

CHAPTER XXV

THE OREGON MISSIONS, II

I DE SMET AND OREGON GEOGRAPHY

The contributions made by Father De Smet to the geographical nomenclature of the Pacific Northwest are an interesting aspect of his career. That these contributions, with a few exceptions, did not prove permanent need not detract from the credit he may be given for these well-meant and often clever attempts to label in some dignified way the watercourses and bodies of still water which he encountered in his travels, for as to mountains he seems to have made no effort at all to give them names. It was his privilege thus to play as it were at the game of topographical designation for at the period of his earliest travels in Oregon no detailed maps of this region were available. In fact, for certain features of the country, e. g. the sources of Clark's Fork of the Columbia, his own maps would seem to furnish the earliest accurate information we possess. Moreover, if the lakes and rivers he came to know had names other than their Indian ones, which in some cases was probably the fact, such names were seemingly little known. At all events, De Smet freely attached labels of his own invention or choice to numerous bodies of water in the Oregon country independently of any designation they might otherwise have had among the few roaming whites of the territory. The nomenclature he devised was partly religious, partly personal in character, being borrowed either from the Catholic Church's calendar of saints or from the names of living acquaintances, in particular of relatives and friends in Belgium, especially if these were benefactors of the missions. As a matter of fact, De Smet's attempts to give the names of generous friends a place in Oregon geography were often, it would appear, nothing more than naive and innocent propaganda with a view to enlist their interest still further in the material upkeep of the missions. A substantial burgher in Ghent or Antwerp would no doubt feel moved to support the missionary cause all the more if he saw his name attached to some stream of running water in the wilds of western America.¹

¹ Maps carrying the names of living Jesuits and friends and benefactors of the missions seem to have been included only in European editions of De Smet's letters. Thus in a French edition (Ghent, 1848) of the *Oregon Missions* are

The Bitter Root River (*La Racine Amère* of the Canadian trappers) was called by De Smet the St Mary's as the basin which it drained was called by him St Mary's Valley² Deer Lodge Creek or Hell Gate River, the main fork of the Bitter Root, he named the St Ignatius³ On his way to the Bitter Root in 1841 he journeyed with his party through a mountain-pass "watered by a copious rivulet We gave to this passage the name of 'the Fathers' Defile' and to the rivulet that of St Francis Xavier"⁴ On his way to Colville in the autumn of 1841 the missionary passed by the Lolo Fork of the Bitter Root, which Lewis and Clark had ascended in 1805 on their way to the Pacific As it was without a name, at least De Smet was under this impression, he called it "the river of St Francis Borgia"⁵ On the same journey to Colville in 1841 he named two rivers which unite to form a tributary of Clark's Fork, St Aloysius and St Stanislaus, then, finding himself on All Souls Day, November 1, on the shores of a little lake six miles round at the entrance to Horse Prairie, he called it the Lake of Souls⁶ In the fall of 1844 on his way from the Willamette to the mountains he remembered a distinguished Belgian benefactor of the Missouri Jesuits "Toward noon we skirted a beautiful little lake, which I named De Nef, in memory of one of the great friends and benefactors of the mission"⁷ On the same journey of 1844 another Belgian benefactor, whose gift made possible the beginnings of Marquette University, likewise received recognition "We camped toward nine in the evening on the shore of Lake De Boey, which was literally covered with wild swans, geese and ducks One of the hunters fired off his gun over the lake, and the innumerable multitude of birds rose in a mass, the beating of their wings resembling the deep sound which

maps showing rivers named for Hoecken, Point, Joset, Claessens, Specht, also lakes named Gustave, Sylvie, Elmire, Rosalie, Clemence, Hughes, etc

² The Bitter Root was named Clark by Meriwether Lewis, William Clark's companion in the overland expedition of 1804-06 Elliott Coues, editor of the Lewis and Clark journals, resents De Smet's attempt to call the river St Mary's, allowing himself an unworthy fling for a scholar "Who she was or what she had to do with Clark's river nobody knows except Father De Smet perhaps" Coues (ed), *History of the Expedition Under the Command of Lewis and Clark*, New York, 1893, 2 585

³ CR, *De Smet*, 1 307 According to Coues, *op cit*, 3 1071, De Smet coined the name Hell Gate (*Porte d'Enfer*) De Smet's own statement does not bear this out CR, *De Smet*, 2 582

⁴ *Idem*, 1 307

⁵ *Idem*, 1 343 Cf Palladino, *op cit*, p 46, for comments on De Smet's naming of rivers

⁶ *Idem*, 1 345, 347

⁷ *Idem*, 2 463 In the northern part of Spokane County and now known as Blake's Lake *Washington Historical Quarterly*, 8 287

ordinarily accompanies an earthquake" ⁸ Finally, the present Priest Lake, which discharges by Priest River into Clark's Fork, was called by De Smet at least as early as 1846 Lake Roothaan as a tribute to the General of the Society of Jesus ⁹ A curious instance of his inventiveness in the matter of geographical names occurs in a passage from a journal

On the 2nd of November [1844] we reached the Spokane River, coming from the southeast I have made a map of the headwaters of this interesting river I have called the two streams hitherto unknown on the maps, which form the great Coeur d'Alène Lake, whence the Spokane River derives its waters, by the names of St Ignatius and St Joseph They in turn are formed by a great number of branches, the four principal of which are known today by the names of the four Evangelists, and the various mountain streams which form these last bear the names of all the Catholic hierarchy of the United States I have moreover counted forty-eight little lakes, lying at the base of the mountains, which are named after venerables of the company of Jesus The mission of the Sacred Heart lies nearly in the centre of this system The head of this river therefore forms a fine Catholic group—may the inhabitants of this region be worthy of the fair names which environ them ¹⁰

Of the Oregon place-names originated by the versatile De Smet only a few survive in present-day geography Such are the St Joseph River, one of the feeders of Coeur d'Alène Lake, St Francis Borgia River as an alternative for the Lolo Fork, and Lake Roothaan and Black-gown River in the substituted forms of Priest Lake and Priest River That practically all of the names in his published maps having Catholic associations have become obsolete is to be explained partly by the circumstances that they naturally made no appeal to the non-Catholic stock that later settled the country, partly to the circumstances that they never at any time gained currency or publicity in Oregon

⁸ *Idem*, 2 457 "Encamped ½ mile above outlet of Lake De Boey" Suckley's Report, 1853

⁹ *Idem*, 2 550 Dr Suckley of the Stevens expedition, while on a reconnaissance canoe trip from Fort Owen to Fort Vancouver, 1853, was in the neighborhood of Lake Roothaan, which he thus describes (U S 33d Congr 1st Session House Doc 129, p 276) "I learn that about thirty-five miles to the north there is a beautiful sheet of water called Lake Roothaan It is about the same size as Lake Kalispem and, like it, beautifully clear and surrounded by lofty mountains, but surpasses the latter in beauty by the great number of small islands it contains The outlet of the lake enters Clark's River about five miles above the falls"

¹⁰ *Idem*, 2 456 Additional names bestowed by De Smet included the "Plain of Prayer" on the borders of Lake Okinagan, where he evangelized the Okinagan in 1842 (CR, *De Smet*, 1 383) and "St Mary's lake" between St Ignatius and Fort Benton (*Idem*, 2 772)

itself and were generally unknown outside the pages of Father De Smet's books

As to De Smet's own name, attempts to give it a place in the geography of the Northwest are on record¹¹ Two such instances, it so happens, belong to localities outside the limits of the Oregon country. On going down in the spring of 1842 from the mountains to Fort Vancouver De Smet evangelized a small band of Shuyelpi or Kettle Falls Indians on the shore of a small lake in northern Washington called by him Skarameep "In memory of my visit they gave the name of Leêyou Pierre (Father Peter) to an immense rocky mountain, which dominates the whole region."¹² Three years later in the course of his adventurous trip to the Canadian Rockies, he did some effective work among a group of Iroquois Indians as he tells in a letter indorsed "Foot of the Great Glacier, at the source of the Athabasca" "As the time approached at which I was to leave my new children in Christ, they earnestly beg leave to honor me before my departure with a little ceremony to prove their attachment and that their children might always remember him who had just put them in the way of life. Each one discharged his musket in the direction of the highest mountain, a large rock jutting out in the form of a sugar loaf and with three loud hurrahs gave it my name This mountain is more than 14,000 feet high and is covered with perpetual snow"¹³ Mount De Smet or Roche De Smet, highest peak of the De Smet range, is six miles west of the site of Jasper House or Fort Jasper, which was on the Athabasca, where it emerges from the Rockies¹⁴ This location is in the present Canadian province of Alberta Lake De Smet in Johnson County, Wyoming, was so named by the members of the party who accompanied De Smet in 1851 to the Great Council "We arrived quite unexpectedly on the border of a lovely little lake about six miles long and my travelling companions gave it my name"¹⁵

¹¹ Three places, all in the Pacific Northwest, are named for De Smet, one in Kingsbury County, South Dakota, on the Northwestern R R , one in Ravalli County, Montana, on the Northern Pacific R R , and one in Benewah County, Idaho

¹² CR, *De Smet*, 1 382

¹³ *Idem*, 2 538 M B Williams, *Jasper National Park* (Ottawa, 1928), p 150, gives the height of "Roche de Smet" as 8,330 ft

¹⁴ Hughes, *Father Lacombe, the Black-Robe Voyageur*, p 67 Cross River in Alberta preserves the memory of the "Cross of Peace" erected by De Smet in September, 1845 CR, *De Smet*, 2 504

¹⁵ CR, *De Smet*, 2 668 "Some two hundred miles to the Northwest of Scott's Bluff is an extinct crater of a volcano and the basin has filled with the clean sweet water of the Big Horn Mountains The lake, fed by everlasting springs, is named Lake De Smet" Shumway, *History of Western Nebraska and*

§ 2. FINANCING THE MISSIONS

In their earliest years the Rocky Mountain Missions, as the creation of the Jesuit administrative unit centered at St. Louis, looked principally to the latter for the material means necessary to keep them economically afloat. The travelling and living expenses of the missionaries had to be paid, residences and chapels built and furnished, farm implements procured, hired help engaged and other necessary expenses incurred. These expenses had to be met out of the funds gathered for the purpose by Jesuit superiors and especially by De Smet himself, who, to instance only one of his soliciting ventures, collected about two thousand dollars in New Orleans and other American cities before starting out for the mountains with his pioneer party of 1841.¹⁶

The Association of the Propagation of the Faith, which furnished aid through the Father General, proved to be the main material support of the missions. In both 1844 and 1845 the sum of forty thousand francs (eight thousand dollars) was appropriated to the Oregon Missions from this source. With the outbreak in continental Europe of the revolutionary troubles of 1847 and 1848 the Propagation subsidies began to diminish. In 1848 Father Roothaan was able to assign to the Rocky Mountain Missions 32,549 francs of Propagation money, but in the following year the allocation did not go beyond twenty thousand. "I will always do what I can," Father Roothaan assured the superior of the missions, Father Joset, in August, 1845, "but it must be remembered that everything comes from alms, for the most part it is the widow's mite."¹⁷ It was soon found that the best plan for applying these grants to the Oregon Missions was to place the money on deposit in London with the procurator of the English Jesuit province, at this period Father George Jenkins. Most of the supplies for the missions were obtained on credit from the Hudson's Bay Company's posts in Oregon, especially Fort Vancouver, and the bills thus incurred were paid by the English procurator on behalf of the missions at the headquarters of the company in London. It was important of course that the Oregon procurator should not overdraw his account with the procurator in London, a thing which was sometimes done, as in 1848 and again in 1849 to the no small displeasure of Father Roothaan. Communication between the Oregon country and London by the ships of the Hudson's Bay Company was so much more satisfactory than the long and difficult overland communication with St. Louis by the Oregon

Its People (Lincoln, Neb., 1921), 2-23. "It is soon to be utilized for stowing the waters of Piney Fork to be used in irrigation." CR, *De Smet*, 2-668.

¹⁶ CR, *De Smet*, 1-274.

¹⁷ Roothaan à Joset, August 6, 1845 (AA).

Trail that Roothaan himself in 1844 or 1845 devised the above-mentioned arrangement with the Jesuit procurator in London. Moreover, at the same time he made the Oregon Missions financially independent of the vice-province of Missouri. With the removal of De Smet from the post of superior in 1846 the connection in Jesuit affairs between Oregon and St. Louis became still more remote.¹⁸

The difficulty at all times was to keep the mission expenditures within the modest limit of available resources. In 1848 the Hudson's Bay Company presented the Jesuit procurator in London with claims against Father Accolti six thousand dollars in excess of the actual deposit for the Oregon Missions.¹⁹ This excess sum the English procurator paid out of his own funds, being shortly after reimbursed by Father Roothaan out of the subsidies allowed him by the Association of the Propagation of the Faith. "I have several times written to you," the General explained to Joset in March, 1850, "that you ought to realize the difficulties in which we find ourselves just now, the Propagation of the Faith not being able to furnish as much as in preceding years in view of the agitation and topsy-turvy condition of things in Europe. It is necessary to understand that we have no funds for the missions except what comes from alms and these are neither guaranteed nor perpetual. I have done what I could and shall still do what I can. But the strictest economy is necessary and it is this point, as far as appearances indicate, which people fail to grasp."²⁰

The high cost of living in Oregon of the forties added much to the economic embarrassment of the missions. Particulars in this regard are frequent in Father Accolti's correspondence.²¹ For the supplies which as procurator it was his business to assemble and forward to the missions in the upper Columbia Valley, he was dependent mostly on the Hudson's Bay Company, which had a monopoly of merchandise and provisions in the Oregon country. The regional headquarters of the company was at Fort Vancouver on the north bank of the Columbia a few miles above the mouth of the Willamette. Here from 1824 to 1846 famous John McLoughlin, the Company's chief factor or "Governor," kept a sort of baronial court the while he maintained peace among the Indians, dispensed hospitality and the necessaries of life to the arriving American immigrants and for the rest promoted within the

¹⁸ Elet in 1849 asked Father Roothaan where he was to send two hundred and fifty dollars, which he had received from a friend for the Rocky Mountain Missions.

