispel Mission on

¹⁶³ U S 33rd Cong 1st Sess, House Executive Document, no 129, p. 278

¹⁶⁴ Palladino, *op cit*, p 68

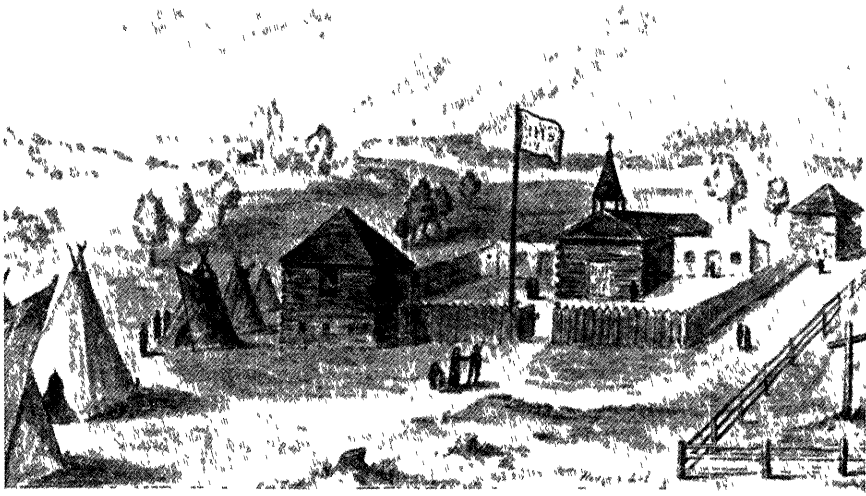
the 28th of August, 1854, I arrived at the place designated on the 24th of September, and found it such as it had been represented—a beautiful region, evidently fertile, uniting a useful as well as pleasing variety of woodland and prairie, lake and river—the whole crowned in the distance by the white summit of the mountains, and sufficiently rich withal in fish and game I shall never forget the emotions of hope and fear that filled my heart, when for the first time I celebrated mass in this lonely spot, in the open air, in the presence of a numerous band of Kalispels, who looked up to me, under God, for their temporal and spiritual welfare in this new home The place was utterly uninhabited—several bands of Indians live within a few days travel, whom you formerly visited, and where you baptized many, while others still remain pagan I was in hope of gathering these around me, and God has been pleased to bless an undertaking begun for his glory, even beyond my expectation In a few weeks we had erected several frame buildings, a chapel, two houses, carpenter's and blacksmith's shops, wigwams had sprung up at the same time all around in considerable numbers, and morning and evening you might still have heard the sound of the axe and the hammer, and have seen newcomers rudely putting together lodges

About Easter of this year over 1,000 Indians of different tribes, from the Upper Kootenas and Flat-Bow Indians, Pend d'Oreilles, Flatheads, and Mountain Kalispels, who had arrived in succession during the winter, when they heard of the arrival of the long-desired Black-gown, made this place their permanent residence All these Indians have manifested the best dispositions Besides a large number of children baptized in the course of the year, I have had the happiness to baptize, before Christmas and Easter, upwards of 150 adults of the Kootenai tribe, men of great docility and artlessness of character, who told me that ever since you had been among them, some years ago, they had abandoned the practice of gambling and other vices, and cherished the hope of being instructed one day in the religion of the Great Spirit

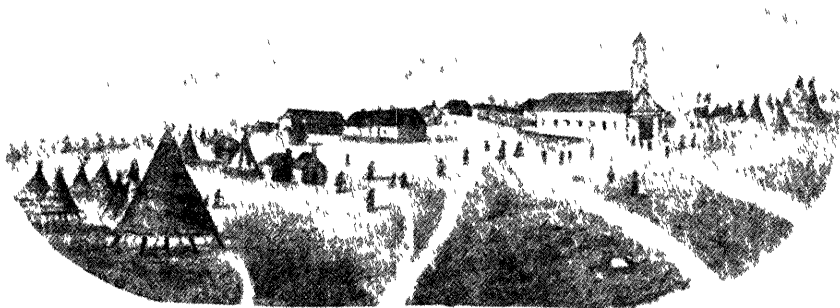
By the beginning of spring, our good Brother McGean had cut some 18,000 rails, and placed under cultivation a large field, which promises to yield a very plentiful harvest Lieutenant Mullan, who spent the winter among the Flatheads of St Mary's, has procured for me much valuable aid in founding this mission, and has all along taken a lively interest in its prosperity I know not how to acquit the debt of gratitude I owe this most excellent officer, and I can only pray, poor missionary as I am, that the Lord may repay his generosity and kindness a hundredfold in blessings of time and eternity ¹⁶⁵

Father Hoecken's connection with St Ignatius terminated in 1858 when he was commissioned to start a mission among the Blackfeet on the east side of the Rockies As to the net results of the work carried on at the second St. Ignatius for the religious and economic uplift of the Kalispel Indians, testimony on the subject was rendered on the floor of the United States Senate in 1884 by Senator Vest of Missouri

¹⁶⁵ CR, *De Smet*, 4 1232



St. Mary's Mission Opened in 1841 among the Flatheads of the Bitter Root Valley, western Montana. Oldest Catholic Indian mission of the Pacific Northwest. Sketch by Hastings in the Linton Album Archives of the Missouri Province, S. J., St. Louis.



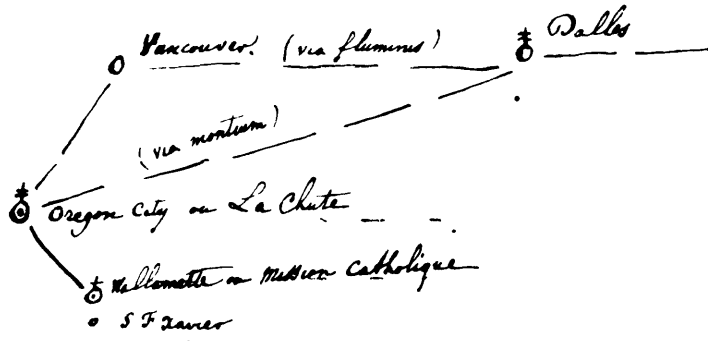
St. Ignace Mission among the Kalispel. Second site, western Montana, 1854. Sketch in the Linton Album Archives of the Missouri Province, S. J., St. Louis.

Chaque trait répond à une journée
 commune, comme on les fait avec
 des chevaux de charge en bon état,
 c'est à dire 35 à 40 milles sur de bons
 chemins

N'ayant jamais été à S Joseph, je
 ne puis guère en donner la position,
 ni la distance depuis S Paul on dit
 qu'en été on fait cette route en 6 jours

Quoique la distance de S^{te} Marie à
 S Coeur ne soit pas grande géographi-
 quement, on ne peut guère s'y rendre
 en moins de huit jours, à cause des
 mauvais chemins on a compte 72
 passages de rivières dont quelques uns
 ne sont guérables qu'en automne et
 vers la fin de l'été. Après avoir
 fait ce trajet, les chevaux ont
 communément besoin de repos,
 ayant les pieds usés

O.



The Rocky Mountain Missions, 1849 Sketch-map by Joseph Joset, S J "Each dash good roads, i.e. 35 to 40 miles" Joset à Roothaan, February 5, 1849 General

70.

† S Joseph ou Prairie d'opuntia

† S Paul, ou Collette ou les Chaudieres

SS Regis † - - † S Ignace

† S Cocur

† S^{te} Marie

S.

— — — ○ Willawalla

S.

represents an ordinary day's journey made with pack-horses in good condition by Archives of the Society of Jesus, Rome.



A Point drawing of the Coeur d'Alène Mission From De Smet's *Oregon Missions* (New York, 1847)

He spoke, as he said, as a Protestant and, so he hoped, as a representative Protestant, who simply had to accept results, and these results, as he witnessed them with his own eyes on a personal visit to the Jesuit missions of Montana, were of a nature to convince him that "the Jesuits had the key to the whole problem of Indian education" ¹⁶⁶

§ 9 THE COEUR D'ALÈNE MISSION OF THE SACRED HEART

Of the Rocky Mountain tribes evangelized by De Smet and his associates, the Coeur d'Alènes have often been pointed out as an especially typical instance of what Christian influence can accomplish for the moral and material improvement of the Indian. When the Jesuits first came among them, the tribe had an unenviable reputation not only among the whites but among other Indian tribes as well. According to Father Joset this was so much the case that no white man had ever settled among them and hence it was impossible to find an interpreter to help one deal with the Coeur d'Alènes in their own language ¹⁶⁷. The mission started on their behalf was only eleven years old when Governor Isaac Stevens on a visit to it in 1853 found the tribe so far advanced in a moral and economic way that he was led to embody in his report a detailed account of the improvements which he saw. "And all this," comments Mooney, the ethnologist, "two thousand miles from the frontier town of St. Louis" ¹⁶⁸

The Coeur d'Alènes were a mere handful, not numbering more than four or five hundred at the time the missionaries came among them. Their habitat was about the lake and along the river of the same name in northern Idaho. They are of Salish stock and call themselves Swiktish or Switswish, and not Coeur d'Alènes, which was in its origin an opprobrious nick-name. Joset declares that before the missionary period they were living a merely animal life. "What in effect could you expect from a people among whom every notion of God, every tradition had been effaced. It was a common saying that courage and generosity were not the portion of the Coeur d'Alènes. All who have had dealings with them are one in saying that the first French or Canadians who made their acquaintance and who gave them this name could not have found a more suitable one. Coeur d'Alène, heart as big as an awl, to signify the absence of all elevated, noble and generous sentiments" ¹⁶⁹

The Coeur d'Alènes made their first entrance into recorded history

¹⁶⁶ Palladino, *op cit*, p. 152

¹⁶⁷ Joset, *Quelques remarques sur les sauvages et en particulier sur les coeurs d'Alène*, 31 pp., 1845 (Ms) (AA)

¹⁶⁸ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, art. "Coeur d'Alènes"

¹⁶⁹ Joset, *Quelques remarques sur les sauvages, etc*

in the journals of the Lewis and Clark expedition, by which they were found living in communal houses along the shores of Coeur d'Alène Lake (1805). Their first notions of Christianity were derived, if Joset's account be correct, not from Catholic but from Protestant sources¹⁷⁰ In 1826 a party of three Indian youths, a Nez Percé, a Spokane and a Coeur d'Alène, travelled to the Red River settlement in the present Manitoba and lived there for some time, meanwhile receiving instruction from Protestant clergymen of the place in fundamental Christian truths The Coeur d'Alène died at the Red River, while the two others returned to their tribesmen. The Spokane was especially zealous in communicating his new-found knowledge and many even of the Coeur d'Alènes were drawn to listen to him. When news of the arrival of the black-robos among the Flatheads reached the Coeur d'Alènes, they forthwith dispatched messengers to St Mary's petitioning to be allowed to share their ministry.