¹⁹ For De Smet and Oregon mission funds, cf *infra*, Chap. XXX, § 3. Elet à Roothaan, June 13, 1849 (AA).

²⁰ Roothaan à Joset, March 17, 1850 (AA).

²¹ Cf *infra*, § 7.

limits of justice and humanity the interests of the great company of which he was the very efficient servant. His open profession of Catholicism after 1843 evoked the hostility of the bigoted element among the American settlers while the uninterrupted aid he had lent to the latter, often at considerable financial loss to himself, drew upon him the unfriendliness of the company and this in the end occasioned his resignation from its service. The story of his declining years, clouded by the ingratitude and injustice visited upon him by the very individuals he had befriended on their first arrival in the country, is a familiar chapter in the history of the Pacific Northwest. A later and more appreciative generation calls him "the Father of Oregon," and as such his name is secured a high place in history.²² "Of all the men," concludes Holman, his biographer, "whose lives and deeds are essential parts of the history of the Oregon Country, Dr. John McLoughlin stands supremely first—there is no second."²³

McLoughlin's relations with the Jesuit missionaries were cordial and letters of his are extant in which he expresses his satisfaction at seeing these bearers of the Gospel tidings enter the missionary field in Oregon. Of the Jesuits working in that field none perhaps came to have more intimate relations with him than Father Accolti. At the latter's first arrival in Oregon in 1844 it was the chief factor who gave him and his associates welcome at Fort Vancouver, where as also subsequently at Oregon City the two were often brought together in business dealings or private association. This is the picture we get of "the Father of Oregon" in a letter written by Accolti from Oregon City in November, 1852. "The old gentleman, Dr. McLoughlin, is always the same with his strong hearty vigorous herculean complexion, but he is too much ingulphed in his temporal business, too much indeed for an old man as he is with one foot on the slippery brink of the grave. From morning till evening he is continually involved in the mist of his grist-mill flour and never appears in public (Sunday excepted) but entirely aspersed with white powder from the head to the feet as an old country-miller."²⁴

²² McLoughlin's statue is in Statuary Hall, the Capitol, Washington.

²³ Frederick V. Holman, *Dr. John McLoughlin, Father of Oregon* (Cleveland, 1907), pp. 111-114. O'Hara, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

²⁴ Accolti to De Smet, November 20, 1852 (A). While friendly to the missionaries McLoughlin was by no means disposed to grant them favors to the prejudice of the company. Shortly before the factor left the company's service, which was early in 1846, Father Accolti wrote to him to inquire how many cattle were to be delivered at Fort Vancouver in return for the cattle obtained by Father De Smet in 1842 at Forts Colville and Walla Walla. He was answered that payment was to be made not in kind, but in cash, at the rate of fifteen dollars a head. As thirty-one head of cattle had been issued to Father De Smet, this

Father Accolti was hard put to it to procure supplies for the missions at reasonable rates. "The prices of articles of commerce," he informed De Smet in February, 1846, "are exorbitantly high. A pair of French shoes—\$5 00, a pair of water-boots—\$10 00, a blanket—\$6 00, etc. In proportion everything is dearer at the Falls [Oregon City] And mark still another invention. The money of the Fort and of the Falls is at present all the same, i. e. American dollars. All the more important articles are now sold at the Falls and for most of them it is useless to have recourse to Fort Vancouver. The price of wheat at the Fort has fallen to 60 cents. Examine all these things and you will see a good deal of artifice about them. We must have patience."²⁵ At first the Hudson's Bay Company sold supplies to the Catholic missions at a discount, even as high as fifty per cent.²⁶ In February, 1845, Father Demers wrote from Oregon City to a friend that the company was then refusing all discount and selling on a hundred per cent basis. The reason for the change he imagined to be the company's desire to retaliate on De Smet for having the year before brought a party to Oregon on a chartered vessel, thus cutting into the company's transportation monopoly.²⁷ Whatever the reason for the new policy, the fact remained that supplies had now to be bought at the regular market rates. Accolti took the matter up both with McLoughlin and with the latter's successor at Fort Vancouver, Peter Skene Ogden, both declared that no relief was possible. Prices were fixed at the company's office in London and no discretion in demanding them was allowed to its agents abroad. Even McLoughlin himself could not obtain a reduction on goods he bought from the company to carry on a private business of his own in Oregon City. Accolti reports a conference which he had on the subject with McLoughlin sometime in 1846 after the latter had severed his connection with the corporation. The one-time factor suggested three plans by which the Jesuit missions in Oregon could better their economic position. One was for them to combine with the "Catholic Mission," as the establishments of Blanchet

with accrued interest at six per cent made a bill against Father Accolti of \$514 50. McLoughlin explained that he could not do otherwise in his regard, as such was the established practice of the company and he gave "thirty-six other reasons suggested to him by a merchant's dialectics." Accolti à De Smet, February 1, 1846 (A)

²⁵ Accolti à De Smet, February 1, 1846 (A)

²⁶ Demers à Cazeau, February 21, 1845. Quebec Archd. Arch.

²⁷ *Idem*. Though Father De Smet in his published letters speaks of the numerous courtesies of the Hudson's Bay Company to the missionaries, the latter did not commend all features of the company's policy, especially in its treatment of the Indians. Cf. A. G. Morice, O. M. I., *History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia, formerly New Caledonia* (Toronto, 1904), p. 99 *et seq*.

and Demers in lower Oregon where known, and buy their supplies in common. If the joint purchases of the combined missions amounted to five or six thousand dollars a year, the company, so McLoughlin surmised, would be ready to offer discounts. Another plan was to buy mission-supplies in Europe and have them shipped to Oregon in the company's boats at the usual rate of five pounds a ton. The third and most promising plan of all, it seemed to McLoughlin, was for the Jesuit procurator in Oregon to buy supplies for five or six years in Europe and have them transported to Oregon in a specially chartered vessel.²⁸ None of these devices, as far as known, were resorted to by the missionaries.

With the discovery of gold in 1848 the prices of commodities in Oregon soared higher than ever. But however extreme the prices charged by the Hudson's Bay Company, there was, on the other hand, some compensation in the free transportation which it granted the missionaries. Not only did they travel in the Oregon country without charge in the company's barges but their supplies were carried by the same barges into the interior as far as Forts Walla Walla and Colville. Sometimes even horses and men for freighting the supplies from the forts to the missions were also furnished gratis, as was done for Father Joset by Fraser, the Colville commandant, in 1846. Both Jesuits and diocesan missionaries make frequent acknowledgment in their letters of the courtesies extended to them by the company's agents. Birnie at Fort George, McLoughlin at Vancouver, McKinlay and McBean at Walla Walla, Fraser and Lewes at Colville and Ermantinger at Fort Hall, meet with particular mention. "The attention shown Father Nobili in the trading-posts of New Caledonia is beyond all praise," De Smet wrote to Van de Velde in 1846. "Truly and deservedly has Commodore Wilkes stated, 'that the liberality and hospitality of all the gentlemen of the Honorable Hudson Bay Company are proverbial.' Indeed we experience this and participate of [in] it on all occasions."²⁹ This attitude of the company toward the missionaries was probably due in greater or less measure to the influence brought to bear upon its personnel by McLoughlin, but it was also, no doubt, motivated to a large extent by a desire on the part of the corporation in general to cultivate the good-will and confidence of its employees, a majority of whom were French-Canadians and therefore Catholics. At the same time, the friendly treatment accorded the Catholic missionaries in Oregon by the great fur-trading corporation gave ground for complaint on the part of the ultra-Protestants of the region and was gratuitously

²⁸ Accolti à De Smet, 1846 (A)

²⁹ CR, *De Smet*, 2 552

interpreted by them as recompense meted out to the missionaries for their alleged readiness to serve British as against American interests ³⁰

In January, 1851, Father Accolti was still in business relations with the Hudson's Bay Company. The total debt of the missions at this juncture was approximately five thousand dollars, all of which, it appears, was due the corporation. Accolti was drawing at this period on the company's office in San Francisco for \$741 88, which he engaged to repay at Oregon City with products of the St. Francis Xavier farm. He hoped to clear the entire debt within two years provided the Association of the Propagation of the Faith did not fail him ³¹. As a matter of fact subsidies from this quarter had been falling off and in 1849 only fifteen hundred dollars was placed by Father Roothaan to the credit of the Oregon Mission in London. This sum, as Accolti informed the General in a letter of 1850, which throws light on the economic struggles of the missions, was far from sufficient to meet their annual needs.

To get Indians to work you must pay them and pay them by clothing them from head to foot, and to clothe them you must absolutely buy what they need. A mission cannot keep up without horses. It is a capital of the first necessity. Without horses you cannot work or travel or transport the necessities of life. To procure horses you must buy them from the Indians by means of clothing, blankets, tobacco, etc. The two last winters, being very severe ones, carried off almost all the horses belonging to our mission. Formerly the Hudson's Bay Company would undertake to transport the mission freight as far as Walla Walla and Colville, that is, more than half the distance to the missions. But now, as barges are no longer going up to those posts, the Hudson's Bay Company can no longer help us. It is necessary, therefore, to come down every year with a large number of horses and for so many horses you have to employ a proportionate number of Indians, whom you must pay well, etc. For sustenance in the mountains you must have a stock of dried buffalo-meat and to procure this you must pay for it. All this computed and with all expenses and transportation charges counted in, Your Reverence will easily understand that this sum of \$1500 is disproportionate to the needs of the five missions especially at a time when everything is so enormously dear in Oregon as also in California. A distressing result of the discovery of the gold-mines, which places us in the falsest possible position before the world.

Father Joset has written to Your Paternity that some of the Residences might be able to support themselves by their products. Either he is deceived or the statement calls for some explanation. The products of the Residences

³⁰ "It increased the hostility of the latter [the Americans] toward the [Hudson's Bay] fur company and especially towards McLoughlin, to whose jealousy of them the Methodists attributed the action of the Company in allowing or, as they believed in inviting the Catholics to settle in the country." Bancroft, *Oregon*,

I 332

³¹ Accolti à Roothaan, January, 1851 (AA)

in the mission-district might keep the [Jesuit] community as also the Indians in the employ of the Residences from starvation, this I willingly admit. But I cannot see how these products can procure clothes for our people and for the Indians who are working at every Residence. I cannot see how by means of these products you can purchase horses, make journeys, etc. In conclusion, to get these products you must pay the Indians and to pay them you must buy merchandise at Fort Van Couver and elsewhere and so, there we are. It's a circle from which there is no escape.

Father Accolti then goes on to say that the Willamette farm was beginning to yield two thousand dollars a year, this, however, was when he had hands to work it. But now it was almost impossible to hire labor except for exorbitant wages. Farm-hands asked five or six dollars a day while even the Indians who came down to the Willamette to hire themselves out were given "a three-dollar wage." "Every one in Europe would take this to be an exaggeration but I say before our Lord that it is the pure truth."³² The mission finances, however, quickly improved and within a few years of Accolti's statement to the General the Rocky Mountain residences were out of debt or at least well provided for. In 1858 Father Congiato assured the General, Father Beckx, that beginning with 1854 the missions had been cared for even beyond their needs. Food was then abundant and wholesome and two thousand dollars was enough for the annual support of the missionaries.

For the St. Louisan of today the Pacific slope has none of the mystery that attaches to geographical remoteness. Railroad, telegraph, motor-car, aeroplane and radio have made an easy bridge over the spaces that lie between. But in the forties and fifties the Oregon country and California were romantically remote from Missouri. What Oregon meant in the popular mind is illustrated by the objection seriously urged at one time in Congress against its organization as a territory and state on the ground that its incredible distance from the East would make it impossible for it to be represented at Washington. Congressional sessions would have come and gone before the members from Oregon would have completed their journey of three thousand miles from the land of the setting-sun.³³ To the Jesuits in St. Louis the field where De Smet and his associates were plying their missionary tasks *ultra Montes Saxosos*, "beyond the Rocky Mountains," seemed as foreign and far-away as India and China seem to most Americans today. This impression was especially borne out by the almost in-

³² Accolti à Roothaan, March 28, 1850 (A)

³³ For the crude ideas about Oregon prevalent at the time cf. Bancroft, *Oregon*, I 355 *et seq.*

credible delay in mail-communication between the Rocky Mountain region and Missouri. Six months after the departure from St. Louis of Father De Smet's party of 1841 their fellow-Jesuits were in suspense as to their safety. "I heard yesterday," Verhaegen hastened to inform the General, August 22 of that year, "that the party Ours started off with was captured and massacred by the Indians and that the priests also perished. To me the rumor seems to be quite unfounded." Two days later he wrote again to Father Roothaan: "We have not learned yet whether they arrived safe and sound and I cannot say when we shall receive the good news. We are daily praying for those zealous men and we trust our prayer will be heard." "I make mention again," said Father Van Assche to the General in 1844, "of the great difficulty, rather should I say of the impossibility of communication. It ordinarily requires two years to get an answer, very often three or four years and there is no regular and certain communication. So far we have heard nothing of Father De Vos, perhaps we shall hear this year, perhaps next year, we simply do not know."³⁴ De Vos had left St. Louis in April, 1843. Van Assche's letter is dated July 24, 1844. In September, 1845, De Vos was still unheard from, as Van de Velde anxiously informed the General: "Not a single one of the travelers who started out for the Columbia River these last two years has returned," which was perhaps an overstatement. However, in 1844 Van de Velde informed Roothaan that the following year would see a new mail-service to the Far West, making possible an exchange of letters between the national capital and Oregon in six months.³⁵ Previous to this time there was no regular government mail-service putting the remote western country in touch with the East. One simply entrusted his letters to some reliable trader or emigrant or other individual travelling in the desired direction. This is illustrated by the case of a Cincinnati who arrived at the Willamette early in 1846 or probably toward the end of the preceding year. He carried with him a packet of letters, many of them addressed by the Notre Dame nuns of Cincinnati to their sister-nuns of the Willamette, while others were for Father Joset. "He would rather have lost \$500 than a single one of these letters," he assured Accolti.³⁶

Correspondence with the Father General in Rome was on the whole more expeditious than with superiors in St. Louis. European mail sometimes came by way of Canada, more often by ships that made the long journey around the Horn and put in at Fort Vancouver. The missionaries' letters make frequent mention of their anxiously awaiting the

³⁴ Van Assche ad Roothaan, July 24, 1844 (AA)

³⁵ Van de Velde ad Roothaan, September 6, 1845, January 17, 1844 (AA)

³⁶ Accolti à De Smet, February 9, 1846 (A)

arrival of the European post at the fort As an instance of the time required for mail from Rome, Father Mengarini at St Mary's in what is now western Montana received on July 17, 1847, a letter from the General dated August 31, 1846 Another letter from the General of date August 8, 1845, was received July 5, 1847, almost two years later The General's appointment of Father Accolti as superior of the missions reached the latter in San Francisco a year later, so also the General's permission to Father Point to go to Canada was a year on the way In March, 1850, Roothaan wrote to Joset "I have finally received here in Rome your letters of March 12 and 18, 1848, that is, a year and a half [two years] late And now I see you have not received my letters written while I was in France and sent by different routes, sometimes in duplicate It is distressing" ³⁷ Little wonder that Father Roothaan advised Joset that he would have to get along largely without counsel from Rome "How hard it is," comments the General, "at such a distance and with such delays in the mail to settle everything from here! Rather it is impossible So let your Reverence act in my place and with the discretion customary with you in the past" ³⁸ Even between the Oregon stations mail was an exceedingly slow affair Father Joset, writing from St Ignatius in 1849, let the General know what a problem it was for him to keep in touch with his subordinates

Communication with our men is very rare From Superiors, as is obvious, we hardly get an answer in eighteen months Even with resident members of the Mission correspondence is very slow With Father Accolti or the Willamette Residence a two-way delivery of letters is possible only twice a year, with New Caledonia, the same, with St Mary's mission, three or four times a year by hired carriers, such as can scarcely be secured at the Wallamet or in New Caledonia except for very high wages As a result the Superior is deprived of the advice not only of his mediate subjects, but even of consultants ³⁹

§ 3 AID FROM ST LOUIS

The Rocky Mountain Missions were withdrawn by Father Roothaan from the jurisdiction of the St Louis Jesuits in 1852 From the time they thus passed out of the hands of the latter they could not regularly rely upon them for necessary aid in personnel and financial support Yet Father De Smet, though standing no longer in any official relation to these missionary centers which he had set on foot, never to his last day lost interest in them and, what is more, never ceased lending them help by whatever means he could command The sup-

³⁷ Roothaan à Joset, March 17, 1850 (AA)

³⁸ Roothaan à Joset, February 15, 1847 (AA)

³⁹ Joset ad Roothaan, February 5, 1849 (AA)

plies of various kinds for the Jesuit Indian missions on either slope of the Rockies were shipped during the sixties from St. Louis. The itemized orders were sent by the superiors of the missions to De Smet, who made the purchases and saw them packed and safely placed on board some upstream Missouri River steamer or else personally accompanied the cargo. The bills for the purchases thus made were either charged against the missions or else were met by De Smet out of the funds gathered by him in Europe and America on behalf of the Indians. Often the articles ordered by the missions were begged by him from St. Louis merchants while his wide acquaintance with steamboat officials generally enabled him to ship the cargoes free of charge.

De Smet's resourcefulness in thus getting together and forwarding at greatly reduced costs large consignments of mission-supplies to the remote Rocky Mountain region is often instanced in his correspondence. "I next thank your Reverence," he wrote on one occasion to Father Thomas O'Neil, rector of the Bardstown college, "for your charitable contribution to the R[ocky] M[ountain] Missions. I succeeded in forwarding to F[ather] Hoecken a large amount of goods, contained in about 40 boxes, 24 bags and bales, bundles of spades, hoes, shovels, axes and handles, cross cut saws and whip saws, four ploughs, etc.—with a large trunk of chasubles, albs, etc. I hope I shall be able to pay the whole from charitable contributions—the amount may come to near \$1300." ⁴⁰ Father Adrian Hoecken, to whom this consignment was directed, was superior at the time of the Blackfoot Mission on the Sun River near Fort Shaw. In reference to this same consignment De Smet wrote May 7, 1860, to Father Congiato, superior of the California and Rocky Mountain Missions. "The full value of the goods forwarded to Fort Benton may be fairly put down at Fourteen Hundred Dollars (\$1400). I purchased a good ways above the alms I received. However, perceiving from your last letter of the 5th April that your purse is low in San Francisco, I shall try my best not to draw on you in California—and in that case the \$1400 or rather \$1265 (the \$135 subtracted) are pure alms and gifts. I beg your Reverence to take it in consideration—in the endeavor I have made to obtain alms. I included all the Missions." ⁴¹ A letter of De Smet's to Father Hoecken, also in

⁴⁰ De Smet to O'Neil, May, 1860 (A)

⁴¹ De Smet to Congiato, May 7, 1860 (AA). "I wrote to you that Father De Smet would soon start for the Indian tribes who live along the Missouri river and are destitute of all spiritual aid. His departure was delayed for several reasons and fortunately so, as four days before he took ship came hunters and traders from the Rocky Mountains with a letter for him from Fathers Giorda and Menetrey, who asked for a number of things which they badly needed. It was thought advisable to make a loan immediately of 1500 dollars and purchase nearly everything, the more so as Father De Smet was allowed to take the things along with

reference to the above-mentioned shipment, reveals the pains he was at to be of service to the missionaries

Very Reverend F Provincial received your two letters and lists I can appreciate your motives in not sending me a line I let it pass It will not hinder me in the least in rendering you all the service I can towards promoting the good cause and welfare of the poor benighted Indian tribes Before your 1st letter and list arrived I had been advised by F Marasci [Maraschi] from San Francisco not to send provisions or anything else from St Louis to the Mountains At the receipt of your list I forwarded a copy of it, the same day, to California to Rev F Congiato The steamer being announced to leave by the 1st of May, no time was to be lost [sic] and I had not a cent to rely upon I set out immediately on a begging expedition and obtained between seven and eight hundred dollars I next visited Mr Ch[arles] Chouteau, the proprietor of the boat, and obtained from that charitable gentleman permission to place the weight of three tons (6000 lbs) in goods on board of his steamer List in hand, during eight days I begged and purchased goods, storing them all the while in the ware-house of a friend—when the boxes had accumulated to about forty in number and the bags and bales to 24, with four ploughs, two barrels of pork and one barrell vinegar, I had the objects weighed and to my great astonishment they overreached 7000 lbs, leaving me 1000 lbs over my allowance or permit of Mr Chouteau This necessarily put a stop to my begging ⁴²

In such practical ways was De Smet keeping in touch with the mission-posts he had set up in the Rockies in his younger days His services in this regard were freely and gratefully acknowledged by the superiors who were there continuing his work Father Congiato wrote to De Smet in 1860 "May God continue to bless that noble Province [of Missouri] and your Reverence above all, who are and have always been the best friend and the greatest benefactor that our Missions of the Rocky Mountains had, have and will ever have" "He [Father Giorda] thanks me," said Father Coosemans in 1863, "for having allowed Father De Smet to do everything for the Indians, adding that he does not know how these missions could get along with-

him without charge He will himself deliver them to the Fathers' hired men, who are to be sent with wagons to Fort Benton, 3000 miles away The good Father added, out of money given to him by friends, merchandise to the value of 500 dollars and more, which of course he gave by way of a gift to the missionaries A good-sized room was fitted up for him on the boat so that Mass could be said every day" Murphy ad Beckx, May 28, 1862 (AA)

⁴² De Smet to A Hoecken, May 3, 1860 (A) Cf also De Smet to Hoecken, March 6, 1863, in CR, *De Smet*, 4 1512 "I brought the Fathers about seventy boxes, bags and barrels, several plows, a wagon and an ambulance, all free of charge This included at least \$1000 over and above their allowance which I had scraped together"

out his assistance" ⁴³ The following year Giorda, noting in a letter to Father Beckx what he thought to be certain oddities on the part of De Smet, averred "All things taken together we cannot but be grateful to Father De Smet for his good will and benefactions toward these missions" ⁴⁴

In 1866 the question was raised by Father Giorda whether the sums spent by Father De Smet on the Rocky Mountain Missions did not really belong to them from the beginning, inasmuch as they had been largely contributed for this particular object. They were, therefore, not to be regarded as merely personal largesses, so to speak, on the part of De Smet. "I should like to know (if I be not too presumptuous) to what extent we can draw upon the said Father and upon his purse. For I have never been able to find out whether Father De Smet's money belongs to the Missouri Province, or to Oregon or to the Father General" ⁴⁵ Father Razzini, Visitor in California in 1873, was told by Father De Smet himself that large sums were collected by him in Europe, especially in Belgium, for the Rocky Mountains and, so said De Smet, "I am in agreement with Reverend Father Provincial to send supplies and assist this Mission at all times, as I have done and shall continue to do." Father De Jonghe, superior of the Jesuit residence of Ghent, assured Razzini that he had himself turned over to De Smet many thousands of francs collected in that city "solely for the Rocky Mountains" ⁴⁶ With regard to monies collected in Europe and America by De Smet for the Indian missions, there is nothing to indicate that they were contributed by the donors exclusively in favor of the Rocky Mountain Missions. He had missionary schemes of his own to promote, e. g. the Sioux mission, which was actually attempted in 1871. Whatever funds were gathered by him specifically for the Rocky Mountain Missions were without doubt applied in that direction. The significant thing is that De Smet interested himself to the end in such effective ways in these early creations of his apostolic zeal though he was under no obligation to do so, seeing they had passed to a provincial jurisdiction (Turin) of the Society other than his own.

The manner in which supplies for the Rocky Mountain Missions were forwarded from St. Louis discloses some interesting facts. These supplies in many if not in most instances were carried gratis in the boats of the American Fur Company as were the missionaries them-

⁴³ Congiato to De Smet, January 30, 1860 (A). Coosemans à Beckx, November 18, 1863 (AA).

⁴⁴ Giorda à Beckx, May 5, 1864 (AA).

⁴⁵ Giorda à Beckx, February 6, 1866 (AA).

⁴⁶ Razzini à Beckx, 1873 (AA).

selves⁴⁷ The persons chiefly instrumental in securing this service to the missionaries were Pierre Chouteau, Jr, and his son, Charles P Chouteau of St Louis, the latter of whom made it a life-long subject of pride that he was the first student to register in St Louis College after it passed into Jesuit hands Pierre Chouteau, Jr, had won distinction as the premier merchant of St Louis, being for years head of the American Fur Company, which controlled for a considerable period the entire fur trade of the Northwest His son after him was identified with the business and for a while was captain of one of the company's boats, the *Spread Eagle*, on which De Smet was more than once a passenger In April, 1861, Father Adrian Hoecken, while on a furlough at Santa Clara College in California, submitted to the Visitor, Father Sopranis, an itemized statement of some of the services rendered to the missions by the American Fur Company, "especially through Charles P Chouteau and Mr A Dawson, a Scotch Protestant at Fort Benton" Freight to the amount of six thousand pounds had been transported gratis from St Louis to Fort Benton, head of navigation on the Missouri River, a distance of some twenty-five hundred miles For this long haul the government was paying at this time a charge of ten cents a pound Moreover, the company had furnished, also without charge, men, wagons and horses to transfer the freight to the mission, presumably St Ignatius, a distance of three hundred and fifty miles, the operation taking thirty-six days Again, the company had on other occasions placed its men and wagons at the service of the missionaries, besides presenting them at intervals with acceptable gifts, as flour, dried meat and, in one instance, "60 buffalo tongues" Assuming apparently that Mr Chouteau would receive due attention from the Jesuits of St Louis, Hoecken asked his superior to send Mr Dawson a book or other gifts in appreciation of the kindness showed by the company⁴⁸ Without impugning in any manner the company's motives in following the policy it did, it is permissible to recall that even from the standpoint of mere business the latter was probably receiving from the missionaries services of more value than those which it rendered them The pacifying influence of

⁴⁷ As early as 1847 Father Point descending the Missouri in an American Fur Company boat was given transportation gratis "What I must not qualify or delay [to express] is my thanks for the personal services rendered to me at Fort Lewis and for the happy influence which the very name of Mr Pierre Chouteau exercises over all parties even the most unfriendly The exceedingly sympathetic attitude of these gentlemen [of the American Fur Company] towards our work has been a source of consolation to me especially at the end of my steamboat trip, they would not have the Captain accept anything for my passage" Point à De Smet, June, 1847 (A)

⁴⁸ Hoecken to Sopranis, April, 1861 (AA)

the missionaries on the Indian tribes helped greatly to promote the conditions which made the fur-trade possible