De Smet, grasping in the beginning at every opening for missionary work among the mountain tribes that presented itself, was among the Coeur d'Alènes as early as the spring of 1842 when he spent three days in their village, instructing and baptizing All the children and twenty-four adults, all the infirm and aged, received the sacrament of regeneration¹⁷¹ De Smet draws a highly colored picture of the happy dispositions manifested by the Coeur d'Alènes on this occasion, a picture which Joset discounts somewhat, saying his fellow missionary was imposed upon by the chief, Stellam, whom he describes as a "consummate knave." However, the tribe did seem sincerely eager for a missionary, especially on the occasion of De Smet's second visit to it, July, 1842, on his return journey from Fort Vancouver¹⁷² As a result, before his return to St. Louis the following fall, he gave orders for the opening of a residence on their lands Father Nicholas Point and Brother Charles Huet were commissioned for the work

"At the close of the hunting expeditions of the autumn of 1842," Father Point narrates, "I left St Mary's to place the new converts under the protection of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The same day I entered their territory, I made with three chiefs who came to seek me, the promised consecration [to the Sacred Heart] and on the first Friday of December in the midst of chants and prayers, the cross was raised on the borders of a lake where the poor savages had united for fishing Thanks be to God we can say that the miraculous draught of St Peter was spiritually renewed" In the spring of 1843, a village was laid out on the plan of the Jesuit reductions of Paraguay "Trees

¹⁷⁰ *Idem*

¹⁷¹ CR, *De Smet*, I 374

¹⁷² CR, *De Smet*, I 390

were felled, roads opened, a church erected and the public fields were sown, and thanks to the piety of our savages, Holy Week, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost were celebrated with becoming solemnity" Soon two-thirds of the Coeur d'Alènes had been baptized and their moral transformation was astonishing "From the 9th of September to the time in which I write [March, 1845]—a period of six months—not one single fault which can be called serious, so far as my knowledge extends, has been committed in the village of the Sacred Heart of Jesus" ¹⁷³

The first Coeur d'Alène mission was located on the north bank of the St. Joe River, about one mile from the southern end of Lake Coeur d'Alène ¹⁷⁴ The site seems to have been badly chosen Very attractive in the fall, in the winter it lay largely under water, the lake backing up in the flood-season. In 1846 a new location was found on the banks of the Coeur d'Alène River, at a place known as Cataldo or Old Mission (Skoot-Loty), thirty miles from the foot of the Coeur d'Alène Mountains and ten miles from the lake of the same name ¹⁷⁵ The mission was later, 1880, moved to its present site known as De Smet on Hangman's Creek in Benewah County, Idaho

From Father Point's account of the beginning of the mission one might conclude that the Coeur d'Alènes had been suddenly transformed into angels and that the missionaries met with no difficulty whatever in dealing with them As a matter of fact, the change for the better which took place in them after their conversion was a gradual one, extending over years, though, considering the substantial results achieved in the end, the years were surprisingly few The mission had scarcely been opened when the ambitions of certain self-seekers, conspicuous among them the chief Stellam, succeeded in breeding discontent among the Indians. The first question put to Point by Stellam on his arrival among the Coeur d'Alènes was, "How much tobacco have you

¹⁷³ De Smet, *Oregon Missions*, pp 278-281, De Smet à Roothaan, October, 1845 (AA)

¹⁷⁴ C J Brosnan, *History of the State of Idaho* (New York, 1918), p 77. "St Joe river owes its name to that first Catholic Mission" *An Illustrated History of North Idaho, etc*, 1903, p 756 George Weibel, S J. (*Gonzaga Quarterly* [Gonzaga University, Spokane], 16 80) states that the first Coeur d'Alene Mission was "on the St Joe River near St Maries, Idaho" Bancroft, *Hist Wash, Idaho and Mont*, p 604, gives the site as ten miles above Coeur d'Alène Lake Cf also for an account of the physical setting of the first Coeur d'Alène Mission, Mullan, *Report on the Construction of a Military Road from Fort Walla Walla to Fort Benton* (Washington, 1863)

¹⁷⁵ Stevens's above-cited report (*supra*, note 163), p 91 "The mission was on the opposite side of the Coeur d'Alene River from what is now known as Cataldo" *An Illustrated History of North Idaho, etc*, p 756

brought us?" A year later Point was embroiled in trouble with the tribe to such an extent that Adrian Hoecken was sent to support him, arriving at the mission in November, 1843. He remained at the post until September of the following year. To bring the Indians to their senses they were threatened with a suspension of the mission. "As almost all are sincerely attached to Religion the threat had its effect. They showed themselves as well disposed as we could wish."

On November 16, 1845, Father Joset arrived among the Coeur d'Alènes from St. Mary's after a three weeks' journey, of which he penned a graphic account. He describes his new home as "at the end of the world amid a labyrinth of mountains, forests, lakes and rivers."¹⁷⁶ More than any other of his confrères this Swiss Jesuit was to identify himself with the mission of the Pointed Hearts.¹⁷⁷ Letters and memoirs from his pen are replete with first-hand and important data on every aspect, religious and cultural, of Coeur d'Alène life and constitute the most authentic Jesuit source of information available on the subject. The Coeur d'Alènes were his favorite tribe. While in charge of the Rocky Mountain Missions in succession to De Smet, he resided among them as local superior. This circumstance gave rise to complaint that he was favoring this mission at the expense of the others. He wrote on this head to Father Roothaan, February 5, 1849. "Certainly I cannot deny that I am particularly in love with this people, whom alone it was given to me to evangelize, whose language is the only one I know and among whom I have experienced in a measure the cross of the Lord, but that I was unjust towards the other missions and favored this one whether as regards equipment or personnel, I take to be untrue."

In 1847-1848 the Coeur d'Alènes were again restless and recalcitrant. The old chief, timid and irresolute, was apparently encouraging them in their opposition to the missionaries. Joset thereupon served notice upon them that he would have to withdraw. "The Indians," writes Father Gazzoli, "begged him with prayers and tears [to remain],

¹⁷⁶ *Ann Prop*, 18 504.

¹⁷⁷ The Coeur d'Alènes are usually designated as such in the De Smet and Point letters. "As to the curious French name Coeur d'Alene, meaning literally 'heart of awl', and figuratively pointed-heart, i.e., small hearted, stingy, etc., various legends are current, all to be rejected on general principles. See Symons' Report, 1882, p. 127, citing A. N. Armstrong, 1856, and Ross Cox, 1832. Were I to add to the stock of stories I should compare the phrase with Crevecoeur and various other geographical names which commemorate French history in the West. Very likely some persons in the locality went hungry till not only were their bellies pinched as in a vise, but their hearts were pierced with sorrow as with an awl." Elliott Coues (ed.), *History of the Expedition under the Command of Lewis and Clark* (New York, 1893), 3 991.

The dismissal of the old chief was decreed by unanimous agreement."¹⁷⁸ A new chief was elected and "things from now on put on a new aspect. The number of Indians gathered together at the mission increased (this year more than 300)" In 1851 Father Gazzoli, who had been among the Coeur d'Alènes since 1847, succeeded Joset as head of the mission. He reported April 6, 1851, that their "moral and religious condition was fairly good (*sai bona*)"¹⁷⁹ Three weeks later Father Vercruysse was writing to the General "Father Hoecken says 'I think the Coeur d'Alènes are the best instructed (of the tribes) in the matter of religion They were the most intractable nation of all. Since the Fathers have been among them, they are entirely changed.'¹⁸⁰

The frontier is a thing of the past, but its glamor and romance, despite unpleasant realities that went along with it, still grip the imagination Point, Joset and their confrères were really not on the first line of the frontier, that was some two thousand miles behind them, along the Missouri border Between them and the actual frontier of the day were the vast reaches of what was dubbed the American desert and six or eight months of distressful journeying. Below them, isolated as they were in the almost inaccessible fastnesses of the Coeur d'Alène country, civilization came nearest in the posts of the Hudson's Bay Company and in the settlements of the Willamette But to arrive at these latter and especially to thread the labyrinth of mountain passes and waterways that separated one Jesuit mission from another was a business that taxed both time and patience to the utmost. Where the trail was good, pack-animals might make some thirty-five or forty miles a day. From the Flatheads to the second Coeur d'Alène Mission was not a great distance in geographical miles, but one could scarcely cover it in fewer than eight days, so bad and broken were the communications Between the two posts seventy-two river crossings might be counted, some of them scarcely fordable except towards the end of summer and in the fall After such a trip the horses' hoofs were completely worn out. Between the second Coeur d'Alène Mission and the second St. Ignatius, there were some eighty river crossings, and the route was open only for a few months a year Winter regularly brought deep snows in the Coeur d'Alène country so that there was no journeying at all on horse at this season Then came the spring thaws with swollen streams and torrential currents From November to June there was no

¹⁷⁸ Gazzoli à Roothaan, March 18, 1848 (AA)

¹⁷⁹ Gazzoli ad Roothaan, April 6, 1851 (AA) Superiors of the Coeur d'Alene Mission during the period 1842-1851 were Point, 1842-1845, Joset, 1845-1847, De Vos, 1847-1848, Joset, 1848-1851

¹⁸⁰ Vercruysse à Roothaan, April 25, 1851 (AA)

direct communication at all between the Coeur d'Alène and St Ignatius. In July wagons sometimes got through, but the passage was difficult except for the rider on horseback. From the Coeur d'Alène to the first St. Ignatius the distance was four days, two days beyond the latter in a northerly direction brought one to Fort Colville and the St. Paul Mission and two days in a westerly direction to St Regis. From the second Coeur d'Alène Mission near Cataldo to Fort Walla Walla, about two hundred miles, one was on the way six days. From the latter fort to Fort Vancouver was seven days more. When steamboats appeared on the Columbia, only two days separated Forts Vancouver and Walla Walla. According to Joset's outline map of 1849 there were just twenty-four days of travelling between St Mary's and sixteen between the Sacred Heart and De Smet's projected general headquarters of the missions at St Francis Xavier on the Willamette. Lieutenant Mullan's wagon road across the Rockies laid out in the fifties over the old Indian trail between Forts Benton and Walla Walla passed by the second Coeur d'Alène Mission and put it in communication, not easy, however, between East and West. But it also robbed the mission of its "splendid isolation" and made it no longer possible for the missionaries of the day to say as Father Gazzoli had said in 1851 "I prefer this mission to the others on account of this very difficulty of access, which preserves my Indians from many a danger."^{180a}

^{180a} "Lieut Mullan sends his best respects to your Reverence. He is at present in his winter quarters at Hell's Gate. The famous wagon road from Walla Walla to Fort Benton passes at the foot of Coeur d'Alene Mission and it is already opened as far as bitter root river. I call it a road because they call it so. Your reverence may judge of its goodness from the following fact, which happened last October. Mr Friedman of Walla Walla left Walla Walla at the beginning of October for St Mary's valley with a train of 30 or 40 pack mules, with the intention of opening a store at St Mary's. He arrived safely at the Mission [Coeur d'Alène], but when he came to the Coeur d'Alene divide, 35 miles about from the Mission, the poor man made a total, I was saying *shipwreck*, but I will call it mulewreck and lost animals, goods and everything he had except his own life and that of his packers. I do not know as yet the particulars nor the precise place where this accident happened. Your Reverence who has seen the place and passed it will not be astonished at all. Were we not nearly lost ourselves on that very spot? Do you remember yet our two famous sixteen-hours mountain crossing and the amusing way we and our horses came down the Coeur d'Alene mountain tumbling and rolling like wheels? It was too dark that night and our eyes could not enjoy the beautiful scene but our ears did and above all our heads and our backs and all our limbs. Without joking, I am sorry for Mr Friedman and Mr McGlinchy and for Lieut Mullan, who, I am told, has a share in the firm. We must abstain as far as possible from speaking with disparagement of the road out of doors. The press in Oregon begins to call it a great humbug and a great waste of money." Congiato to De Smet, January 30, 1860 (A). "The same Father [Gazzoli] writes, Oct 25, 1859 'Lt Mullan finds himself in the worst situation. He has lost a great number

Journeying for one reason or another was such a repeated necessity for the missionary, especially if he happened to be a superior that Father Joset calls it the most typical feature of the Oregon Jesuit's life. The following account of the discomforts and difficulties of travel was written by him apparently with reference to the first Coeur d'Alène Mission

The most typical side of our lives, a side, moreover, which takes up a good deal of our time, are the trips I get along without them as well as I can, the more so as I can scarcely absent myself without the farm suffering in consequence. Still, I have been obliged to pass more than three months in necessary journeys, now it was the Superior, who summoned me to his side, now we were at the end of our provisions, now it was one reason, now another. If you only knew what these journeys are, you would readily persuade yourself that one doesn't undertake a single one of them without very urgent reasons. In the first place, you must get things ready, animals, saddles, *épaissimens* [?], *pareflèches* [leathern cases for carrying dried meat], ropes, provisions, hatchet, kitchen outfit, necessaries for making a fire, etc. Nothing must be forgotten under penalty of exposing yourself to serious embarrassment. Whether we are going ourselves or are sending some of our people, preparations last at least half a day. In this country there is neither stage-coach nor inns, nor bridges, nor highways, nothing except prairies, woods, swamps and broad rivers. I had fancied to myself that, being a good pedestrian, I would not tire my horse overmuch, but apart from the circumstance that travelling on foot would be a singularity here, you would merely use up your time and wear out your shoes, and afterwards you would have much greater difficulty replacing your shoes than your horse. You would meet with obstacles at almost every step, especially if you were surprised by bad weather as happened to me every time I went out.

Ordinarily you start at sunrise and stop only at night. Unless you have very urgent business, you go at a steady trot. However, it has happened to me to be awakened at two in the morning by my Indian, who led me on at a

of animals. The few which remain to him are in such a bad condition as to be entirely useless. His express man, through whom I send this letter, arrived here in the most pitiful condition. When at ten miles from the Mission he thought himself lost and was obliged to throw away his blankets, etc. They will learn now by experience what they would not believe when the Fathers told them that that route has so many and so great difficulties as to render it almost impracticable. I request your Reverence again not to speak to externs of this failure. I am sorry for Lt. Mullan. He is a true friend of the Missions and of the Fathers and deserved all success in his enterprise." Congiato to De Smet, February 4, 1860 (A). According to Addison Howard, "Captain John Mullan," *Washington Historical Quarterly*, 25: 188 (1934), Mullan admitted he made a mistake in running the road through the Coeur d'Alène region instead of using the Clark's Fork route. But the road, all things considered, proved a success. S. F. Bemis, "Captain John Mullan and the Engineer's Problem," *Washington Historical Quarterly*, 14: 201-205, T. C. Elliot, "The Mullan Road: Its Local History and Significance," *Idem*, 14: 206-209.

gallop the whole day long. If I remarked to him that he was going to overtax our mounts, he answered a little piqued "Aren't my horses fat?" Indians are not easy on their animals. Arrived at our camping-place, we all lend a hand. To unsaddle, fetch wood, light a big fire, set up the tent and prepare supper is the work of a few minutes. The supper, it is true, does not require much preparation. As soon as the Indian has boiled the water, you give him a little meal and if you have any of it, a little fat and salt to make *gamme* (boiled), if besides you can serve a little bread, meat, or dry salmon, you will have a feast really royal and delicious, such as kings seldom find before them, only you mustn't leave the victuals to the discretion of the Indians under penalty of fasting half the way. For lack of this precaution Father Ravalli on his way from St. Ignatius to St. Mary's found himself six days from his journey's end when the victuals gave out, and yet he had set out with a very good supply of meal, fat and salmon.

After supper, you smoke or chat, then prayers are said before bed-time. At dawn next morning you go and get the horses, breakfast the way you supped, saddle as quickly as possible and are off. All this might seem pretty nice to one who has a taste for travel, for myself, this taste is a thing of the past. To give you a more complete idea of our excursions, I shall say a word about the last one I made.

In the first place, in order to leave the house, it was necessary to cross a deep marsh covered with ice which, as it broke under the horses' feet, caused them to stumble into the mud. My guide came in this way to be unhorsed. He had to let his horse loose and cross the marsh on foot, with the water almost up to his waist. We had to unload the horses to make them pass over, for the same reason we were obliged a little further on to break the ice which covered the river. At evening we camped right in the midst of the snow. The wood was damp and we had trouble in kindling a little fire. No poles for setting up the tent, besides, my companion was a novice in the matter of travelling. When the Indians are alone, they will suffer cold and dampness rather than fix themselves a comfortable lodging and it must be acknowledged that we should find very few whites capable of putting up like them with fasting, cold, dampness and fatigue, but those who journey with us realize that we don't like filling ourselves with rheumatism without necessity and they know what must be done. My companion, however, didn't know. Though the night was dark, I succeeded in finding enough bark to cover the spot where we had to rest. As we could not set up the tent, we used it as a covering and, though it rained the whole night, we did not get wet overmuch. We left at daybreak. The roads were very bad and we could make only a short distance. We camped rather nicely near a wide river. The water was low and by taking out the largest sized stones we made a floor on which we took our rest. The third day was warm enough to bring a thaw, which set us right down in the mud. Bits of bark were still our only resource for camping. The next day we fared better, the ground was pretty high, covered with leaves and right in the heart of a forest. The fifth day we had a driving rain which lasted all through the night without interruption. We came across an enormous fir-tree thrown down by the lightning and we put up our shelter

across from it. We succeeded in lighting a fire big enough to consume more than half of this trunk, which measured five feet in diameter. The blazing block formed a wall of fire which reflected the heat into our tent. This comfort we had need of. The frozen ground was covered everywhere with water. Still we had to get together a large quantity of wood, prepare poles for mounting the tent and search for a big enough supply of bark so as to lie down on a higher level than the water which flooded our dwelling. However, as you must move around in all this work, you don't suffer from cold and you acquire besides an excellent appetite for supper. The sixth day we reached happily the end of our journey. The most distressing thing to happen in experiences of this kind is for the beasts to become worn out. Still, you have to make them go ahead by hook or crook, you do what you can to relieve them, as often as the roads permit, you foot it, still you don't stop suffering until the beasts reach a place where they can rest.

At the moment I write these lines, Father Hoecken, coming to find me to make his confession, has just passed an entire night exposed to continual rain, without even having any branches to make himself a shelter. His two Indians slept soundly while he could not close an eye and so the minutes seemed to him hours. Farther on a torrent barred the way. The Indians of the neighborhood had no canoe, but they brought some mats which, rolled into two or three folds and tied to two sticks, made a sort of raft on which the party ventured over one after the other. The torrent was not a big one but it was so rapid that the craft was carried 50 or 60 paces below the place where it started from. The next day they had to cross the same torrent three times and, though the guides knew how to pick out the best fords, the horses almost drowned in crossing the foot of a lake as they were numbed by the cold water from the snow.¹⁸¹

Still further side-lights of interest on the struggle for existence that went on in the first patch of civilized or semi-civilized life laid out in northern Idaho are furnished by Joset's correspondence. The mission had only one canoe, the handicraft of a certain Dumont. Stellam, the chief, borrowed it and through characteristic Indian carelessness managed to lose it. Fortunately, Dumont had made a second canoe of the same size as the other and this one Dumont's children sold to the mission for "a kettle, a shirt and a three-point blanket to be delivered in the spring." The mission had a herd of ten cows in charge of a Kalispel Indian, but they were of little service as barns and stalls were wanting. "Milk and butter would have been a great help to us." "But before building," Joset is writing in January, 1845, to De Smet, "we ought to know where the village is going to be. If we could order either at Colville or at the sea a large-sized drill for boring wells, we could settle at the foot of the mountains where we would have the advantage of being near the river, if we cannot have this tool, we must remain where we

¹⁸¹ Joset, *Quelques remarques sur les sauvages, etc.* (AA)

are” Joset lists among the articles needed at the mission some “tanned leather” Shoes were apparently home-made “We are almost bare-foot, especially Father Point Our health suffers in consequence” “Our position is singular indeed,” Joset explains “We have oxen, horses, mules and not a cham to use them with, yokes without irons, one plow and that one useless for new land, a part of the irons for another If we had 4 chains, complete yokes and 2 plows, we could have a good field of potatoes, another of wheat, one of maize, one of barley, so that we could not only count on being self-supporting but also on helping our neighbors in case of need” There was no threshing of wheat the preceding year and so seed-wheat would have to be got from Colville The plows and chains must come from the “sea,” that is from Fort Vancouver Joset ends the letter to De Smet in which he catalogues these needs with the reflexion “Permit me in finishing to quote to you the words of a Provincial who, to support his Province and feed 50 scholastics, had no resources except those of Providence and that in a new country ‘let our scholastics be good religious and means will not be lacking for their subsistence If we make efforts to do our duty, Providence will not fail us, Christ’s word is pledged to this effect, *quaerite primum regnum Dei* To make charity and regularity reign on all sides, this is, I take it, to be our chief concern’ But why tell you things which you understand better than myself!”¹⁸² Father Joset always showed insight in appraising the character of the Coeur d’Alènes Some paragraphs of his on this head will bear citation

Father De Smet’s letters have made known the Flatheads, that knight-errantry of the Mountains A great difference may be observed between their character and that of the Coeur d’Alènes, who owe their name to their slender courage, and the cause of this difference appears to come in great measure from their geographical position The former, located nearer to the region of the buffalo, the daily bread of the prairie, have been occupied up to this in scarcely anything else but hunting, but for this it was necessary to brave continuously the numerous and perfidious nation of the Blackfeet, so that they ate only what they carried off, so to speak, at the point of the sword Thence their character, noble in every acceptation of the word

The Coeur d’Alènes, on the other hand, are too far distant from the region in question, from which they are separated by mountains which one crosses only with difficulty and in the good season alone Hence in their search for food they scarcely go outside the narrow circle of their lands Their resources in food are the little hunt (*la petite chasse*), to wit, rabbit-hunting, fishing, roots and moss They are poor, selfish, but more easily brought to engage in the labor of agriculture, they are the people, the *plebs* As you see, I must congratulate myself from every point of view on the portion that is my

¹⁸² Joset à De Smet, January 12, 1845 (A)

lot in the field of the Lord *pauperes evangelizantur* For the rest, I have found the ground thoroughly broken and in full cultivation

Previous to the arrival of Father De Smct the Coeur d'Alènes lived in complete isolation They were neither loved nor esteemed by their neighbors, also, they spoke a language which is not common to any other tribe It is easy to learn, much easier than that of the Flatheads They have almost no sounds which are not found in some one of the languages derived from the Latin The Flathead language is much more difficult, but it is something like a universal language in these parts, being common to the Kalispels, Chaudières, Couteveys, Spokane Almost all the Coeur d'Alènes themselves understand it, you need patience to learn it, but are fully recompensed by the abundant fruit which you gather from your labor

Like all the savages who cannot hunt the buffalo, the Coeur d'Alènes live under rush-mats, which they fasten to poles arranged like a cone with an opening on top to let in the light and afford an outlet for the smoke In this sort of [?] one cannot, as may be done through glass windows, see from the inside what is going on without, but one hears everything that is said even at half-pitch in the neighboring lodges A chief harangues his followers No one goes out to listen to him, but scarcely has he finished when all the cabins echo with an approving cry very much like huzzas in a college From this care in seizing upon everything which is said, comes no doubt the publicity given on the instant to the slightest failings You have here a powerful check upon vice, and so ordinarily the Indian maintains a great reserve Perfectly vindictive though they be, they will receive a bloody injury without seeming to be affected by it, their rage concentrates in the bottom of their hearts without their face betraying the least emotion ¹⁸³

Governor Isaac Stevens in the course of his explorations for a railroad route to the Pacific was a visitor at the second Coeur d'Alène Mission in October, 1853 The picture he drew of the mission, eleven years old at the time, is a pleasant one

The Coeur d'Alène Indians are underestimated by all the authorities They have some seventy lodges and number about five hundred inhabitants They are much indebted to the good Fathers for making considerable progress in agriculture They have abandoned polygamy, have been taught the rudiments of Christianity and are greatly improved in their morals and in the comforts of life It is indeed extraordinary what the Fathers have done at the Coeur d'Alène Mission It is on the Coeur d'Alène river about thirty miles from the base of the mountains and some [ten] miles above the Coeur d'Alène lake They have a splendid church nearly finished by the labor of the fathers, laymen and Indians, a large barn, a horse-mill for flour, a small range of buildings for the accomodation of the priests and laymen [lay brothers], a store-room, a milk or dairy-room, a cook-room and good arrangements for their pigs and cattle They are putting up a new range of quarters and the

¹⁸³ Joset à ——— (AA) Cf *supra*, note 134

Indians have some twelve comfortable log-cabins. The church was designed by the Superior of the Mission, Pere Avili [Ravalli], a man of skill as an architect and undoubtedly, judging from his well-thumbed books, of various accomplishments. Pere Gazzoli showed me his several designs for the altar, all of them characterized by good taste and harmony of proportion. The church as a specimen of architecture would do credit to any one and has been faithfully sketched by an architect, Mr Stanley.