The courtesies extended by Charles P Chouteau to the missionaries were especially appreciated In May, 1862, De Smet was a passenger all the way from St Louis to Fort Benton on an American Fur Company boat, the *Spread Eagle* "The respectable and worthy captain, Mr Charles P Chouteau had had a little chapel prepared on board—I had the great consolation of offering the holy sacrifice every day during my long voyage" ⁴⁹ Informing a correspondent that a cargo of goods for the Rocky Mountain Missions sent from St Louis had reached its destination, De Smet wrote in 1863 "I have since learned that the Reverend Fathers have received the provisions, clothing, church vestments, tools, etc, intended to supply the different missions My little cargo amounted in all to nearly 1500 pounds The worthy captain of the steamboat, Mr Charles Chouteau, was so exceedingly obliging and charitable as to give me a free passage, together with the two brothers, as well as transportation for our baggage and all the things destined for the Missions—a charity on his part which would otherwise have cost us upward of \$1,000 We shall pray and venture to hope that heaven will reward him with all his respectable family for his great goodness and charity to the missionaries and their missions This good work he repeats with pleasure every spring and at each departure for the mountains" ⁵⁰

On his voyage of 1864 to the upper Missouri De Smet met with a similar attention "As on former occasions Mr Charles Chouteau received me on board his boat with his habitual kindness and cordiality He gave me the quietest and most commodious stateroom and at once had an altar prepared therein Thanks to his charity I found myself installed as if at home in one of the Society's houses I have the consolation of offering the holy sacrifice every day in a kind of antechamber contiguous to mine A good number of Catholics can assemble here and they come every Sunday to assist at Mass and fulfill their religious duties." ⁵¹

In 1863 the American Fur Company, or, as it was sometimes styled by De Smet, the "Honorable St Louis Fur Company," withdrew from a business which had begun to be unprofitable owing to the gradual disappearance of fur-bearing animals in the Northwest "Mr Charles Chouteau, the great benefactor of the Missions," De Smet wrote in August, 1865, "has sold out his whole concern in the trading-posts on the Missouri river, except at Fort Benton He may even sell that post

⁴⁹ CR, *De Smet*, 2 783

⁵⁰ *Idem*, 3 803

⁵¹ *Idem*, 3 819

before long This would bring a great contrariety [*sic*] in regard to the upper missions, as freight on all the goods might be exacted, which would make a considerable amount However, let us hope in kind Providence Should Chouteau cease running on the Missouri, some other kind friend might step in his footsteps”⁵²

The “kind friend” whom De Smet hoped to be able to rely on after the passing of the Chouteaus seems to have made his appearance in the person of Captain Joseph La Barge (1815-1899) Between him and the missionary there was not merely friendship but intimacy Probably no one among the lay acquaintances of the missionary was closer to him in his latter years than this well-known Missouri River captain It was on La Barge’s boat, the *St Ange*, that De Smet made his tragic upriver voyage in 1851 which witnessed the death by cholera of his companion, Father Christian Hoecken, and it was in order to bless La Barge’s newly launched steamer, the *De Smet*, that the veteran missionary pioneer of the frontier made his last public appearance, May 13, 1873, only ten days before his death When De Smet was in Europe in 1869 Father Keller wrote to him from St Louis “Father [Thomas] O’Neil still has charge of your books and affairs—but nothing has been done in regard to the Rocky Mt Missions—no goods bought yet We shall see Capt La Barge next week and try to get them to take some freight up free If we succeed in this, we shall send up a part of this list If not, we may send nothing as they say they would rather purchase up there than pay full freight on goods from St Louis”⁵³ At Captain La Barge’s funeral from the Jesuit Church of St Francis Xavier in St Louis, April 6, 1899, Father Walter Hill paid tribute to the generous and important services rendered by this Missouri River celebrity to the Jesuit missionaries of his day.⁵⁴

§ 4 MINISTRY AMONG THE WHITES

The Jesuit ministry in Oregon was not expended merely on the Indians, it reached out also, though on a smaller scale, to the whites It was primarily indeed on behalf of the Indians that the Society of Jesus had entered the Oregon field, but circumstances modified to an extent the Society’s program and made it share in the ministerial care of the pioneer Catholic white population of the country Father Blanchet had appealed to De Smet on his first arrival at the Bitter Root in 1841 to make the valley of the Willamette in lower Oregon the

⁵² *Idem*, 3 836

⁵³ Keller to De Smet, March 24, 1869 (A)

⁵⁴ Hiram M Chittenden, *History of Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri Run, Life and Adventures of Joseph La Barge* (New York, 1903), 2 440

principal field of his operations. He spoke enthusiastically of the prospects of the Church in that region and of the need there for "a convent, college and schools." In the event the first decade of Jesuit activity in Oregon did include a measure of apostolic work among the whites of the lower Columbia region, but it was temporary and provisional in character and after the mid-fifties there were no Jesuit priests at all in that quarter until their reappearance many decades later. Father De Vos, after some months spent with the Flatheads, had been put by De Smet in the fall of 1844 at the head of St. Francis Xavier's residence in St. Paul, the contemplated headquarters for all the Jesuit missions in the Pacific Northwest. "Reverend Father De Vos," Father Blanchet informed the Bishop of Quebec in November, 1843, "has been invited by Dr. McLoughlin to come down and make the torch of the faith flame amid the nations that surround the white population."⁵⁵ Later he wrote again to Quebec: "Father De Vos, who is spending the winter among the Flatheads, proposes to come down next spring with his companion [Adrian Hoecken], whom he brought along from St. Louis. So we should do wrong to lose hope."⁵⁶ The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, brought over from Belgium by De Smet in 1844, opened an academy at St. Paul within a few weeks of their arrival, with thirteen children of the Canadian farmers of the district in attendance. Only a half league away from the Jesuit residence in St. Paul was the sisters' convent and academy, the chapel of which saw its first Mass October 17, 1844, Father De Vos being celebrant. On November 7 following the same father began a retreat of eight days for the sisters, the first occasion on which the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius were given to religious women in the Oregon country.⁵⁷ During Blanchet's absence from the vicariate, 1844-1847, Father Demers administered church affairs as vicar-general. Father De Vos was also at this juncture given the powers of vicar-general, a post from which he subsequently withdrew on instructions from De Smet. Father Roothaan himself expressed disapproval of the appointment, as it invested the incumbent with a measure of authority over the secular clergy and might easily lead to unpleasant complications.

Of the group of Jesuits in lower Oregon at this period, which included De Vos, Accolti, Nobili, Ravalli and Vercruysse, the first was the only one well enough acquainted with English to deal with the arriving emigrants from the states.⁵⁸ Accolti, besides working at Eng-

⁵⁵ Blanchet à ———, November 6, 1843. Quebec Archd. Arch.

⁵⁶ Blanchet à Signay, November 28, 1843, Quebec Archd. Arch.

⁵⁷ O'Hara, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

⁵⁸ One of the Oregon missionaries, apparently De Vos, wrote at this time to Father Roothaan: "The Italian Fathers are engaged [1844-1845] chiefly in study

lish, set himself to learn Spanish with a view to aiding the Spaniards and Mexicans who were coming up from California. As to De Vos, he was early in 1845 placed in charge of the parish in Oregon City, Father Accolti succeeding him as superior at St Paul Oregon City, laid out on Dr McLoughlin's claim, was bidding fair to develop into the metropolis of Oregon. Its first Catholic church, St John's, subsequently the cathedral, was blessed and opened to the public February 8, 1846.⁵⁹ Father De Vos acquitted himself of his new duties with enterprise and zeal. "The Archbishop lately gave me charge," he says, "of all the part to the [east ?] of the Willamette River that I might make excursions among the Irish and Americans who are colonizing this part." Among his converts from Protestantism were persons of distinction in contemporary Oregon life, including Dr J E Long, secretary of the provisional government, and Peter H Burnett, first chief-justice of Oregon and later first governor of California. Burnett had made acquaintance with De Vos in 1843 when the two found themselves together in the great emigration that went over the Oregon Trail in that year. "After an impartial and calm investigation," he writes in his *Recollections*, "I became convinced of the truth of the Catholic theory and went to Oregon City where I found the heroic and saintly Father De Vos, who had spent one or more years among the Flathead Indians. He received me into the Church."⁶⁰ Burnett later recorded his religious experiences in a carefully reasoned volume, *The Path which Led a Protestant Lawyer to the Catholic Church*.

Father De Vos's ministry was not confined to Oregon City. He made ministerial trips through the valley of the Willamette and even among the Indian tribes of the Columbia banks as far as the sea. A letter of his to Father Roothaan enters into details on this phase of his work.

Ever since I left the Residence of St Francis Xavier to betake myself to the Falls [of the Willamette] and [afterwards] to its mouth, God has designed to bless my ministry. On St Ignatius day I received the abjuration of the Secretary of the Provisional Government [Dr Long] and of his wife. I baptized and remarried them the same day. Since their conversion their life is truly exemplary. At Fort Vancouver, where the Governor [McLoughlin], a convert from Protestantism of nearly three years ago, preaches by his example, I had the consolation to baptize seven adults, of whom six were

of the language of the country. Father Ravalli by his knowledge of medicine and exercise of the sacred ministry rendered great service to all the habitants in St Paul's mission, for every dwelling-house had its sick." (AA)

⁵⁹ O'Hara, *op cit*, p 136

⁶⁰ *Oregon Historical Society Quarterly*, 5 180. A new edition of Burnett's work, edited and abridged by Rev James J Sullivan, S J, was published in St Louis, 1909.

tchinoack [Chinook] Indians and one a Walla-Walla mixed blood, as also a good number of children

Father Nobili had done a great deal of good in this place. He succeeded in bringing to the sacraments, with three or four exceptions, all the employees of the fort (most of them Canadians or Iroquois). The missionaries before him had failed. The memory and name of "the little father" will be long in benediction here and in all the neighborhood. All the persons he brought back to the right faith are persevering and continue to go to confession every month. At the beginning of October I went to the mouth of the river [Columbia] and as far as John and Baker Bay to visit there the tschinook and Hosops (these last had never seen a priest nor had any priest been in their lands before). These poor people are as wild as can be imagined. They received me kindly and gave me their children to baptize. On my way to and from the Tchinnouck I visited all the Indians on both sides of the Columbia from Fort Vancouver to Fort George. All these Indians are very superstitious and corrupt. Though nothing else were done except to baptize their children, the majority of whom die very young, a person would be amply repaid for his trouble.⁶¹

In a letter of 1847 to a St. Louis Jesuit, De Vos, while depreciating his own labors, made an appeal for co-workers in the now highly promising missionary field on the Pacific Coast.

Your Reverence will observe that your letter did not find me among my dear Mountain Indians, but in the heart of an American settlement. And what, you may ask, are my occupations among these good people? Scarcely any, though I think that if there had been but one zealous missionary, well acquainted with the English language, such as your Reverence, Fathers Verhaegen, Elet, Carrell, Aelen, etc., he would do wonders in this new country. Your Reverence knows that I am a very indifferent speaker and yet they come and listen to me with the greatest attention and seem to be pleased with the ill-spoken instruction which I gave them. Do, dear Father, send us two or three good missionaries filled with the spirit of our Holy Institute, well-versed in controversy and the English language, and regardless of the difficulties, dangers and contradictions which now and then they will have to encounter, regardless also of fever and rheumatism and above all indifferent to sunshine and rain—for in Lower Oregon we may say that it rains but once a year, from the end of October till the beginning of May.⁶²

In 1847 Father De Vos returned to the upper country to resume the career of an Indian missionary which he had hoped to pursue when he left St. Louis in 1843 for the West. A year among the Coeur d'Alènes was followed by three years among the Shuyelpi, of which

⁶¹ De Vos à Roothaan, November 7, 1845 (AA). Three variants for Chinook occur in this letter.

⁶² St. Louis *News Letter*, Oct. 22, 1847.

mission he was superior. But missionary life proved too severe a strain on him and in 1851, being fifty-four, he was called to California, where at Santa Clara College he passed away in 1859.⁶³

The fruitful apostolate of De Vos among the Americans was paralleled in many ways by Father Louis Vercreyusse among the Canadians. The men of his flock, for the most part former employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, were now engaged in farming. A superior of Vercreyusse once characterized him as "brusque and irritable," but a thoroughly honest man withal, who gave no quarter to the failings of his congregation. He inveighed especially against the intemperance that was common among the Canadians of the Willamette. His sermons on the subject, Father Demers wrote to Quebec, "were enough to make the devil himself shudder." But on the whole the one-time voyageurs and trappers now engaged in the less romantic pursuit of tilling the soil showed themselves a distinctly decent and law abiding type of people. They were loyally devoted to the Church and its pastors and did not shrink from serious discomfort when it was a question of living up to their duties as church-members. This finds illustration in a letter addressed by Father Vercreyusse in 1846 to a brother of his, a resident of Courtrai in Belgium. The locality in the Grand Prairie referred to in the letter was known as St. Louis and was distant only a few miles from St. Paul.⁶⁴

For the past four or five years the [Hudson's Bay] Company has allowed them to settle in the Willamette [Valley], where they marry Indians or mixed bloods. These families number now 150. Having neither seen nor heard of a priest during the entire term of their service, they live in utter disregard of their religious duties. Mgr. Blanchet lately began to make them the object of his particular attention. By agreement with Father De Smet, he has given me [1844] charge of a group of these people who occupy a tract seven or eight leagues in length by four or five in width called La Grande Prairie. They were without a church. I was told I should never succeed in this project, I answered that with God's help one may succeed in anything. Up to this these poor people have been coming, in winter as well as summer, to Mr. Blanchet's church, now our Cathedral, situated a half-league from Lake Ignace. This famous cathedral, 40 feet long, 30 broad and 22 high, open to every wind, is as miserable a looking shed as I ever saw. Now these good people find their way to church from a distance of two, three and even five miles around, mounted on horseback and with their wives and children riding behind. Rain, hail or snow, it makes no difference, they remain camping under the trees until Vespers. The sight has more than once moved me to pity, but then what a consolation to behold such fervor in men once

⁶³ Cf. *infra*, § 6

⁶⁴ Bancroft, *Oregon*, I 71, has a map of French Prairie. Cf. also O'Hara, *op. cit.*, p. 27

utterly abandoned. One Sunday afternoon about half-past three o'clock I had them come together and discussed with them the question of a site for a new church. They all began to speak at once, each one wishing it near his own house. Realizing that I had not proceeded in the right way, I commanded silence and then told them they had best abide by my decision. To this they unanimously agreed. The following Sunday I pointed out to them the place I had chosen. Then I selected two Canadians, sensible men, who had considerable influence over the others, and mounting our horses we succeeded in two or three days in making the rounds of the Grande Prairie. We were given a pleasant and honorable reception on all sides and people eagerly agreed to the levy of timber and other things which I proposed.