They have a large, cultivated field of some two hundred acres and a prairie from two to three thousand acres. They own a hundred pigs, eight yokes of oxen, thirty cows and a liberal proportion of horses, mules and young animals.

The Indians have learned to plough, sow, till the soil generally, milk cows (with both hands) and do all the duties incident to a farm. They are, some of them, expert wood-cutters, and I saw at work getting in the harvest some thirty or forty Indians. We observed them ploughing, which they executed skillfully, others were sowing wheat and others digging potatoes. We saw a funeral ceremony conducted after the Catholic form and we were struck with the harmonious voices of the Indian choristers and their solemn observance of the ceremonies.

October 13 [1853] The Coeur d'Alènes have already under the influence and example of their priest made a fair commencement in agriculture and will with timely encouragement from our government live entirely by cultivation, for which their country is so well adapted. They are well contented and it is pleasing to notice habits of industry growing upon them. In the barn we saw their operation of threshing. Four boys rode as many mules abreast around in a circle and they were followed by two girls with flails, who were thoroughly at home in the business. I observed an Indian woman milking and was surprised to see her use both hands, something rarely seen among Indians. We afterwards visited the field. A large fire was burning and around it sat Indians roasting potatoes at pleasure. There appeared to be great scarcity of proper implements, and in digging potatoes I noticed that many had nothing better than sharpened sticks.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ U S 33rd Cong, 1st sess, House Executive Document No 129, pp 91, 92, 373, 374. Bancroft, *History of Washington, Idaho and Montana*, has a reference (p 562) to the mission-church, the architectural merits of which he belittles. "The church built of wood in a poor imitation of M Angelo's San Miniato [Florence] on the hill, stood on a knoll surrounded by low, flat, alluvial lands. Approaching from the west, it was seen at the other end of the valley facing north. In the rear was the residence of the fathers—a rustic cottage with over-hanging eaves and a narrow piazza all around it. A hundred feet to the west was the refectory and grouped around the sides of the knoll were 50 wigwams and cabins. In front of and to the east of the church considerable ground was enclosed by a substantial rail fence." Cf also *op cit*, p 604, for comments on the prosperity of the Coeur d'Alène Mission. Stevens says (*loc cit*), that pulleys and ropes were the only mechanical aids in the erection of the church, which was of Roman Doric architecture. "It is of hewn timber and adobe, ninety feet in length, forty in breadth, and sixty in height. The inside is prettily arranged. The

The Coeur d'Alènes have since lived up to the reputation which they had already acquired after the first decade of Jesuit missionary effort on their behalf had passed. The single black mark against them, as regards their relations to the whites, is the attack they made on Col Steptoe's command in 1858, that, however, was a good deal of an accident, practically unpremeditated and without significance in appraising the general attitude of the tribe to the federal government or the white settlers about them.¹⁸⁵ Former Governor McConnell of Idaho, a visitor at the Coeur d'Alène Mission in 1913, has appraised thus the net result of the work achieved in this first center of religious and cultural influence within the limits of his state:

The Coeur d'Alène Mission continues the work for which it was established and to the efforts of that church may justly be credited the rapid advancement and prosperity of that tribe. There is no record of the Coeur d'Alène Indians ever having violated any treaty made by them with the government or of their being at any time unfriendly with the whites. Their condition today, morally and financially, as well as their record for good behaviour in the past, is an example of what might have been accomplished with other tribes if similar methods had been followed.¹⁸⁶

§ 10 THE MISSION OF NEW CALEDONIA

In the summer of 1845 Father Nobili set out from Fort Vancouver to open the Mission of New Caledonia in what is now extreme western Canada or British Columbia. While the mission achieved no permanence, it carried on during the three or four years of its career a vigorous if transitory evangelical campaign on behalf of the savage folk of the region. British Columbia has been described as a "sea of moun-

altar is supported by two massive timbers of pine almost four feet in diameter." According to Brosnin, *Hist. of the State of Idaho*, p. 78, the old mission-church at Cataldo was "Idaho's first house of worship." Thanks to the faithful workmanship of the Fathers, Brothers, and Indians who reared its historic walls, it still continues in an almost perfect state of preservation. Idaho's first church would appear to have been the one erected at the original Coeur d'Alène Mission on the St. Joe River.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. *infra*, Chap. XXV, note 103.

¹⁸⁶ W. J. McConnell, *Early History of Idaho* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1913), p. 42: "While the Jesuits did not bring capital, construct railroads, build cities and put up mills in Kootenai County, their work in another direction was of very great importance. The changes in primitive conditions, in the attitude of the redmen towards the "pale-face" intruder brought about by these faithful missionaries were marvellous in character and far-reaching in result. It is impossible to estimate the weight of their influence in subduing savage hatred and thus paving the way for the civilization that came at a later day." *An Illustrated History of North Idaho, etc.*, 1903, p. 755. The main facts regarding the mission are collected in Edmund R. Cody, S. J., *History of the Coeur d'Alène Mission of the Sacred Heart* (Old Mission, Cataldo, Idaho, 1930). Bibliography.

tains" Vast forests of pine and cedar, fertile and attractive valleys, great streams flowing towards the Pacific from their sources in the Rockies and ubiquitous mountain ranges conspire to make a scenery at once rugged and picturesque. Through this wilderness Alexander Mackenzie made his way in 1793 to the Pacific, the first white man to solve the classic problem of an overland route to the Western Sea, and this, more than ten years before Lewis and Clark made their epic trip to the mouth of the Columbia. New Caledonia was the name borne by the watershed of the Fraser River, particularly in its upper reaches. Catholicism came early into the country, its first white inhabitant, one Lamalice, being of the Faith, as was also Simon Fraser, who navigated to the sea the great waterway that bears his name. Into these mysterious fastnesses of heathendom and savage, untamed nature, came in 1842 the first priest, Fathers Demers, the pioneer Oregon missionary, who got as far north as the country of the Porteurs or Carriers around Stuart Lake. He appears to have undertaken the venturesome trip at the instance or at least with the encouragement of Father De Smet, who gave assurance that the work would be carried on by Jesuit hands. Demers and De Smet left Vancouver together in June, 1842, as passengers in a barge of the Hudson's Bay Company going up the Columbia. At Walla Walla Demers parted from his travelling companion to pursue his way to New Caledonia. Here, among the Kamloops, the Atnans or Ahtena, and the Porteurs or Ltatoten, he administered 436 infant baptisms. At Fort Langley on the Fraser his baptisms are said to have numbered seven hundred, which is probably an over-statement. At all events, Blanchet wrote in a glow of enthusiasm to the Bishop of Quebec "The adorable name of Jesus has been announced to new nations of the north" ¹⁸⁷

In 1843 Demers, having thus broken ground in this virgin soil, left the New Caledonians behind him to return to the lower Columbia. But he held De Smet to his pledges and urged that a missionary of the Society be sent in his place to the remote North. De Smet found it possible to do so and Father Nobili was given the commission. The latter, a Roman by birth and then thirty-three years of age, had been engaged since his arrival in Oregon in August, 1844, in a strenuous ministry at Fort Vancouver and along the Willamette. At the fort he gave a mission of three days to a brigade of fifty which arrived there in June, 1845, made up largely of Canadians with apparently some Porteur Indians among them. All, with one or two exceptions, made their confession. In the midsummer of 1845 Ravalli and Nobili left Fort Vancouver, the first to make his way to St. Ignatius Mission, the

¹⁸⁷ CR, *De Smet*, 2 477-478 *Catholic Encyclopedia*, art "British Columbia"

latter to halt at Walla Walla and there await instructions from De Smet. From Fort Okinagan Nobili wrote to De Smet, July 25, 1845

I received your precious letter at Walla Walla and through it was made acquainted with my new destination May the good God be blessed! It is He Himself whom I hearkened to as I hearkened to your "go and carry the torch of faith to this forlorn tribe of Porteurs, who otherwise seem so well disposed to open their eyes to the light of life" I go then, encouraged by your words, and in going, I forget my weakness, my defects, my lack of virtue and experience for an enterprise which is beyond my strength, I abandon myself entirely to the care of Divine Providence, who *infirmam mundi eligit et attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponit omnia suaviter* ["chooses the weak things of the world and reaches from end to end mightily and disposes all things sweetly"]

The young man from Vancouver accompanies me I have, however, deemed it advisable to defer his reception into the Company so that I may instruct him further in the duties of which he must acquit himself in his new state I shall keep punctiliously to your directions I realize the necessity of so doing, especially that I may draw down on myself and my new enterprise the blessing of the good God who loves obedience more than victories, and so I shall keep your letter before my eyes as the rule to be followed in all my undertakings and I shall try even to divine your wishes and intentions¹⁸⁸ (A)

What happened to Nobili and his novice companion on their overland trail to the North is told in a letter of Accolti's to De Smet

On his journey to Fort Okinagan he [Nobili] suffered much He left the Wallamette with Battiste, the novice, and three pack horses A Hudson's Bay Company agent travelled with them for a few days, then he quit them villainously, without listening to Father Nobili's entreaties not to abandon them On his horses he had the Father's tent and sack of provisions The result was that they had to remain without food or shelter on an entirely unknown trail Then they got lost and lack of water and nourishment brought them within an inch of perishing Two Indians from the Cascades, whom Father Nobili had known at Fort Vancouver, rescued them from the peril Thanks to them also they had the happiness of appeasing their hunger on an owl, which the Indians had killed a short while before¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Nobili informed Father Roothaan, October 18, 1845, (AA), that he had left Walla Walla with a "brother novice," Battista (Baptist) by name More likely the latter was only what is termed in the language of religious orders a "postulant," as Nobili hesitated to accept him (as a novice) seeing that "he showed signs of self-will and [independent] judgment, which have been and always will be the pest of our Society" Nothing further is heard of Battista after his journey to New Caledonia with Nobili

¹⁸⁹ Accolti à De Smet, February 9, 1846 (AA)

In a few years Nobili had built chapels here and there over a great extent of country, chiefly at the so-called "forts" or trading-posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. In the fall of 1845 he penetrated as far north as Fort St. James on or near Stuart Lake, where he stayed only five days, returning thither, however, the following year. At Fort Alexandria on the Fraser he was surprised to find a frame church built apparently in the interval that had elapsed since Demers's departure. Here marriages among the Canadian employees of the fort were set right and twenty-four children and forty-seven adults baptized. In May, 1846, he went down to Fort Colville to confer with Father De Smet. On December 12, 1846, he was at Fort George at the confluence of the Nechoco with the Fraser. Here he was met by fifty Sekanis Indians, who had come down from the Rockies and had waited nineteen days for his arrival. He baptized "twelve of their children and twenty-seven others, of whom six were adults of advanced age." At Fort George Nobili planted a missionary cross as he did wherever he remained any length of time. On December 18 he was at Stuart Lake, where he spent seven days doing what good he could among the Indians of the locality and especially inveighing against the tribal custom of burning the dead and torturing widows. The nations were left impressed, if not altogether converted from their evil ways, and the chief lodge and headquarters of the medicine-men was generally metamorphosed into a church.