Here then are the means at my disposal for building the church, which will be the largest and finest in the Willamette. One thing only will be lacking—a bell. May it not be possible to obtain one from Europe, perhaps even from Courtrai? If ever it come, I will call it Philomene. To enable my parishioners to hear it well, it ought to weigh from 350 to 400 pounds. Every time I hear it ring I will say to myself—lo! Courtrai is calling my good Canadians to come and hear the word of God. You will preach by your bell on top of the church while I on my part am preaching inside.⁶⁵

In the sequel disagreement on some or other ground developed between Father Vercruysse and his parishioners. The outcome was that he was relieved of his duties at St. Louis in the Willamette Valley and sent to the upper country where he labored for twelve or more years among the Canadians of Colville, as also among the Kalispel. He eventually returned to Belgium, his native country, and died there at Courtrai in 1867.

It is surprising at what an early date Catholics entered the educational field in Oregon. Even in the days of the vicariate-apostolic provision had been made for the education of the children of the Canadian settlers. The first Catholic school in the Pacific Northwest may be said to have been the one maintained at his own expense by Dr. John McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver. Later, the liberality of Joseph Larocque, chief trader of the Hudson's Bay Company, who donated forty-eight hundred francs for the purpose, enabled Father Blanchet to erect a school for boys at St. Paul, which he dignified with the name of St. Joseph's College, in honor of its generous founder.⁶⁶ It opened its doors in the fall of 1843 under the direction of Father Langlois. On the first day thirty boys were registered as boarders, mixed bloods, most of them, and farmers' sons, except one Indian boy, the son of a chief. A year later the Sisters of Notre Dame opened an academy at St. Paul, which

⁶⁵ Vercruysse à M. son frère à Courtrai, November 10, 1844. Printed in Ghent O'Hara, *op cit*, p. 123.

⁶⁶ O'Hara, *op cit*, p. 129.

was to provide effectively for the education of girls. The reenforcement of nuns under Sister Renilda which arrived in 1847 with Archbishop Blanchet enabled the sisters to open a school in Oregon City, which began classes September 12, 1848. It was so great a surprise to meet with well-conducted sisters' schools in such a wilderness as Oregon was in the forties that travellers of the day rarely failed to comment upon them. Thus Lieutenant Neil M. Howison, U.S.A., who was in the Willamette Valley in 1848: "The French missionaries, to wit, a bishop, a number of priests and seven nuns, are succeeding in their operations. They are amply furnished with money [?] and other means for accomplishing their purpose. They educate a number of young Indians, principally girls, and all the offspring of the Canadians. They are strict Catholics and exercise unbounded influence on the pupils of the French settlements, who are improving in every way under their precepts. The mission derives its support from Europe and I was told that the Queen of France and her daughter, of Belgium, are liberal patronesses."⁶⁷ The British officers, Lieutenants Warre and Vavasour, who went through the Oregon country in 1845, were present at the examinations of sixty school-children in St. Paul, "the sons and daughters of the Catholic half-breed population." They found the Methodist school-house twenty-five miles up the Willamette on the same side of the river, "in wretched repair," with few pupils in attendance and they regretted not being able to give as "prosperous [an] account of the Methodist missionaries as of the Roman Catholic Brethren."⁶⁸

As a matter of fact, the Catholics, though later on the scene than the Protestants, were succeeding so well in the educational field that they seemed in the eyes of the latter about to monopolize it. The Reverend Ezra Fisher, pioneer Baptist missionary, was greatly exercised over the prospect as appears from his correspondence. "The Romans are very industrious in attempting to occupy every important point with a school," he wrote in 1846. "I was credibly informed that a proposition was recently made by the priests to the proprietors of Portland, the highest point which merchants reach in the Willamette, to build a church and establish a permanent school in the place if the proprietors would give the site and pledge their attendance at the services of the

⁶⁷ *Oregon Historical Society Quarterly*, 14:44

⁶⁸ *Idem*, 10:52. M. Duflot de Mofras, attaché of the French legation in Mexico, visited Archbishop Blanchet at St. Paul and was received by him "as a compatriot and brother." He speaks of the Bishop's farm, "the produce of which is applied to the relief of widows and orphans and to the foundation of schools and workshops for adult apprentices." Duflot de Mofras, *Exploration du Territoire de L'Oregon, Des Californies et de la Mer Vermeille executé pendant les années, 1840, 1841 et 1843* (Paris, 1844), 2:216

Roman church [?] The influence of this sect is becoming stronger in this territory I am informed by indubitable authority that there is not a place in the whole territory where the higher branches can be acquired except by a private teacher or in a Catholic school”⁶⁹ News of the impending return in 1847 of Archbishop Blanchet from Europe with reenforcements was anything but agreeable to Mr Fisher “We are in daily expectation of the arrival of a vessel freighted with Roman missionaries, priests, teachers, nuns and missionary funds to the amount it is said of \$130,000, to be expended in Oregon Romans are sparing no pains to secure the influence and wealth of Oregon to their church, their priests are all Jesuits”⁷⁰ The statement that the Catholic clergy of Oregon at this period were all Jesuits, is, of course, not in keeping with the facts Though the initial Catholic successes did undoubtedly provoke a measure of unfriendly feeling towards the Catholic Church in Oregon in the period of pioneer settlement, not a little appreciation of the services it was rendering to the country was voiced even in Protestant quarters Dr Elijah White, who first went out to Oregon as a Baptist missionary and was later first United States Indian agent for the territory, said on the subject “The Reverend Mr Blanchette and associates, though zealous Catholics, are peaceable, industrious, indefatigable and successful in promoting religious knowledge among the Canadian population and aborigines of this country Their enterprise in the erection of mills and other public works is very commendable and the general industry, good order and correct habits of that portion of the population under their charge is sufficient proof that their influence has been for good”⁷¹

In view of the favorable impression which the Catholic schools were thus making even in non-Catholic circles, it is not surprising that the project was entertained of a Jesuit college, which, it was hoped, would meet with support from all classes of people St Joseph’s College at St Paul was in reality never more than an elementary school maintained with ever-increasing difficulty In 1844 Father Langlois, its principal, petitioned the vicar-general for leave to spend the students’ vacation-period with the Jesuits of the Flathead Mission with a view to engaging the services of two of the coadjutor-brothers of the mission

⁶⁹ *Correspondence of Ezra Fisher, Pioneer Missionary of the American Baptist Home Mission Society in Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Oregon* (n d), p 181

⁷⁰ *Idem*, p 214 A tendency to call all Catholic priests Jesuits is not uncommon among the uninformed Cf Nixon, *How Marcus Whitman Saved Oregon* (Chicago, 1895), p 234 “That man was a French Jesuit priest by the name of J B A Brouillet” Brouillet was a diocesan priest, not a Jesuit

⁷¹ A J Allen (ed), *Ten Years in Oregon—Travels and Adventures of Dr Elijah White and Lady West of the Rocky Mountains* (Ithaca, N Y, 1850), p 194

as teachers in his school⁷² This leave was refused by the vicar-general on the ground that Langlois's presence could not be spared and for the additional reason, a very good one, that Jesuit brothers would not be available as their rule did not permit them to live apart from the priests of the Society⁷³

In May, 1849, the emigration of families from French Prairie in consequence of the discovery of gold in California was so considerable that the following month St. Joseph College was closed. It never afterwards resumed operations. Long before this, however, efforts had been made by Blanchet to have the Jesuits open a school of higher education in Oregon. In 1845 he personally appealed to Father Roothaan in the matter. Later, in July, 1849, on learning of the troubles the Society of Jesus was meeting with in revolutionary Europe, he again appealed to the Jesuit General for the immediate dispatch of fathers from Europe to establish a college as also new missions among Indians and whites⁷⁴. Among the Oregon Jesuits themselves the question of a college met with divided opinion. Some of their number, as Father Gazzoli, took the stand that a college would be against the interests of the Indian missions, by others this was denied, especially by Father Accolti, who was the most vigorous supporter of the proposed college. "The establishment of the Sisters at the Falls [Oregon City]," he wrote to De Vos in March, 1849, "is going on wonderfully well. Every day they have applications for the admission of girls. The house (your old habitation) being too small, they are going to undertake a large building on the lots of Dr. McLoughlin, which have been recovered. The Archbishop doesn't like this, as he will thereby lose the music in his Cathedral and all the advantages which come from having them close by." His Grace was coming to reside permanently in Oregon City "in Pomeroy's house near the church." "If we only had an establishment in Oregon City we should do as much good ourselves with God's grace, for educational facilities are very rare and yet everybody desires them, those especially who know our colleges of St. Louis and Cincinnati."⁷⁵ In March, 1850, Accolti suggested to the General that a beginning be made of a boarding-school at Oregon City, or else at St. Paul, where such step would have the advantage of securing title to the extensive property held there by the Jesuits⁷⁶. All Oregon land-titles were still in doubt, but the law extended special protection to property held by educational institutions. In April and again in June of the same year

⁷² Blanchet à ———, July 5, 1844. Quebec Archd. Arch.

⁷³ O'Hara, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

⁷⁴ Blanchet à Roothaan, July 3, 1849 (AA).

⁷⁵ Accolti à De Vos, March 15, 1849 (AA).

⁷⁶ Accolti à Roothaan, March 28, 1850 (AA).

Accolti continued to urge the matter with the Father General. Dr. John McLoughlin had offered lots in Oregon City on condition that a boarding-school be opened in three years, for the sake of the Catholic cause the opportunity should not be let slip. The general sentiment in favor of a Jesuit college in lower Oregon is revealed in a letter addressed from San Francisco to Father Elet by Father Brouillet, vicar-general to the Bishop of Walla Walla.

As a member of the Oregon clergy and aware of the interest and ardent zeal which you have always shown in regard to the missions of this country, I address myself with confidence to you today on behalf of these same missions. Everybody is asking for a college here, Protestants as much and perhaps even more so than Catholics. The clergy, with the Most Rev. Archbishop at their head, realize the advantages and necessity of it. Repeated efforts have been made by his Grace to fill this void in this diocese but without success. Burdened with a crushing debt and having only the most meagre revenue, the Archbishop cannot himself make any pecuniary sacrifices for this object, and, furthermore, what clergy he has at his disposal do not suffice to meet the other very pressing needs of his diocese. He deplores the impossibility of procuring for his diocese so indispensable an institution and I have heard him many times express the desire that the Jesuit Fathers might take the work in hand as soon as possible. I know also that he has pleaded repeatedly with Father Accolti to bring him to favor without delay the fulfillment of this desire.

I know Oregon, I know its resources and conditions and I am convinced that the Jesuit Fathers would need only to put their hands to the work to find in a short time all the material resources required to build and support a college there on a respectable footing provided the necessary personnel is at hand. I can cite in support of my opinion the case of the Sisters of Notre Dame, who in less than 18 months have founded at Oregon City an establishment which fills everyone today with astonishment. But I believe that we must not lose time, for a certain number of Protestants are at work and wish to build a college. If they succeed and if their college can strike root before the Catholic one is ready to open its doors, there will be less encouragement to look for on the part of the Protestants, at least for the present.

For the greater glory of God and the good of souls I ask you then as a favor, Very Reverend Father, to be so good as to come without delay, by the establishment of a college, to the relief of the youth of Oregon, of whom you are at this moment the only hope. By doing so you will meet the ardent wishes of the Most Reverend Archbishop of Oregon, of the greater part of his clergy and above all, of him who has the honor to call himself with profound respect, etc.⁷⁷

Far away in distant St. Louis Father Elet, struggling painfully with the problem of undermanned colleges and under a formal order

⁷⁷ Brouillet à Elet, April 12, 1850 (AA)

from the Father General not even to consider any extension of the educational activities of his men, could not do otherwise than turn a deaf ear to the appeal from Oregon

Soon, however, the prospects for education, Catholic and otherwise, in Oregon visibly declined. Emigration to California, the subsequent economic depression and other circumstances combined to make schools a less pressing necessity than they were felt to be in the preceding years. Archbishop Blanchet wrote to the Bishop of Quebec in April, 1849: "The Canadians and Americans are leaving the country to go to the Mine (*à la Mine*) [i.e. California]. Our people will be accompanied by a priest [Brouillet]. Farming operations are entirely suspended and it is probable that famine will make itself felt in Oregon. Our beautiful country has been stopped in its progress by the discovery of the Mine. It is going to fall into a decline for several years. There is strong talk of having slaves here. But there is nothing to hope for from slaves."⁷⁸ The Sisters of Notre Dame were forced in 1852 by these changed conditions to give up their school in St. Paul. The following year they withdrew from Oregon City also, going to California, where they laid at San José the foundations of an educational work that continues to this day. In 1849 Dr. John McLoughlin's claim, which included the site of Oregon City, was by the terms of the Oregon Donation Land Act appropriated by the Territory. The result of this measure was that no property could be sold in Oregon City, the growth of which was thereupon abruptly, and, as time proved, permanently stopped.