Father Nobili's travels next brought him to Fort Kilmar on Babine Lake, near the Alaska frontier, to which remote spot he was the first missionary to penetrate. Records in his own hand of baptisms performed here October 25, 1846, are still extant. Early in January, 1847, he was back at Fort St. James, where he remained, carrying on a vigorous campaign of instruction until the beginning of Lent. In October of the same year, it would appear, he was among the Chilcotins, a troublesome Dené tribe and the southernmost of the family within the limits of British Columbia. He blessed a cemetery, visited several of the native villages and baptized a number of adult Chilcotins, whom, comments an historian, "he would probably have left longer under probation had he possessed more experience of their native fickleness." He was the first priest to visit the Chilcotins. In May, 1847, he opened a residence named for St. Joseph among the Okinagans, two days journey from the Thompson River and there resided the following year with Father Goetz as companion. The map accompanying the first edition of De Smet's *Oregon Missions* indicates four missionary stations in New Caledonia, viz. at Fort St. James, Fort George, Fort Alexandria and Fort Thompson in addition to the residence among the Okinagans. At Kamloops near Old Fort Thompson in British Columbia tradition still

witnesses to the missionary labors of Father Nobili in that remote corner of the New World ¹⁹⁰

In his material needs Nobili was aided by the officials of the Hudson's Bay Company "The attention shown Father Nobili in the trading posts of New Caledonia," said De Smet, "is beyond all praise" ¹⁹¹ At the same time, living conditions as Nobili encountered them were almost intolerable. Moreover, until Father Goetz arrived, he was without the support of a companion "I should not have approved the sending of poor Father Nobili alone among the Porteurs," Father Roothaan wrote to De Smet, September 1, 1846 "Still, the necessity of so doing must have been unavoidable." In dispatching Goetz to Nobili's relief Joset had anticipated the General's instructions, who wrote to him urging that a companion be sent to the solitary missionary in the northern wilds. Finally, in 1848, both Nobili and Goetz were recalled and the Mission of New Caledonia, inaugurated under such promising circumstances, was given up. Father Goetz, it would seem, was the first to be summoned back from the Okinagans. Father Nobili, thus "left alone in an inhospitable hut with the most wretched kind of food," was instructed by Father Joset to relinquish his post and return, which he did "When I saw him at the Sacred Heart," wrote Joset to the General, August 2, 1850, "I said to myself at once that he was by no manner of means made to live among the Indians" ¹⁹² At St Ignatius Mission, May 13, 1849, Nobili made his solemn profession as a Jesuit before Father Joset. This important step in his career as a religious thus taken, he was left free by his superior to descend to the Willamette. There was no one to assign him as companion in his recent mission except Father Vercruysse, whose services Nobili was unwilling to employ. He accordingly went down, taking advantage of the per-

¹⁹⁰ A. G. Morice, O. M. I., *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada from Lake Superior to the Pacific* (Toronto, 1910), 1 293-294. A considerable body of Nobili's unpublished correspondence descriptive of his missionary experiences is extant in the Jesuit General Archives, Rome. De Smet, *Western Missions and Missionaries* (New York, 1863), p. 513, has a sketch of Nobili.

¹⁹¹ CR, *De Smet*, 2 552 "I received your kind favor at the Dalles and I return to you my most sincere thanks for the good news and information you gave me concerning New Caledonia. Having preceded Father Nobili to Walla Walla I left a letter with the very kind and good Mr. McKinlay for him with a request to follow the brigade and to pass the winter among those interesting Indians. Next summer or spring he is to return to make his report and I hope arrangements shall be made to establish a permanent mission in that quarter. Father Nobili in his letter to me appeared to be very desirous to undertake the task—may the Lord bless his endeavors and bless all the gentlemen of the Honorable Company who have taken so warm a part in the subject." De Smet to John McLoughlin, July 18, 1845 (A)

¹⁹² Joset à Roothaan, August 2, 1850 (AA)

mission given him, to the Willamette, and the Mission of New Caledonia remained permanently closed "Father Nobili was in New Caledonia last year," Father Accolti informed the General in February, 1850 "His mission was beginning to meet with success. Father Joset withdrew him, having no other subject to give him for companion and thus execute the orders of your paternity. Father Nobili tried by every means in his power to prevent this measure, which he foresaw would be to the prejudice of the Indians. But in the end he had to obey."¹⁹³

In 1849 Fathers Nobili and Accolti were both sent by Father Joset to San Francisco, from which city Nobili made known to De Smet the circumstances under which his missionary career had come to an abrupt end.

But is it possible, you will say, that I mean to conclude this letter without telling you a single word about my mission, or rather should I say, your mission of New Caledonia, for to your charity and zeal did the poor Indians of that region owe their good fortune. Poor mission, which yielded such an abundance of fruit and promised still more! Why, dear Father, did you leave Oregon so quickly? If you had been here, my mission had not died, rather I should myself have died on the mission. But God in His goodness has permitted neither the mission to last more than three years nor myself to die in its service, and in the midst of my Indians as I had hoped. *Dominus dedit, Deus abstulit, sicut Deo placuit ita factum est, fiat voluntas ejus* ["The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, as it pleased God, so hath it been done, may His will be done"] Well, Father Joset, as soon as he received the letter making him Superior of the Missions, recalled me from New Caledonia with all my baggage and ordered me to withdraw from the Residence of St. Joseph, which had been established at the foot of the Great Lake of the Okinagans, later [ms ?] he sent me as a companion there one of the Fathers recently arrived from Europe, finally, for the second time he wrote unexpectedly to me and my companion ordering us even under a precept of obedience to abandon Mission, Residence, Indians and private effects to the care of Providence and return to the Rocky Mountains. Such, my dear Father, has been the fate of New Caledonia, which I traversed and evangelized for three years in the midst of privations of every kind and of evident perils even to my life. An answer to my letters to Very Reverend Father General with a positive order not to abandon the mission came at length, but too late. To explain, last autumn when I was called from the Flatheads to the Wallamette and from there to California, the state of my health, which was impaired more by the vexation I was silently feeling in my heart than by the hardships of my apostolate, no longer permitted my Superiors to think of me for any of the Indian missions, it rather made them consider whether it would not be expedient, as the doctors had advised, to send me back to my native air and thus end the risk I was incurring of succumbing some day or other to my chronic infirmities. Thus seven thousand Indians have been abandoned,

¹⁹³ Accolti à Roothaan, February 29, 1850. (AA).

among them a great number of catechumens and more than fifteen hundred neophytes¹—*Judicia Dei abyssus multa Justus es Dne et rectum judicium tuum* [“Thy judgments are a great deep Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgment is upright”] In this state I await with resignation and indifference my final destination¹⁹⁴

In San Francisco Father Nobili was declared by a competent physician to be unfit for missionary life. He was found to have chronic pericarditis, contracted, so it was surmised, on his long sea-voyage to America and he suffered, besides, from some serious disorder of the blood. His death, so the doctors apprehended, might come at any time. It was in all probability his broken health that now begot in him a changed attitude towards the Indian missions. “He has conceived a complete aversion for the missions,” wrote Accolti, “and does not wish even to speak of them.” But he had a talent for administration, which he was soon to have an opportunity to exercise with distinction as founder and first president of Santa Clara College. From the incredible isolation and hardships of a missionary’s life in the wilds of British Columbia to the presidency of an American college was a step which Nobili now made with best of grace. The happy impression he made as college executive, clergyman, and citizen was widespread and when he came to die in 1856 Californians of all religious affiliations mourned his premature demise.

The abortive career of the Mission of New Caledonia was a keen disappointment to Father Roothaan. In February, 1847, he had written to Oregon instructing Fathers Nobili and Joset that under no circumstances was the mission to be abandoned. In March, 1850, he informed Joset: “I had decided and so written more than once that the new mission taken in hand with so much success by Father Nobili was to be kept up by assigning him at least one Father for companion. Goetz after being dissatisfied at first was beginning to get along with Father Nobili. But you have recalled both of them. Father Nobili himself in California! All my letters lost! It is distressing.”¹⁹⁵ The very great difficulty of maintaining satisfactory communication between the Oregon Jesuits and Rome, from which center rather than from St. Louis they were chiefly directed in the first decade of the missions, thus proved a serious bar to the progress of their work. The attempt made to evangelize the Indians of what is now British Columbia was not afterwards resumed by Jesuit hands. At a later period the Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate entered the field, working with distinguished zeal among whites and Indians alike.

¹⁹⁴ Nobili à De Smet, March 28, 1850 (A)

¹⁹⁵ Roothaan à Joset, March 17, 1850 (AA)

Father Nobili's missionary excursions above the 49th parallel had lacked nothing of hazardous adventure. Father De Smet himself in the course of a rather audacious missionary journey penetrated north of the American line. He was eager to bring the Blackfeet to terms of peace with the Flatheads and with this object in view determined to visit the former in their native habitat east of the Rockies. It was a perilous undertaking and both Accolti and Nobili tried to dissuade him from it, while Mr. Fraser, commandant of the Hudson's Bay Company post at Colville, made a hurried trip that he might represent to him in person what he deemed to be the grave imprudence of the step he was about to take. "I advised him against it for the present," Nobili wrote to Father Roothaan, "because the Blackfeet, after being attacked and defeated by the *Pend d'Oreilles*, swore death to the first priest they should meet."¹⁹⁶ To De Smet himself Nobili wrote "I beg you seriously to listen to Mr. Fraser, who will warn you of the evident danger you are going to incur among the Blackfeet."¹⁹⁷ Plainly De Smet himself in the face of such warnings could be under no illusions as to the danger in store for him. To Dr. McLoughlin he confided "The Indians think it a most dangerous expedition at present though all are willing to accompany me thither."¹⁹⁸ His attitude in the matter is also revealed in a letter to Nobili: "I feel in myself an irresistible desire to visit those poor unfortunate savages plunged as they are in the deepest Indian superstitions. I am not unaware that my life there will be much in danger. Ah! can I offer it to God? Would it be acceptable? Pray, dear Father that I may be worthy of [such a blessing]."¹⁹⁹

It appears to have been De Smet's intention, when he left Walla Walla on this dangerous journey, to return to St. Louis by way of the Blackfoot country without recrossing the Rocky Mountains, but this detail of his plan was not carried out.²⁰⁰ The route he chose led him north past the sources of the Columbia and across the continental divide by Whiteman's Pass into the present Canadian province of Alberta. He failed, however, to meet the Blackfeet and, with the object of his mission unattained, had to retrace his way over the Rockies to the Columbia. Snow-shoes and dog-sleds were among the modes of conveyance he had to utilize in this perilous trip, which lasted from the fall of 1845 to the late spring of the following year, including a stay of two months at Fort Augustus, now Edmonton, on the east of the Rockies,

¹⁹⁶ Nobili à Roothaan, August 31, 1845 (AA)

¹⁹⁷ Nobili à De Smet, July 25, 1845 (A) Accolti à Roothaan, October 18, 1845 (AA)

¹⁹⁸ De Smet to McLoughlin, July 18, 1845 (A)