§ 5 THE FALL OF THE FLATHEAD MISSION

In view of the glowing accounts received from the beginning about the Flathead Indians and the initial successes that marked the mission set up on their behalf, their subsequent alienation from the fathers resulting in the closing of the mission was a matter to cause surprise. To Father Roothaan, who had been led to hope that a brilliant chapter of Jesuit missionary enterprise, similar to the one written by the sons of St. Ignatius in Paraguay, was about to be put on record in the fastnesses of the Rockies, the anti-climax was a keen disappointment as it was also a good deal of an enigma. In later years regret was expressed on occasion, as by Father Congiato in 1858, that the Flathead Mission had ever been abandoned. Yet those on whom the responsibility immediately rested sanctioned the measure and from their correspondence it appears that there were reasons enough to warrant it. Of these reasons the most decisive was the circumstance that the Indians had become so estranged from and even openly hostile to the missionaries that any

⁷⁸ Blanchet à ———, April 9, 1849. Quebec Archd. Arch.

prospect of effective work among them for the moment at least seemed entirely at an end

Before leaving the mountains in 1846 De Smet solicited and obtained from Father Mengarini a candid statement regarding the dispositions of the Indians at this date

Having been asked by Father De Smet for my opinion regarding the attitude of our Indians of the Rocky Mountains, I think before God I can say with certainty that to my knowledge most of the Flatheads and Pend' Oreilles preserve their baptismal innocence, that not only do they listen with eagerness to everything that concerns religion, but that they are forward to carry out every counsel given to them, that confession and communion are in general frequented by all in the most satisfactory manner, that among the Indians there are apostles who have drawn numerous families from other infidel nations and influenced them to receive instruction and baptism, that many who happen to live at a distance go as many as fifty and sixty miles several times a year to make their confession and communicate, that heroic acts are very frequent especially among young persons of sex Solicited to evil by heathen strangers they answer that they renounced sin in receiving baptism To give a proof of what I assert as regards their sincere attachment to religion, I will add that to have the happiness of participating in the sacraments and to hear the word of God, they often pass several days without anything to eat I can also give assurance before God that what I have just related is only an abridgment of what one might say in their favor ⁷⁹

The first indications of a change of attitude on the part of the Flatheads appeared in the fall of 1846 On the return at this period of the Indians from their buffalo-hunt east of the Rockies, the missionaries realized with a shock that they had a different class of people to deal with A letter of Father Ravalli's to the General gave this information

In my letter before this one I wrote to your Paternity what deep consolation the Indians were giving us by their piety, their attachment to the missionaries and their unselfish labors for the new church and house Things stood thus and we blessed the Lord for it and as we had let them go off on the hunt we were every day awaiting the moment when we could welcome them anew But we were not a little astonished when on their approaching this reduction last fall, their camp, which was broken up in various bands, took different courses Part of the Indians were unwilling or afraid to come up to their village, while the others on entering the village took up again their old-time barbarous yells, which had not been heard since we came among them They gave a chilly salute to the missionaries and then drew off with their lodges far from the latter nor did they show themselves to see the priest except rarely and then only to smoke in his cabin They sold

⁷⁹ Quoted in De Smet à Nobili, May 25, 1850 (AA)

us grudgingly a little dry meat and that of the worst quality. We heard a little later that on Father De Smet's departure from their hunting-camp to descend the Missouri they had given themselves up to their old war-dances, to savage obscenity and to shameless excesses of the flesh. In our amazement we did not fail to have recourse to fatherly rebuke, to exhortation, to prayer. We had placed them under the protection of the Blessed Virgin by distributing the scapular, we had held public prayers and established the Congregation of the Refugium Peccatorum of Paris. We knew that we were not to blame for such a change and we bewailed it all the more when we saw that they went on constantly getting worse.⁸⁰

Strangely enough, Father Ravalli reported that Father De Smet himself was the cause, however unwittingly, of the sudden change of front on the part of the Flatheads and this by holding out to them prospects and promises which he was unable to redeem. "From his first arrival in the Mountains he had beguiled them with promises and hopes of a village, animals, plows, etc. We are expecting other distressing things to occur very soon by reason of the lavish promises which Father De Smet scattered about him everywhere in his last journey and which neither he nor others will be able to keep." The allusion here is to the Flathead buffalo-hunt of the fall of 1846, on which occasion De Smet and Point accompanied the Indians into the Blackfoot country, where, oddly enough, as is told elsewhere in this history, Flatheads and Blackfeet, mortal enemies before, joined forces in an attack on the Crows. The Flatheads, so Ravalli avers, were looking for presents of tobacco, which De Smet had assured them long before. The tobacco was withheld from them and was bestowed by De Smet on the Blackfeet, who, to make matters worse, now stole one hundred and twenty horses from the Flatheads, but the latter, through respect for Father Point, who was now residing among the Blackfeet, made no effort to recover their stolen property by force. "The savages," Ravalli comments, "do not reason subtly and from the particular go to the universal and say now openly that the blackrobes are like the other whites, that they are liars, and are in league with their enemies."

The charge that De Smet by promising the Indians things which later on could not be supplied had caused disaffection among them and so alienated them from the missionaries made an impression on Father Roothaan. "It seems, my dear Father," he wrote to De Smet, "that you have made gifts and promises to the Indians which it is impossible to continue or realize."⁸¹ Not only Ravalli but at a later date Joset wrote unfavorably of the system of gaining the good will of the Indians by

⁸⁰ Ravalli à Roothaan, June 29, 1847 (AA)

⁸¹ Roothaan à De Smet, April 14, 1851 (AA)

liberal assurances of services to be rendered to them in the future. That De Smet in the exuberance of a generous and large-hearted temper went on occasion beyond the bounds of prudence in the pledges he made to the Indians is likely enough. To the Blackfeet when he met them in the fall of 1846, he promised a resident missionary and all the advantages of a so-called reduction, none of which he was able subsequently to supply. Other instances of similar import might be cited. On the other hand, the fact remains that De Smet always managed to retain the good-will and even affection of the Indian and that in an unusual degree nor is there any instance on record, apart from the alleged one in connection with the Flatheads, where an Indian tribe is said to have been provoked to ill-humor by De Smet's failure to live up to his engagements. As to the particular case of the Flatheads there are reasons for believing that Father Ravalli was misinformed when reporting its circumstances to the Father General. As a matter of fact De Smet's journal records that they withdrew from him in the Blackfeet country in the fall of 1846 with the best of feeling and gave no indication of resentment against the alleged shabby treatment they had received at his hands "[September] 11 [1846] Farewell to the Flatheads. All came to shake hands with us, the grief of their hearts was depicted in their countenances, we all perceived how deeply they felt the separation. A great number of their cavaliers accompany us for a considerable distance, six go as far as our encampment, not less than twenty-five miles." ⁸² It is further to be noted that, whatever may have been the disaffection among the Flatheads occasioned by Father De Smet, it was apparently not lasting and is not again cited in the correspondence of the period as having had anything to do with the closing of St. Mary's Mission.

Though the Flatheads had returned from the buffalo hunt of the fall of 1846 strangely altered in their attitude towards the missionaries, they again changed for the better. Ravalli records a period of eight months in 1848-1849 during which the Indians were a "true consolation" to the fathers. Then a crisis was again precipitated by dissensions in the tribe. But the crisis passed and Ravalli was able to write to the Father General in the spring of 1849 "At present the Indians are all well-affected towards our holy religion and towards us" ⁸³ About the

⁸² CR, *De Smet*, 2 586

⁸³ Ravalli à Roothaan, April 5, 1849 (AA). Cf., also, for a favorable account of the Flatheads at this period, Gov. J. Lane's report, October 22, 1849, to the commissioner of Indian affairs. "They [the Salish or Flathead Indians] till the soil in small quantities on Bitter Root River under the direction of Jesuit missionaries, have horses and cattle, are not inclined to rove and are a brave and noble race, friendly to the whites. They are well armed and hunt buffalo annually" (H).

same time Joset, superior of the missions, was informing the General that the Flatheads were "never better," while Nobili, a guest for some months among the latter (1849), was greatly impressed by them. Joset wrote to one of his men "Father Nobili eulogizes St. Mary's in the highest terms. He puts it above every other mission and in all respects. The Superior, he says, must see it, to believe."⁸⁴

That within a year or so of the time these highly satisfactory reports were penned, the two resident fathers, Mengarini and Ravalli, should have felt themselves obliged to withdraw from the mission in the face of renewed hostility on the part of the Flatheads so acute as to carry with it a menace to their lives, was a startling development. The two missionaries fortunately left on record accounts of the circumstances that immediately preceded the *dénouement*. At an advanced age, he was eighty at the time, Father Mengarini compiled his recollections of the nine years he had spent with the Flatheads.⁸⁵ These memoirs are replete with interest though the fact that they were written forty years after the events dealt with impairs to some extent their value as a dependable source of information. Mengarini's account of the break-up of the mission is a bit vague and confusing and it dates the affair two years before it actually occurred. Ravalli's letter of 1851, presently to be cited, stresses as practically the sole reason for the alienation of the Flatheads from the missionaries the fact that they had been spoiled by intruders and squatters on the Flathead lands. Of these intruders and squatters Mengarini says not a word. According to his version of the episode it was seemingly a Flathead brave, little Faro, who sowed discord among his tribesmen by depreciating the work of the Catholic missionaries and extolling, on the other hand, the activities of the Protestant missionaries in neighboring tribes. This course he pursued in retaliation for Father Mengarini's failure to back him up in his unwarranted pretensions to be accorded the rights of a chief. A remarkable phase of the situation, also adverted to by Ravalli, is recorded by Mengarini, to wit, the premature demise of the flower of the tribe. "From this time the best of the Indians began to be snatched away by death. One by one they disappeared until the Indians themselves began to marvel at the fact and asked me what I thought of it. To them I gave evasive answers but unbosoming myself to Very Rev. Father General, I wrote 'It is my firm belief that God has established this mission for the salvation of certain chosen souls and that when these are saved the mission will be no more.'" The suspension of the mission, according to Mengarini, was meant to be temporary only and

⁸⁴ (AA) Nobili was a visitor at St. Mary's before going to California.

⁸⁵ *WL*, 18 148 *et seq*

was decided upon "in order to punish them [the Indians] and bring them to a sense of duty" ⁸⁶

Unlike Mengarini's narrative, Ravalli's letter of April 5, 1851, to the Father General was written only a few months after the events narrated "From all the set-backs and losses which, taken together, rendered our efforts of no avail and from the calamities we experienced mainly in the course of the last five years, it became only too evident that Divine Providence was little by little paving the way for the end of this mission and had, so it appeared, called the missionaries thither only for the sake of a few good people who had followed from their tender years the natural light of reason. We have in fine observed that of the numbers who died every year, the Lord called chiefly such as were best in the matter of conduct and conscience. The only Indian (Lolo) who still remained well-disposed and really attached to religion was horribly mangled by a bear a few days before I left" ⁸⁷ Ravalli then goes on to relate how the Indians had been demoralized "by the presents and still more by the wicked suggestions and examples of a few Protestants and [Canadian?] whites and by the annual immigration of people from the United States," so that they were no longer in sympathy with the missionaries. In a preceding letter Ravalli had described the mischief-makers as "divers Canadians, some Iroquois and a few mixed-breeds dismissed from the service of the Hudson Bay Company" All of these, it would appear, were at least nominal Catholics as they had their children baptized and their marriages set straight according to church law and had given as a reason for settling in the vicinity of the mission their desire to have an opportunity to practice their religion ⁸⁸

Whatever hopes the missionaries may have had of reclaiming the Flatheads seem to have vanished in the spring of 1850. The Indians now pitched their tents at a distance from the church so as to be free to pursue without let or hindrance their passion for gambling and dancing, which latter with all its besetting indecencies was continued far into the night "The majority gave up 'private prayer' and vented insult and injury every day upon the missionary. Though we were making sacrifices for their sick even so far as to deprive ourselves of a morsel of bread, they refused to sell us necessary provisions while under our very eyes they sold to an agent of the Hudson Bay Company," a declared enemy of the mission ⁸⁹

Father Joset had been repeatedly warned by letter of the critical

⁸⁶ *Idem*, 18 149, 152

⁸⁷ Ravalli à Roothaan, April 5, 1851 (AA)

⁸⁸ Ravalli à Roothaan, June 29, 1847 (AA)

⁸⁹ Ravalli à Roothaan, April 5, 1851 (AA)

situation at St. Mary's, but had taken no action. The two coadjutor-brothers, Savio and Bellomo, had been dispatched with a message for him but their canoe upset in a stream and the message was lost. When news of the accident reached the mission, a special courier was sent off at once with another letter for Joset, who was just then at St. Ignatius Mission. The courier reached his destination but without the letter, which was lost on the way. Both the brothers and the courier, however, could give verbal information about conditions at St. Mary's, and from their reports, so Ravalli avers, Joset concluded that the crisis at the mission was more imaginary than real. In the interim notice had reached St. Mary's that Accolti had succeeded Joset as superior of the Rocky Mountain Missions. As no relief was forthcoming, Mengarini, local superior at St. Mary's, now determined to descend to the Willamette, a distance of nine hundred miles, and there represent to Accolti the true situation at the mission. On his way thither he passed by the Coeur d'Alène Mission and there had the good fortune to meet Father Joset.

During Mengarini's absence Ravalli was in daily dread of an incursion from the Blackfeet. The body of the Flathead tribe were absent on the fall hunt and all that remained of the erstwhile Indian congregation was a group of some fifty old people and children, all of whom Ravalli gathered into the mission-enclosure or "fort" as he describes it. He was also at pains to secure within the enclosure some hundred horses belonging to the Indians. His precautions were taken none too soon. On September 7, 1850, a party of fifty mounted Blackfeet suddenly made their appearance with savage war-whoops before the mission. All the force Ravalli could muster for a defense was three young Indians and an old worn-out brave. Fortunately, the Blackfeet made no attempt to invade the mission enclosure but drew off, not, however, before they had appropriated some horses and murdered an excellent young Flathead in the employ of the fathers. Presently Father Ravalli had to face another perilous situation. His supply of provisions began to run out and he would soon be helpless to relieve the wants of the fifty Flatheads he was sheltering.

Meantime, at the Coeur d'Alène Mission Mengarini was able to impress upon Father Joset that something had to be done quickly to save the little Jesuit group at St. Mary's. Thereupon the latter dispatched two couriers to Ravalli with instructions to pack up the mission effects preparatory to removal and await his arrival. But Joset arrived only at the end of October. In the interval Father Ravalli felt his life was none too secure. Twice already the Jesuits had been threatened with pistols by Indians of neighboring tribes, instigated, so Ravalli says, "by lies of certain Flatheads." Moreover, the fact that the Indians went off

on their buffalo hunt leaving the fathers entirely unprotected seemed to indicate that they would view the massacre of the latter with no great concern. In fact, when they returned from the hunt they expressed themselves astonished to see the missionaries still alive. Of Joset's arrival among them they took no notice and went on in the desperate course they had commenced. The decision to abandon the mission, at least temporarily, was now definitely taken. On November 5, 1850, Father Ravalli, with health badly impaired by his recent experiences, left St. Mary's for the Coeur d'Alènes while on the same day Father Joset and Brother Claessens also made their departure, having with them the live-stock and movable property of the mission. Their immediate destination was Horse Plain, a journey of three or four days to the northwest, where they wintered in a tent, proceeding in the spring to the Pend d'Oreilles.⁹⁰

At the risk of some repetition of the foregoing account a letter written to De Smet by Accolti from his residence in Oregon City is reproduced. Its importance lies in the circumstance that it embodies no doubt Mengarini's version of what had occurred at St. Mary's as the latter had by this time joined Accolti on the Willamette.

You may know perhaps that the Flathead Mission no longer exists. This is how it came about. Some time ago these Indians underwent a change of heart in regard to the Fathers through the machinations of a certain Mr. McDonald, an agent of the Hudson Bay Company, of some Nez-Percés and a few whites who unfortunately had established themselves among the Indians. The Fathers were continually exposed to the insults, the calumnies, and the deceptions of these unfortunate Indians. All the old people and the good folk of the nation have been dead for some time. The nation is now made up entirely of undisciplined and unruly elements. Those who have the name of chief no longer exercise any influence over them, ever since the punishment of the whip was abolished. The life of the Fathers was in danger for the same reasons that caused the murder of Dr. Whitman among the Cayuses. In case of sickness the Indians no longer addressed themselves to the Fathers. They brought to their patients Nez Percé *souffleurs* or jugglers. When the patient was dying, they went to look for the Fathers for medicine. If they gave any (it was always too late) and the patient died, it was the Father who had killed him. If they refused (as prudence very often required) and the patient came to die, it was on account of the Father who had refused his aid on purpose to have him die. One time the Fathers were threatened in their house by an Indian armed with a pistol. The opinion got around among the savages that the Fathers wanted to have them all die so as to get possession of their lands. Another opinion which became almost general among the Indians was to the effect that the Fathers were among them because they had nothing to live on elsewhere and because they had been driven from other

⁹⁰ Ravalli à Roothaan, April 5, 1851 (AA)

countries I say nothing of the night dances, even on Sundays, men and women pell-mell and all with a view to do what the Fathers forbade them to do I say nothing of their games of cards, which they get from the Mormons of Salt Lake, where they go to trade their skins and horses for cash, with which some of the Indians are furnished up to some hundreds of dollars in gold and silver pieces I wish to say only that the ministry of the Fathers was rendered absolutely useless in those remote parts on account of the almost continual absence of the Indians This absence was due in great measure to the removal of the buffalo which diminish in numbers considerably every year Last year the Fathers had the Indians with them only for three weeks Add to this the frequent incursions of the Blackfeet, which have made the place almost uninhabitable They are forever hanging around the village to seize an opportunity to commit their thefts It very frequently happened that they got into the Fathers' fields at night with their horses and destroyed a whole year's crop The Brother-farmer was forced to go to his work every day with his gun beside him Finally, last summer Father Mengarini left the place to go and lay the state of affairs before Father Joset The latter had just arrived from here among the Coeur d'Alenes I had ordered him to send Father Hoecken among the Flatheads and place Father Mengarini with the Kalispels But after hearing it all, he and the Fathers of the Mountains thought it better to proceed to the suppression of this unfortunate mission But there was no time to lose There was danger in delay It was necessary to run and save Father Ravalli, Brother Claessens and everything one possibly could So Father Mengarini came down here to inform me about the state of affairs, while Father Joset with a dozen Indians went on towards St Mary's On arriving there he found everything going to pieces Forty Blackfeet on horseback had just left the village carrying off with them almost 60 horses after having pillaged the few lodges which had remained there and killed a brave young man in the employ of the Fathers After getting everything together, effects and live-stock, Father Joset sent Father Ravalli to the Coeur d'Alenes while he with Brother Claessens went to camp on Horse Plain, three days journey before you get to St Ignatius, so as to transport everything to the missions as soon as the season allowed I think he is now on his way back to the Coeur d'Alenes There he will find my instructions Father Mengarini is with me The state of his health and especially his morale is badly affected This makes him quite unfit just now (and I believe even forever) for the missions They write me the same with regard to Father Ravalli ⁹¹

⁹¹ Accolti à De Smet, May 5, 1851 (A) The deed conveying the mission improvements to Owen reads "[November 5, 1850] sold church improvements to John Owen for \$250 receding back to church that portion of the improvements known as the fields or mill property if church establish another MISSION here on or before January 1, 1852 Signed P J Joset, Jno Owen Witness, F B Owen, St Mary's Mission, Flathead Country" "The text of that instrument is the earliest known record of such a transaction in all that region" Dunbar and Phillips (eds), *Journals and Letters of Major John Owen, Province of the Northwest, 1850-1870*, 2 v (New York, 1927), 1 7, 22 In view of the abundant contemporary evidence produced above as to the changed attitude of the Flatheads to the

Such, then, was the unlooked-for issue of the great Flathead Mission, the praises of which had been sung by zealous missionary propagandists for the edification of the pious faithful in Europe and America. Though the explanations of the catastrophe put on record at the time by the missionaries seem intelligible enough, a certain air of mystery continued to hang over the whole affair. As Accolti wrote to the General, "what is certain is that the fall of the Flathead Mission was accompanied by a thousand highly distressing and mysterious circumstances." Father Roothaan himself commented on the affair: "Mysterious indeed is the fall of the Flathead Mission." "The reverses of these last years are still a mystery to me. A mystery above all is the change on the part of the Flatheads."⁹² From Ravalli's version of the affair already summarized it may be gathered that the collapse of the mission was in some manner charged to Father Joset on the alleged ground that he failed to realize the critical situation at St. Mary's and arrived there too late to lend effective aid. On the other hand Father Vercruysse of St. Ignatius, taking it upon himself to send off to the General his own interpretation of what had occurred at St. Mary's, exonerated Joset from all blame in connection with the affair.⁹³ "Father Mengarini," wrote Vercruysse, "seems to attribute the fall of St. Mary's partly at least to Rev. Father Joset. The latter, says he [Mengarini], seemed to be little disturbed over its abandonment. This is wrong. Journeys that could not be dispensed with in the general interest of all the missions made it physically impossible for him to satisfy the wishes not only of the Fathers of St. Mary's, but of all the others as far as paying them a visit was concerned. So it was that last year in spite of appeals from all the Fathers, in spite, too, I dare say of the pressing

missionaries and their teaching, the editors of the Owen journals are in error when they write (I 7) "The statement that the indifference and hostility of the Flatheads to religion was a cause of the abandonment [of the Mission] has no corroborating evidence." It is significant that the Owen brothers met with the same experience as the Jesuits in being attacked by Blackfoot raiders. "In 1853 John and Francis, who bought the building of St. Mary's Mission and established themselves, as they believed, securely in the Bitter Root Valley, were unable to maintain themselves longer against the warlike and predatory nation from the east side of the Rocky Mountains and set out with their herds to go to Oregon, leaving their other property at the mercy of the savages. They had not proceeded far when they were met by a detachment of soldiers under Lieutenant Arnold of the Pacific division of the government exploring expedition in charge of I. I. Stevens coming to establish a depot of supplies in the Bitter Root Valley for the use of the exploring parties which were to winter in the mountains. The fortunate circumstance enabled them to return and resume their settlement and occupation."

Bancroft, *Hist. of Washington, Idaho and Montana*, p. 605

⁹² Roothaan à De Smet, April 15, 1852 (AA)

⁹³ Vercruysse à De Smet, April 28, 1851 (A)

need they were under of meeting him personally, Reverend Father Accolti was unable to get away from the Willamette. If he had done so the suppression of St. Mary's, so it is believed, would not have taken place."⁹⁴

That after all the closing of the mission was not warranted by the circumstances was the view taken by Father Vercruysse. This Kalispel missionary was qualified by a superior as "brusque, irritable, impatient and highly imaginative," but withal "a good religious."⁹⁵ Further, he was often abrupt in judgment and speech and one cannot be too secure about the value of the criticism to which he gave expression, especially as he was not himself an eye-witness of the incidents in question. "I have heard from whites and Indians that Father Mengarini did not handle the Flatheads properly, that he spoke to them too imperiously. I witnessed it here (at St. Ignatius) myself in a talk he gave the Kalispels and I spoke of it to Father Hoecken. The Kalispels also do not like him. I think that if he replaces Father Hoecken and his companion warns him about this defect he will do good there. On account of their haughty character the Flatheads and Kalispels wanted to be treated with gentleness so that one gains nothing by being brusque. The Skoelpi of Colville and the Coeur d'Alènes take offense at nothing. I have had experience of it." As to the great personal risks to which the missionaries were said to be exposed from Blackfoot raids, Father Vercruysse asked what harm ever befell them during the ten years the mission ran or whether a single piece of live stock belonging to the mission was ever appropriated by the Blackfoot. Apparently he had not heard of the horses stolen by the Blackfoot shortly before the closing of the mission. "Our Fathers in China have more to fear from the sword of the Mandarin. Still they stand firm and after all I think we came here with God's grace on this understanding, namely, to count life as nothing in order to save the Indian." Again, the Flatheads were away from their village three-fourths of the year on their buffalo hunts. But why did not the missionaries follow them as Father Point had done three or four times and even in the depth of winter and at the risk of his life?⁹⁶ That the Indians had become demoralized by half-breeds and whites, Father Vercruysse did not deny. "But were all the Indians culpable? Certainly not, and for ten Sodom would have been saved

⁹⁴ Father Roothaan was inclined to blame Joset for not relieving the critical situation at St. Mary's in due time by sending aid to Mengarini. Roothaan à De Smet, April 14, 1851 (AA).

⁹⁵ Congiato à Beckx, December 10, 1858 (AA).

⁹⁶ Palladino (*op. cit.*, p. 40) points out that the practice of following the Indians on their hunts, though at first adopted by the missionaries, was subsequently abandoned by them as inadvisable on various grounds.

Further, shouldn't one do everything possible to save the wicked? One finds wicked people everywhere standing up against the good. They write me that just now the Wallamette is the *faubourg* of Hell. Are the priests leaving it?"⁹⁷

The strictures passed by Father Vercruysse on the withdrawal of the missionaries from the Flatheads were conceived no doubt in a spirit of sincerity, but it will hardly be concluded therefrom that the step was as unnecessary and ill-advised as he believed. Possibly it may have been shortcomings on the part of the missionaries that had caused the unpleasant situation to develop, an opinion expressed by a superior of the Rocky Mountain Missions in later years.⁹⁸ Possibly, when the situation had developed, the missionaries might have taken a more heroic stand and attempted to weather the storm as Vercruysse would have had them do. Yet failure to follow the more heroic course is not necessarily to be made a matter of reproach. What clearly emerges in any case from contemporary evidence is the fact that in the end Indians and missionaries had become so estranged as to justify in the eyes of the latter the temporary abandonment of the mission.