¹⁹⁹ Cited in Nobili à Roothaan, August 31, 1845 (AA)

²⁰⁰ CR, *De Smet*, 2 530

whence he visited the mission of St Anne²⁰¹ The return journey was marked by the severest physical discomforts, to which he would have succumbed had it not been for the aid received from a small band of Indians met with on the way To this day there are local traditions of De Smet's visit to the Canadian Rockies, the memory of which is also perpetuated in Mount De Smet at the head waters of the Athabasca in the present Jasper Park, Alberta²⁰²

On the conclusion of his northern adventure De Smet descended the Columbia to Fort Vancouver, whence he returned to the mountains, reaching the Flathead Mission in August, 1846 From here he set out for St Louis on his third return journey East to civilization Expenses for the support of the new establishments in the Northwest had been considerable and it was thought necessary to send a father to the States to provide for them "The Fathers unanimously expressed their desire that I again undertake this long and hazardous voyage" De Smet took advantage of his journey east to pass through the Black-foot country where he succeeded in meeting and dealing successfully with the notorious tribe which he had failed to make contact with the year before Having travelled by way of the Jefferson, Bighorn, Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers and met Brigham Young on the way, he arrived at St Louis about December 1, 1846 He never again re-

²⁰¹ CR, *De Smet*, 2 485-552, Morice, *op cit*, 164 In 1845 De Smet "came over Whiteman's Pass to the Bow river where the village of Canmore is now situated" M B Williams, *Through the Heart of the Rockies and Selkoks* (Ottawa, 1929) At Edmonton (Fort Augustus), principal post of the Hudson's Bay Company in the region, De Smet met Father Thibault January 3, 1846, also "Governor" John Rowand or Rowan, Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at the post named For a letter of Rowand to De Smet, cf CR, *De Smet*, 4 1559 Lake St Anne or Manitou, residence of the two Canadian missionaries, Fathers Thibault and Bourassa, was about fifty miles northwest of Edmonton "I remained fifteen days at the fort [Jasper] instructing them in the duties of religion—after Mass, on Easter Sunday all were regenerated in the waters of baptism and seven marriages renewed and blessed The number of baptized amounted to forty-four, among whom was the lady of Mr [Colin] Fraser (superintendent of the fort) and four of his children and two servants" CR, *De Smet*, 2 537 "I am glad to inform you concerning my Freeman and their children that since you hid the goodness to Baptize and Marry them that a great alteration took place amongst the most of them excepting one instance, all the others seem to improve since you left us, how long they may continue so I cannot say" Fraser to De Smet, November 1, 1846 (A) For details of a later date on the Alberta posts visited by De Smet see Katherine Hughes, *Father Lacombe, the Black-Robe Voyageur* (Chicago, 1911)

²⁰² Baptiste Morigeau, baptized by De Smet, September 8, 1845, at the head waters of the Columbia (CR, *De Smet*, 2 499), was living as late as 1921 A Dutch edition (Ghent, 1849, p 100) of the *Oregon Missions* contains a map indicating De Smet's route to the sources of the Columbia with the pictorial detail, "Loges de Morigeau Ma tente"

turned to the Rocky Mountain Missions in any official capacity in their regard whether as superior or member of the missionary staff. Father Roothaan, as long as he lived, showed himself averse to De Smet's resuming his activities in the field which he was the first to open "Your post," he wrote to him, "will be in St. Louis From there you will be in a position to serve your dear Indians from afar." Later, Roothaan's successor, Father Beckx, authorized a superior of the Rocky Mountain Missions to secure, if possible, De Smet's services as a resident missionary, adding that certain unfavorable reports circulated about him were exaggerated and without foundation But the founder of the Rocky Mountain Missions was not to resume any such connection with them His destiny, as the General let him know, was to serve the Indian cause "from afar"

§ II MISSIONARY STATIONS AND EXCURSIONS

What stood most in the way of the development of the missions was the lack of an adequate personnel both in numbers and, in a measure also, in efficiency The actually available workers would seem to have had occupation enough in the immediate duties that fell to them in the resident missionary centers of St. Mary's, St. Ignatius and the Sacred Heart Yet, while the Flatheads, Kalispel and Coeur d'Alènes were the major objects of the missionaries' attention, other upper Columbia tribes shared at intervals in their ministry. It is indeed a noteworthy circumstance that De Smet's program of missionary enterprise called for the eventual evangelization of all the Oregon tribes. He apparently seized every opportunity to make a beginning at least of apostolic work in every Indian body he met with in his travels in the expectation that hands would later be available for the serious working of all these fields His own temperament, it can be seen, led him to pursue this course. As was a matter of common knowledge among his associates, he was most at home in breaking new ground, in sharing the interest and elation incident on new ventures. The patient, humdrum labor of cultivating a field already sown was not congenial to him ²⁰³ Nevertheless, a spirit of adventurous enthusiasm was an excellent thing to carry into the opening campaigns of the difficult missionary enterprise on which he had embarked. After all, the main output of missionary zeal and service continued to be centered on the three principal tribes already mentioned while at the same time the lesson was effectively taught that a certain eager and energetic reaching out after new conquests, conditioned withal by the dictates of prudence

²⁰³ See *infra*, Chap. XXIV, § 3

and the circumstances of time and place, was the proper spirit for the Jesuit missionary to carry into his work.

As a matter of fact, not De Smet only, but also his Jesuit confrères in the Oregon field adopted, in theory at least, the policy of extending their ministry to new tribes as opportunity offered. "We shall be able," wrote Joset in October, 1845, "to make excursions right along to new peoples, to draw some of them to already existing missions and to prepare the way among others for new establishments. Thus we hope it may be possible little by little to draw the Flatbows as also the Upper Pend d'Oreilles or Lake People (*Gens du lac*) to St Ignatius, the Okinagans (these are on the other bank of the Columbia) and the Spokanes to the Falls, where St Paul's Mission will be opened, the Coutenays, Snakes, and some of the Blackfeet to St. Mary's. If the Caious [Cayuse] are found to be well disposed, this [tribe] will be a center for [work among] the Walla Walla and the Nez Percés. For as to establishing a mission in every petty tribe, it can hardly be thought of, so it seems, it would require priests without end and expenses would be unnecessarily multiplied. To establish missions it is indispensable to procure means for the Indians to live around the church. A grist-mill is needed, also a saw-mill, a forge for repairing tools, etc." ²⁰⁴ Again, Joset wrote in 1849 "We are too few to lend aid to the neighboring tribes, such as the Coutenays, Pend 'Oreilles, Blackfeet, Banax [Bannocks] and Snakes." And in March of the same year Father Adrian Hoecken expressed the opinion "If excursions could be made to the nations named [Spokan, etc], the greater part of them by far would receive the words of salvation." ²⁰⁵ Ravalli, De Vos, and Hoecken find mention as about the only missionaries to get in touch in an apostolic way with the outlying tribes. There was no one, Mengarini observed in 1845, to cultivate the Cayuse and Snakes "who count many baptized persons among them and for these we are all made responsible." ²⁰⁶

Whatever missionary excursions were undertaken were made in most cases from the first St. Ignatius. By the Canadians the Skoyelpi or Shuyelpi were dubbed the Chaudières, as they generally were to be found around the Kettle Falls (*Chaudières*) of the upper Columbia in search of salmon. Later they became known as the Colville Indians. ²⁰⁷ They had first been visited by Demers, who baptized some of their children, but "their passions, especially a strong one for gambling, kept them deaf to the voice of truth." De Smet, on his trip in the fall of

²⁰⁴ Joset à —, October 12, 1845 (AA)

²⁰⁵ Joset à Roothaan, Feb 5, 1849, A Hoecken à Roothaan, March 25, 1849 (AA)

²⁰⁶ Mengarini à Roothaan, September 30, 1849 (AA)

²⁰⁷ Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*, I 326, art "Colville"

1841 to Fort Colville at Kettle Falls, was invited by the Chaudières to visit them, which he did in May, 1842 "On the same day that I arrived among the Skoyelpi or Chaudière Indians, who resided near the fort, I undertook to translate our prayers into their language. This kept me only one day, as their language is nearly the same as that of the Flatheads and Kalispels, having the same origin." ²⁰⁸ A hundred children and eleven adults were baptized by De Smet on this occasion. The station thus opened by him was on the left bank of the Columbia between Fort Colville and the mouth of Clark's Fork. In 1845 Ravalli was visiting the Shuyelpi from St. Ignatius. At his instance and De Smet's the Indians built a chapel and a cabin for the missionaries. ²⁰⁹ Yet so far the bulk of the tribe clung to their old superstitions. Their definite turning to the Gospel appears to have been due to the influence of the chief, Martin Gilemen Xstolia, and especially to that of his son Antony, who with great display of courage put an effective stop to gambling. ²¹⁰ The Indians now began to visit St. Ignatius, only two days distant from their village, to meet the missionaries. Presently they underwent a remarkable change to the astonishment as well of the priests as of the employees at Fort Colville. In 1846 Father Hoecken was among them instructing and baptizing children and adults. In June of that year Father Nobili came down from his mission among the Okinagan to confer with Father De Smet at Colville. He spoke of the Shuyelpi in terms of eulogy: "Their nation numbers about 600 subdivided into various tribes. It is incredible what a change came over everybody after the first catechetical instructions of our Fathers. The commandant of the Fort [Colville] and all the other Hudson gentlemen are in amazement at it." Finally, so Joset felt in March, 1848, things were ripe for making a start. "Everybody says the opening of a mission at St. Paul can no longer be delayed without great loss to souls." ²¹¹ In April, 1848, Father de Vos was sent by Joset to reside among the Shuyelpi.

For three years Father De Vos carried on a strenuous ministry at St. Paul, unassisted by any of his Jesuit brethren, for no one could be spared to cooperate with him. The results he achieved were noteworthy. Father Vercruysse reported in 1851: "Alone as he was for three years, everything changed face. The Canadian employees of Fort Colville

²⁰⁸ CR, *De Smet*, I 381. "I gave the name St. Paul to the Shuyelpi nation." De Smet à Roothaan, August 7, 1845 (AA).

²⁰⁹ The chapel stood between the fishery and the fort on the left bank of the Columbia.

²¹⁰ Jonathan Edwards, *History of Spokane County, State of Washington* (1909), p. 143, gives the chief's name as Martin Hlmaxsolix.

²¹¹ Joset ad Roothaan, March 18, 1848 (AA).

are no longer the same nor are the Indians of the locality and its environs. He is loved and respected and no longer makes use of an interpreter. Of all the missions, this is the one where most is done for the instruction of the Indians”²¹² Before the end of 1851 De Vos, apparently for reasons of health, had been transferred from Oregon to California, leaving his place among the Shuyelpi to be filled by Joset. Here the latter was visited in 1853 by Dr. Suckley of the Stevens expedition.

Arrived at Fort Colville November 13. Near the fort is the mission of St. Paul established among the Kettle Falls Indians on the left bank of the Columbia about one mile from the Kettle Falls. I visited the mission establishments three times during my stay at Fort Colville. It is superintended by the Reverend Father Joset, assisted by one other priest [Vercruyse²] and a lay-brother. Father Joset received me very kindly. He is a Swiss and very gentlemanly and agreeable in his manners. To him I am indebted for much valuable information concerning this part of the country. The mission establishments consist of a chapel, a dwelling-house and several other buildings. There is no farm attached to it. The missionaries can obtain all they need from the Hudson Bay Company.²¹³

St. Paul's Mission was closed by Father Congiato, superior of the Rocky Mountain Missions in the fall of 1858. On visiting it the previous July he made the discovery that the Indians had been demoralized by contact with the whites. Furthermore, Fathers Ravalli and Vercruyse, the resident missionaries, were thought by Congiato to be inefficient and their places he was apparently unable to supply. The Indians, besides, were assuming a threatening attitude towards the whites, who petitioned Congiato not to suspend the mission as this would leave them at the mercy of the natives. But danger on this head was at an end in the fall, most of the Shuyelpi seem to have moved away from the falls, the previous excellent salmon fishing at that point having become a thing of the past as a result of the opening of new fisheries at the mouth of the Columbia. The only Christians remaining at the Falls were some thirty Canadian families. Having given orders that these be attended by a visiting priest from the Coeur d'Alène Mission, Congiato closed St. Paul's in October, 1858.²¹⁴ In the sequel the Shuyelpi Indians, to whom it had ministered in the beginning with such happy results, made occasional contacts with the Jesuit missionaries, as in 1860 when Joset baptized eighty-four of their number.²¹⁵

²¹² Vercruyse à Roothaan, April 25, 1851 (AA)

²¹³ Stevens's report in House Executive Document, no. 129, p. 284 (Cf. note 163)

²¹⁴ Congiato à Beckx, —, 1858 (AA)

²¹⁵ The fate of the Shuyelpi is told by one of their number in a letter to

The Flatbows (Lower Kutenai) and Kutenai were two divisions of a tribe known under the name of the Skalzı. De Smet visited the Flatbows in the summer of 1845 "[August 15] I said Mass there, the first ever celebrated in their lands . . . I baptized 90 little children and ten adults . . . The new station received the name of the Assumption . . . They will form in the future a station dependent upon St Ignatius" ²¹⁶ From the Flatbows De Smet proceeded to the Kutenai "August 25 [1845] we arrived at Tobacco Prairie . . . the remote residence of the Koetenays Everything I had recommended to them on my first visit they were practicing . . . August 26, feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I sang High Mass I baptized 105 persons, of whom twenty were adults . . . I have given to this station the name of the Holy [Immaculate] Heart of Mary. One of our Fathers will soon visit it" After erecting a large cross De Smet continued his way north towards the sources of the Columbia ²¹⁷ The Kutenai later settled

De Smet, October 28, 1858 "Father Smet I am a poor savage My name is Michel and I belong to the Nation of Skoyelpys, which the Whites call the 'Chaudieres' I have left my nation to follow the Fathers to whom I owe every thing, first, the knowledge of God and the true religion, and then all the other instructions I have They have taught me to read and write, and more besides, for they have taught me to sing They have taught me also to speak French God has given me an excellent and pious wife We are both quite young We have learned the Christian Doctrine well and we have decided to consecrate ourselves to the spiritual and temporal good of our poor fellow countrymen I know, Father, that you are a great friend of the Indians I know also that, although far away from us, you never cease to do us good, and I thank you for it sincerely in the name of all the Indians After having done us spiritual good, you are now doing us temporal good In return we will try to do you spiritual good, by praying to the Great Spirit for you I have heard from Father Congiato, Great Chief of all the Indian Missions, that you are thinking of coming to see us All the hearts of the Indians would be very happy at your visit Come quickly, Father, come to see and console your poor children who love you much Your visit could perhaps bring back my nation to the right path You know, Smet, that they are not behaving well Gambling and whiskey have destroyed all the good that the Fathers did among them The bad example of the Whites, who are looking for gold has ruined my poor nation, the Fathers have been obliged to abandon them Only the lake people continue to be good My heart will be happy when I learn that you pray for my poor nation I bid you good bye with all my heart Thy Child in Jesus Christ, Michel, Skoyelpy Indian" (A)

²¹⁶ De Smet, *Oregon Missions*, p. 216 The station was on the left bank of the Kutenai River in a northeasterly direction from Lake Pend d'Oreille Cf. CR, *De Smet*, 2, 487-491

²¹⁷ De Smet à Roothaan, October 25, 1845 (AA) Cf. also CR, *De Smet*, 2, 493 De Smet had visited the Kutenai for the first time in the spring of 1842 CR, *De Smet*, 1, 371 The Station of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was situated on the Arc à Plat or McGilvray River north of the American border "De Smet was the first missionary of religion to penetrate among the British Kootenays." Morice, *Hist. of the Catholic Church in Western Canada*, 1, 295

around the second St Ignatius near Flathead Lake. They developed into a dependable and edifying group of Christians and Father Congiato pronounced them in 1858 to be the best at this time of all the mountain tribes.

St. Peter's Station was opened by De Smet in 1845 "I placed under the care of St Peter the tribe inhabiting the shores of the great Columbian lakes" Adrian Hoecken visited these Indians to baptize the adults and De Smet was among them again in the spring of 1846. They are referred to in the missionaries' letters as "the Lake tribe" or "The Lake people" (*gens du lac*), as by Joset in 1851.²¹⁸

Southwest of the first St Ignatius on the left side of Clark's Fork was the Station of St Francis Regis. "On the 4th of August [1845]," De Smet informed Father Roothaan in October of the same year, "I left the Chaudières accompanied by several Cree half-breeds to examine a tract of land which they had chosen for the erection of a village. A number of buildings were already in course of construction. I gave the name St. Francis Regis to this new reduction."²¹⁹ In April, 1848, Father Vercruysse was detached from St Ignatius and assigned by Joset as pastor to these half-breeds, with whom he resided somewhat over a year. It proved, however, embarrassing to leave St Ignatius with only a single resident priest, moreover the St Regis Station appears to have become practically deserted in consequence of the rush to California in 1849. Father Vercruysse was accordingly recalled to St Ignatius and the Cree half-breed station was closed.²²⁰

Journeying to Fort Vancouver in the spring of 1842 De Smet made his first acquaintance with the Spokane on their lands in the present eastern Washington, where for some time previous two Protestant clergymen had been working among them. "A band of Spokanes received me with every demonstration of friendship and were enchanted to hear that the right kind of the Black-robbers intended soon to form an establishment in the vicinity. I baptized one of their little children who was dying."²²¹ The Spokane, called also Zingomenes, numbered about

²¹⁸ "[The Station] of the Lakes of the Columbia, where Father Hoecken is to go shortly to baptize the children, has been placed under the patronage of St Peter." De Smet à Roothaan, October 25, 1845 (AA). "The tribe of the Lakes forms part of the Shuyelpi nation. The bulk of this tribe had been evangelized at Kettle Falls [St Paul]." De Smet à Roothaan, May 29, 1846 (AA). From De Smet's letter it would appear that St Peter's Station consisted of no more than some twenty families.

²¹⁹ De Smet à Roothaan, October 25, 1845 (AA).

²²⁰ Joset à Roothaan, October 29, 1849, Accolti à Roothaan, March 28, 1851 (AA).

²²¹ CR, *De Smet*, I 379. Edwards, *Hist Spokane County, Wash*, p 139, discusses the question whether De Smet passed through the Spokane region on his trip to

eight hundred and four²²² In 1847 Joset wrote of this tribe "The Spokanes have more than once invited us to settle in their lands We have never yet been able to accede to their request Some of their number who reside among our neophytes [Kalispel] have made us conceive a good idea of their gentle and refined character Such as have been baptized show themselves very good Christians On the other hand, living by salmon-fishing and without labor of any kind, they are given to gambling and what is worse in my opinion, they live in complete anarchy However, as soon as the number of our workers permits, we shall attempt some excursions among them"²²³ In 1849 Father Adrian Hoecken wrote of the Spokan that they were divided in their stand on religion, some wanting a Catholic, others a Protestant missionary²²⁴ It was not until 1866 that Jesuit missionary work was definitely taken up on behalf of this interesting tribe On December 8 of that year Father Joseph Cataldo opened in Peone Prairie northeast of Spokane the first house of Catholic worship in the Spokane district "It was dedicated to St Michael Pretence at style of architecture there was none, yet within its narrow walls, in a space of eighteen by twenty feet, the Upper Spokan were converted to Christianity and in a comparatively short space of time"²²⁵

Only a slight measure of missionary endeavor was attempted by the Jesuits in favor of the group of four closely related tribes, the Nez Percés, the Cayuse, the Walla Walla and the Paloos Of these tribes, which spoke slightly different dialects of the same language, the most important were the Nez Percés²²⁶ These had very probably been associated with the Flatheads in the first Indian deputation to St Louis from the Rocky Mountains The first notions of Christianity had been brought among the Flatheads by Christian Iroquois from Canada. There are indications that the Nez Percés received religious instruction from the same source, but they were likewise indebted for their initial acquaintance with the Gospel to the Hudson's Bay Company agents and traders, especially Nicholas Pambrun of Fort Walla Walla Both Captain Bonneville and Nathaniel Wyeth, on their arrival among the Nez Percés at a time when as yet no Christian missionaries had made their way to the tribe, found them familiar with certain

Fort Vancouver in 1842 "If so he was undoubtedly the first Catholic priest who ever visited Spokane" Spokane was on the old trail between Colville and the Coeur d'Alène Mission

²²² Hodge, *op cit*, 2 625, art "Spokan"

²²³ Joset, *Missions Catholiques, etc* (AA)

²²⁴ Hoecken ad Roothaan, March 25, 1849 (AA)

²²⁵ *Gonzaga Quarterly* (Gonzaga University, Spokane), 16 82

²²⁶ Hodge, *op cit*, 2 65, art "Nez Percés"

Christian practices, as is recorded by Washington Irving in his *Adventures of Captain Bonneville*. Polygamy was rare among them, Sunday was scrupulously observed so that they refused to hunt with Bonneville on that day, and crimes denounced in the Christian code were visited by them with severe penalties. Pambrun in particular proved himself to be an enterprising lay-apostle and, so he informed Bonneville, had been "at some pains to introduce the Christian religion and in the Roman Catholic form among them [Nez Percés], where it had evidently taken root" ²²⁷ One would have thought the Nez Percés offered a particularly promising field for the Jesuits to cultivate and yet it was not until 1868 that the Society took up resident missionary work among them. On the other hand the Presbyterians were early on the ground, the Reverend Mr. H. H. Spalding opening a mission for these Indians at Lapwai in 1836. Spalding with his wife had come out from the States to Oregon with Marcus Whitman and his bride in 1836, the two women being the first Americans of their sex to cross the Rocky Mountains. Dr. Whitman settled among the Cayuse at Waiilatpu near the Walla Walla River.

Though a mission in this quarter was long delayed, occasional contacts were made between the Nez Percés and their Jesuit neighbors. On Christmas day, 1841, thirty of the tribe received baptism at St. Mary's ²²⁸. In the autumn of 1845 eleven Nez Percés, all either chiefs or headmen, presented themselves at the Coeur d'Alène Mission for instruction and baptism. On their return journey they halted at Mr. Spalding's mission where the clergyman twitted them for making the sign of the cross, saying they would go to perdition if they took up the practices of the black-robbers. This led one of their number, James by name, a one-time disciple of Spalding's, to take up boldly the defence of the religion which he and his travelling companions had begun to profess. Father Joset, who tells the incident, goes on to declare, however, that much must be said in Spalding's favor.

Still we must not identify Mr. Spalding with those fanatics who have almost no other occupation except to calumniate our holy religion. He is our nearest neighbor, his establishment being only sixty miles from our present position [Coeur d'Alène Mission]. We have had recourse to him to procure

²²⁷ Irving, *Adventures of Captain Bonneville* (New York, 1850), p. 300. "The same gentleman [Mr. Pambrun] had given them a code of laws to which they conformed with scrupulous fidelity. Polygamy, which once prevailed amongst them to a great extent, was now rarely indulged. All the crimes denounced by the Christian faith met with severe punishment among them. Even theft, so venial a crime among the Indians, had recently been punished by hanging by sentence of a chief."

²²⁸ CR, *De Smet*, I 338.

things for the farm, as seeds and live stock. He has shown himself very generous. What he did not give, he sold at a very moderate price. Moreover, he offered us his mill to grind our wheat. "You are beginning," he said, "you have need of assistance." I believe him in good faith and of so sincere a piety that I am hoping he will soon enter the Catholic Church. I assisted at the morning service which he held for his family and was very much edified at it. I transcribe here the last lines of one of his letters: "May the God of Missions and of peace grant us his Holy Spirit to comfort and strengthen us in our arduous labors among the benighted and to teach us always how to pray acceptably." They rear their children with a great deal of care. "If only they be good Christians," said his wife, "that is all we wish for." I have often said to myself that if any one was capable of spreading Protestantism among the Indians it would be such a man as Mr. Spalding.²²⁹

On the occasion of these visits of Joset's to Spalding, the Jesuit heard from the latter the story of his nine years' fruitless labor among the Nez Percés. There were ominous signs of the growing hostility of the Nez Percés and Cayuse to the Protestant missionaries. The windows of Spalding's school-house had been maliciously broken by the Indians and he himself suffered insults and sometimes physical injury at their hands. He saw no hope except in the presence of United States troops. As his position was daily growing more critical, he was ready to sell out his holdings and move elsewhere, especially as his wife and children were eager to get away. Joset suggested that he might himself become the purchaser. Spalding entered no objection and was ready to turn over the establishment to any missionary who would supplant him. Joset thought seriously of buying the buildings, forge, mill and other appurtenances, but for the moment lack of funds forbade him to take any step in this direction.

Such is Father Joset's account of his dealings with a clergyman who in later years was to acquire notoriety as a defamer of the Catholic Church and her ministers. It places Mr. Spalding in a more amiable light than that which is shed upon his memory by the rancorous events in which he was embroiled in later years. Very probably there is truth in the explanation which seeks to account for the violence of his later anti-Catholic sentiments on the ground that the Whitman massacre had left him with unstrung nerves and unbalanced mind. At all events it is pleasant to record that a Jesuit priest could feel himself indebted to Mr. Spalding for certain genuine tokens of Christian charity and benevolence.²³⁰

²²⁹ Joset, *Quelques remarques sur les sauvages, etc.*, 1845-1846. (AA)

²³⁰ Bancroft, *Oregon*, I 665. "There can be no doubt that Spalding's mind was injured by this shock. All his subsequent writings show a want of balance which inclines me to regard with levity certain erroneous statements in his pub-

Shortly after Bishop Blanchet arrived at his episcopal see of Walla Walla, September 3, 1847, he began to look about him for an opening for missionary work among the native tribes of eastern Oregon as the Indians, apart from a mere handful of whites (about ten) in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, were the only inhabitants of his diocese. He wrote to a friend "I have very much in mind to establish a mission among the Sakaptiens [Nez Percés]. They have with them a presbyterian minister whom for the most part they do not like. The presence of a black-robe in this place would force him to retire. Father Joset knows some of the chiefs and is going to speak to them."²³¹ Nothing came of the Bishop's hopes in this direction. The next year, 1848, Father Mengarini reported of the Nez Percés that "they were still immersed in all their ancient superstitions . . . with an aversion towards the Catholic missionaries and an incredible horror of them," very probably inspired by Mr. Spalding.²³² When a dangerous contagious malady broke out among the Nez Percés, the Jesuits offered their services but these were declined and all that could be done for the tribe was to baptize a few children. Previous reports about the tribe would seem to have been more encouraging, however, their attitude at this juncture towards the Catholic missionaries did not invite attempts on the part of the latter to evangelize them. But the turn of the Nez Percés for the Catholic message was not delayed indefinitely. Father Cataldo, the Jesuit, appeared among them in 1867, bringing a large number of them within the fold. The following year he opened on the north bank of the Clearwater a permanent mission on their behalf.²³³ In the eyes of the Nez Percés he was their providentially sent apostle and the faith they were privileged to receive at his hands became known among them as "the gospel according to Cataldo."²³⁴

The Cayuse, like the Nez Percés, were to stage some dramatic scenes in the relations between Indians and whites in the Oregon country. As a missionary prospect the Cayuse were not any more promising than the Nez Percés. In June, 1847, Father Nobili gave it as his opinion that hopes of successful work among the Walla Walla, the Nez Percés, the Spokane and the Cayuse were slender. Shortly before that

lications I find in the *Oregon Statesman* of August 11, 1855, this line 'H. H. Spalding, a lunatic upon the subject of Catholicism and not over and above sane upon any subject.'" Bourne, *Essays in Historical Criticism* (New Haven, 1913), p. 28.

²³¹ M. Blanchet à ———, October 13, 1847.

²³² Mengarini à Rootham, February 21, 1848 (AA).

²³³ *Gonzaga Quarterly* (Gonzaga University, Spokane, Wash.), 16:88.

²³⁴ Father Cataldo remained in active service as an Indian missionary up to his death, April 9, 1928.

date Father Joset had made some sort of attempt to open a station in the Cayuse country, planting a cross at a point about thirty miles from Fort Walla Walla. The cross stood but a brief spell, being torn down by the natives.²³⁵ Bishop Blanchet's first actual missionary venture, made within a few weeks of his arrival at Walla Walla, was among the Umatilla and Cayuse, the location being only a short distance from Dr. Whitman's establishment at Waiilatpu. The doom of the latter had already been pronounced. The Bishop and his clergy arrived in the country just in time to be involved in the storm of abuse and calumny that followed in the wake of the historic Whitman massacre of November, 1847. Measles brought into the country by the immigration of 1847 and passed on to the Indians, an illusion of the latter that the philanthropic doctor instead of attempting to cure their sick meant to kill them, and a dozen other circumstances tending to fan the fires of native resentment against the whites issued in the tragic deed perpetrated by the frenzied Cayuse on the little American colony at Waiilatpu. No one nowadays seriously believes that the massacre was the outcome of a Catholic plot, that such a charge should have met at one time with considerable credence only evidences to what lengths religious prejudice can go. "We are clear in our conviction," writes Bishop Bashford of the Methodist Episcopal Church recording the most enlightened and scholarly opinion on the subject, "that the massacre was not planned or deliberately encouraged by the Roman Catholic priests."²³⁶

It will be of interest to cite here the words written some months after the catastrophe by Father Nobili to his General in Rome. The Jesuit had met Whitman at Walla Walla and was greatly impressed by the latter's evident devotion to the Indians, as were all who knew him, for he was an undoubted friend of the red man. Nobili speaks of him as "the excellent Dr. Whitman, deservedly loved by all the Americans for the assistance which he lent them when they came from St. Louis [*sic*] tired and hungry and passed by his residence. They love him, too, for his boarding and educating so many little orphans." Whitman had told De Smet of the threats against his life, he had the same story to tell Nobili.

They [the Cayuse] spared neither his clothes nor his letters, which they tore to pieces, nor did they spare his horse, when he came here to Walla

²³⁵ M. Blanchet à Bourget, undated, but written before the Whitman massacre. Montreal Arch. Archives. Cf. C. B. Bagley (ed.), *Early Catholic Missions in Old Oregon* (Seattle, 1932), I, 151-238 for Father J. B. A. Brouillet's *Authentic Account of the Murder of Dr. Whitman and other Missionaries by the Cayuse Indians of Oregon in 1847 and the Causes which Led to that Horrible Catastrophe*.

²³⁶ Bashford, *The Oregon Missions: The Story of How the Line was run between Canada and the United States* (Cincinnati, 1918), p. 75.

Walla, as he told me himself, they even went so far as to threaten every now and then to kill him and his entire family. Who would have believed it? The bloodthirsty wretches have put their threats into effect. I had already proceeded far in copying out these sheets to take advantage of the first opportunity to send them to Europe when, from a private letter from one of the Triumvirs who govern the Hudson's Bay Company district in Oregon and from a very long official report sent out to the Gentlemen of New Caledonia, I became acquainted with the terrible news. Poor Doctor Whitman, his wife and eleven others, to wit, his entire family were on a sudden slaughtered by the Kayous and [ms²] in their own homes. Eleven other men, nine women and forty-one orphans, were made captives by the Kayous and Nez Percés. One of the Hudson Triumvirs [Ogden], noble and generous soul that he was, finally rescued them. All the American missions except the one nearest to Colville have been [ms²] and abandoned, and the Americans themselves persecuted to death by the frenzied savages. And all this in consequence of a disease [measles] which has wrought havoc among the savages everywhere even in New Caledonia and which was and is still ascribed to poison brought in by the Americans. War has broken out. What will be its consequences? My Indians in the British dominions, also under the scourge of God's hand, are submissive and quiet.²³⁷

Instant war on the part of the American settlers against the Cayuse was provoked by the atrocious deed at Waiilatpu, the perpetrators of which were eventually taken into custody, tried, convicted and hanged. Meantime, the Protestant missionaries in eastern Oregon were withdrawn and even Bishop Blanchet in compliance with government orders had to suspend his operations among the Cayuse and move from Walla Walla to the Dalles. Attempts were made by the Protestants to have the Rocky Mountain missions of the Jesuits also closed, but these were allowed to remain open as the Indians in this section of the territory were on the best of terms with the whites. The excitement caused by the Whitman massacre had simmered down when an incident occurring in the midsummer of 1848 kindled anew the flames of bigotry. As a measure incident to the Cayuse war a law had been passed by the Oregon territorial legislature forbidding the delivery of all firearms and ammunition to the Indians. Father Joset on hearing of this measure came down to Oregon City, where the legislature was sitting, to enter a protest against it on the ground of the hardship it would entail on the Catholic Indians, who were peaceably disposed and loyal to the provisional government. These Indians got their livelihood by hunting, moreover, the Flatheads absolutely needed arms to defend themselves against the Blackfeet. One of the legislators in particular was much impressed by Joset's representations and pledged himself to make

²³⁷ Nobili à Roothaan, June 30, 1848 (AA)

efforts to have the law repealed. It happened at this juncture that a considerable supply of arms and ammunition for the Jesuit missions had arrived at Fort Vancouver. It was in fact the entire annual shipment for all the mission-posts of the Upper Columbia country, consisting of one thousand and eighty pounds of powder, fifteen hundred pounds of balls, three hundred pounds of buckshot and thirty-six guns. Joset, expecting that the law would soon be repealed, directed Accolti to forward the consignment to its destination. This the latter did, and without any attempt, it would seem, to conceal the character of the consignment. At the Dalles Lieutenant Rodgers intercepted the material, seized it, and reported the affair to Governor Abernethy, who directed him to explain to Father Accolti what had been done.²³⁸ The latter, in a communication to Major Lee, commanding the American forces against the Cayuse, pointed out that the law did not prohibit the shipment of munitions but only their distribution among the Indians, and he asked that, in case the munitions were not to be confiscated, they be returned to Fort Vancouver. What disposition was finally made of them is not known, but the incident itself was at once seized upon by prejudiced minds as evidence of an attempt to smuggle arms into the interior to be put into the hands of the Catholic Indians for the extermination of the Protestants. The preposterous charge met with widespread credence and anti-Catholic hostility was soon fanned to a white heat. In December, 1848, a petition for the expulsion of the Catholic clergy from Oregon was introduced into the territorial legislature but failed of passage. Presently news of the discovery of gold in California began to occupy the public mind with the result that it became diverted entirely from the proposed penal measure against the Catholic clergy, of which nothing further is subsequently heard.

²³⁸ Bancroft, *Oregon*, I 743