In 1852 word, apparently from a reliable source, had reached St. Louis that the Flatheads were eager to have the missionaries return. Father Accolti, superior of the missions, did not credit the report, as he wrote to De Smet from Oregon City:

With regard to the Flathead Indians there is no hope of resuming amongst them our missionary operations. There is no hope on our part, not having sufficient individuals to employ on it, there is none on the part of the Indians, being all abandoned in spite of their pastors, even when present, to every kind of mischievousness and corruption, besides their stubborn reluctance to hear the advice of their Fathers. The old generation of that once brave nation has passed away, even the good half-breed Lolo, who two years ago was attacked and devoured by some grizzly bears while hunting. What now remains is nothing but a handful of indisciplinate and corrupted youth which cares nothing about priests and religion and have no respect at all even for their chieftains. The only man who now remains of the predestinated number is Victor, who is chief because so [he] has been called and considered by our Fathers, but now he is a mere nominal Chief. He has no control at all over his people especially since he received with a Christian forbearance a hard blow on the face from his bold and arrogant rival in the chieftainship. Their continual absence from the mission had made the presence of the missionaries quite useless and burthensome in that place. The young man, who, you say, has exposed to you the desire of the nation to have the missionaries

⁹⁷ Vercruysse à De Smet, April 28, 1851 (A)

⁹⁸ "From the lack of zeal and love of the Indians and of tact on the part of Ours resulted the fall of the famous mission of the Flatheads." Congiato à Beckx, December 10, 1858 (AA)

again among them is quite mistaken. Had they such a wish, they should have sent a formal delegation to Father Joset, who is not far from their country in order to obtain missionaries and confess their wrongs and make reparation for the insults inflicted on their Fathers and Pastors, but they have done nothing of the kind. Then that young man, who, I suppose is Mr. Owens, either is deceived or rather wishes to deceive us in order to enhance his trade which he has regularly established among the Flathead Indians on the ruins of our Mission. Still I do not intend to deprive them of our spiritual assistance if they want to derive profit from it. Last year I sent Father Hoecken on a missionary expedition to the Upper Kalispelems of the Lake. Notice had been given previously and timely to the Flathead Indians that they might convene at that place. There appeared none.⁹⁹

Three years following the departure of the Jesuits from the Bitter Root, Lieutenant John Mullan and Dr. Suckley, both of them associated with Governor Stevens in his explorations for a railroad route to the Pacific, were visitors among the Flatheads. Both of them recorded the impression made upon them by the Indians. Dr. Suckley wrote

The men are rather below the average size, but they are well-knit, muscular and good-looking. Although professedly Roman Catholics, they still keep up their aboriginal mode of dress, and many of their old customs. They are remarkably honest, good natured and amiable. On account of the depredations and constant aggressions made upon them by the Blackfeet and their own migratory habits, it was found inadvisable to keep up the mission among them. It was accordingly abandoned three years ago, they still remember the good teachings of the missionaries, as evinced by their honesty and chastity. Although few in numbers, they are very brave and invariably attack the Blackfeet when they meet. The custom of scalping dead enemies is abandoned by them.¹⁰⁰

Lieutenant Mullan's report, dated from Camp Stevens, Bitter Root Valley, November, 1853, said in part

The Flatheads as a nation have more reason to complain of a want of attention and care on the part of the government than any other tribe of Indians probably in North America. Their numbers have been so greatly diminished during the last few years by being murdered by the Blackfeet that at present there remains but a handful of the noblest of the Indian tribes of North America to tell the tale of woe, misery and misfortune they have suffered at the hands of the Blackfeet, those hell-hounds of the Mountains. This last [appointment of a Catholic agent] I mention and recommend from the fact that the Jesuit priests have been among the Flatheads for ten or twelve years and have lain among them a foundation upon a better and firmer basis than has been lain among any Indian tribe either east or west of the

⁹⁹ Accolti to De Smet, November 20, 1852 (AA)

¹⁰⁰ U. S. 33d Cong., 1st Sess., ex. doc. 129, p. 116

mountains, upon which a superstructure can now be built which will be an ornament not only to the district where it will be erected but to our whole nation ¹⁰¹

Mullan was petitioned by the Flatheads to secure for them the services of a Catholic priest. He was sympathetic to their wishes, assuring them, though on what grounds one cannot say, that a priest would be with them within four years. As it turned out, just four years later Father Menetrey of St Ignatius Mission appeared among the Flatheads though not through any intervention on the part of Mullan. Writing to De Smet, Menetrey gives a graphic account of the condition in which he found the tribe. He spent twelve days with them in the latter part of July, 1857, returning after the feast of St Ignatius (July 31) for another visit of eight days. He found Father Mengarini's work on behalf of the tribe to all appearances undone. With a few exceptions the Indians appear to have given themselves up after the latter's departure to gambling and libertinism.

As regards morality I can say that the Flatheads have gone to worse extremes than the wild nations who know nothing of the Great Master who makes matrimony a holy and indissoluble partnership. But we must say to the praise of the Flathead chiefs, Victor, Ambrose, Moses and Adolph, that these four men have never deviated from the path of honor and virtue traced out for them by the missionaries, they have never ceased, Victor especially, to deplore the blindness of their nation and to use all their influence to bring it back to the path of duty. Victor lately unfolded to me the anguish of his heart. "When I went out of my lodge," he said, "and saw all my people given over to gambling and libertinism and closing their ears to my words, my heart was rent with grief. I threw myself on the ground to moan over the miseries of my people and deplore the loss of the Fathers. I had seen them so happy and so good under their direction. After their departure I saw them delivered over to every kind of disorder." And yet this we must say to the praise of the Flatheads and their virtuous missionaries, never, even in their worst excesses have the Flatheads ceased to regret the departure of their missionaries and to sigh for their return. The Flatheads were in the deplorable condition I have just told of when at the desire of Reverend Father Congiato I went to see them on July 15 last. Victor had been notified of my visit and had a lodge prepared to receive me. The evening of my arrival I sent an invitation to all the gamblers to come to prayer as soon as they heard the sound of the bell. My invitation was very well received. At the ringing of my little bell all the gamblers left off playing and came to kneel down with the rest of the nation before my lodge (A).

Father Menetrey's sermons bore instant fruit. Gambling was forsworn and the Indians came regularly to the services and made their

¹⁰¹ *Idem*, p. 467

confessions "with a piety and a sorrow of which I should not have believed Indians capable" Mutual cancellation of debts incurred in gaming was agreed upon, and the entire tribe recalled for the moment at least to the ordered ways of Christian life Altogether in two visits three hundred confessions were heard and twenty marriages set right When Father Menetrey returned for the second visit he found that the erstwhile gamblers were still faithful to their pledges "I left the camp in the best of dispositions just as it was about to break up for the buffalo hunt It had quite another aspect now It was not less edifying than the camp at the mission [of St Ignatius] No longer did one hear there the noise of the gaming-table (*roulette*) or the drum At evening every one withdrew to his lodge Morning and evening, when the little bell was rung, one could hear the angelus recited in all the lodges At night before going to bed they recited acts of faith, hope and contrition" But Father Menetrey felt that this reconversion of the Flatheads would be short-lived The only thing that would hold them firm would be the continued presence of a missionary in their midst and so he appealed to Father De Smet to send him the material means for restoring the Flathead Mission A postscript to his letter to De Smet reads "I think Father Mengarini will be pleased to learn that his Flatheads have been converted anew If this good Father should care to return he would be welcome and would do much good Reverend Father Joset said the Blessed Virgin was at his heels [?] when he suppressed St Mary's Mission One misfortune after another befell him, everything went against his plans Father Mengarini can tell you Now I can say the contrary, the Blessed Virgin was at my side to help me reestablish the Mission I felt it every instant The coming-back of these Indians converted to Mary has been miraculous I am persuaded that this good Mother wants to reestablish her Mission Your Reverence will not wish to afflict her" ¹⁰²

Nine years more were to elapse before the restoration of the Flathead Mission became a reality "The Jesuit Fathers," Major John Owen, who had taken over the mission-improvements in 1850, wrote in his journal, October 15, 1868, "are putting up a chapel near here for the use of the Indians and others who desire to hear divine service" ¹⁰³

¹⁰² Menetrey à De Smet, August 15, 1857 (A) Father Adrian Hoecken met the Flatheads at the Hell-Gate Treaty of July 16, 1855, between Gov Isaac Stevens and the Flathead, Kootenay and Pend d'Oreille Indians His name was signed to the treaty

¹⁰³ Dunbar and Philipps (eds), *Journals and Letters of Major Owen*, 2 31 Owen's acquisition of the Jesuit mission-buildings at St Mary's, which he changed into a trading-post, dignifying it with the name of Fort Owen, was the starting point of a long career of business and other relations with Indians and whites in the Pacific Northwest He was for years Flathead Indian agent, hence

The Jesuit fathers were Ravalli and Giorda. Their mission lasted until 1895 when the last of the Flatheads vacated their ancestral home in

his title of major Owen showed himself at first distinctly unfriendly to the Jesuit missionaries and their work. Father Vercruysse gives this account of the circumstances under which he acquired the mission-buildings:

"The two fathers of St. Marys allowed themselves, I think, to be imposed upon by a few individuals who exaggerated things so as to inspire them with fear and make them move away and thus render themselves masters of the locality. A melancholy fact: An American under pretext of trading horses (perhaps he spoke the truth, it doesn't matter) insinuated himself [into the favor of the fathers] and gained confidence by his adroitness. The Fathers represented this individual to Father Joset as trustworthy. Father Joset at his departure leased to him for a year under certain conditions the house and mill with an order to burn them as soon as he should be given the word [?] The good Fathers having departed, this individual induced the Flatheads to gamble more than ever, the chiefs, Victor among the rest, forbade him to settle there and cultivate land. Seeing himself master of the post by the flight of our people, he then betakes himself to Salt Lake (10 to 12 days from St. Marys where one finds the populous town of the Mormans, an abominable sect, they say, driven even by the protestants out of the United States), in order to bring back with him to the flathead lands his corrupting and wicked companions." Vercruysse à ———, April 25, 1851 (A). Whether Vercruysse was correctly informed or not as to Owen's activities at this time among the Flatheads, at any rate the major subsequently worked on occasion against the missionaries. He laid on them the blame for the Coeur d'Alène attack of May 17, 1858, on Col. Steptoe's command, alleging even that Father Joset had egged on the Indians against the government troops. Of the missionaries' work in general he expressed the opinion: "I see no good resulting from their labors or the present state of things would not exist." Letter of July 12, 1858, in *Journals and Letters, etc.*, 2: 179. A reading of Owen's correspondence on the subject of the Coeur d'Alène outbreak reveals how flimsy was the evidence alleged for the charges against Joset, who, as a matter of fact, did everything in his power to calm the Indians and prevent an uprising. What actually did happen is told by Father Congiato with convincing detail in letters published in the *San Francisco Monitor*, March, April, 1860. The conduct of the missionaries on the occasion of the Coeur d'Alène outbreak was, so Congiato writes, "subsequently vindicated and highly praised by the officers and men of the expedition sent against the Spokanes, Palouses and Coeur d'Alènes." In connection with the escape of Kamayaken, the Palouse chief, from Fort Walla Walla prison, Congiato wrote to De Smet, chaplain at the time to General Harney's command in Washington Territory: "The people speak here against the interference of Major Owen in that affair and say that had the thing been left in your hands, there would have been no difficulty in bringing Kamayaken down." Congiato to De Smet, *The Dalles*, May 24 (?), 1859 (A). "The last piece of news from the Rocky Mountains is that Alexander, the Pend d'Oreilles chief, set fire to Louis Brown's house in the *Prarie la course aux femmes*. The notorious Major Owen of course accuses F. Menetrey [Superior of St. Ignatius Mission] as having been the instigator of it. The Major is becoming very troublesome to the Fathers and has taken to write letters full of vague imputations against the fathers. By the last steamer I will mail you the *San Francisco Monitor* of the 24th ult. and the next of the 31st. Both numbers will contain something on the matter. The leading democratic paper in the State has copied and published both

the valley of the Bitter Root and began to reside with the rest of the tribe on the Jocko Reservation in western Montana. Here to this day they continue with the Kalispel to enjoy the pastoral care of the same Society of Jesus which had brought them tidings of the Gospel story at the dawn of the forties. Light and shadow, romance and tragedy, gather thick in the recorded story of this remarkable tribe. For gripping interest and pathos probably no chapter in the story of the conflict between Indians and whites in the United States rivals the one which tells of the heroic if futile efforts of the Flathead chief Charlot to save for his people their lawful possessions in the Bitter Root.¹⁰⁴ Today the still standing pioneer structures of Giorda and Ravalli and the remains of Major Owen's trading-post make of the one-time village of the Flatheads an alluring centre of historical interest in the Pacific Northwest. "The place," writes a modern author, "is hallowed by wonderful memories. The simple mission has become hemmed in now by the busy workaday world, but it is yet there with its message of peace and righteousness and the blue sky arches as gloriously above as it did upon that fair October day [1841], the fields stretch away as beautiful as they were then, the wonderful river flows as blue and clear as then, the peak of St. Mary's points ever heavenward as faithful as it did of yore, and hallowing and sanctifying all is the memory

articles. It would be a great benefit to the poor Flatheads if this miserable agent was removed at once. He is unfit altogether for his post. The poor man besides being constantly *afflatus Baccho* has another great defect, viz., *cerebrum non habet*." Congiato to De Smet, April 30, 1860 (A).

Charges of obstructing the government in its dealings with Indians were also made by the major against Father Menetrey though he seemed to intimate that this occurred not through malice but through the father's imperfect knowledge of English and unacquaintance with the ways of the country. According to Father Vercruysse the reckless charges made against the missionaries by the major could be explained on no other ground than that his mind was unhinged as a result of a blow which he appears to have received on the head from the revolving wing of a wind-mill. The father added sympathetically "he has a good heart." Vercruysse à De Smet, September 1, 1860 (A). As a matter of fact later relations between Owen and his Jesuit neighbors of St. Ignatius Mission were distinctly friendly as is witnessed by entries in his journals, as also by the account of him furnished to the editors of the same by Father Palladino. "I visited St. Ignatius Mission," Owen writes. "They [the missionaries] certainly deserve great Cr[edit] for what they are doing." *Journals and Letters*, 2: 43. Owen, who had been a freemason, often expressed a desire to become a Catholic and was accordingly received into the Church by Father Palladino shortly before his death. Certainly nothing occurring in the published writings of this interesting frontier figure militates against the generally received opinion of the disinterested and effective work of the Society of Jesus among the Indians of the Northwest.

¹⁰⁴ Humphrey, *The Indian Dispossessed* (Boston, 1905), pp. 44-72, Palladino, *Indian and White in the Northwest*, p. 66.

of the good men who established the mission, who first blazed the trail to Montana" ¹⁰⁵

§ 6 CALIFORNIA

Before the Oregon Missions were detached from the parent-stem of Missouri they had given birth to the Jesuit Mission of California. To that land of sunshine and mellow climate the Society of Jesus had hitherto been a stranger. Lower California had indeed its system of flourishing Indian missions before the great debacle of the Suppression, but with this event or somewhat earlier the missionaries of the Society were driven by the Spanish authorities from that promising field. As to upper California, now the state of California, the only Jesuit known to have set foot upon its soil before Accolti and Nobili came down from Oregon in 1849 was the missionary-explorer Eusebio Kino, who crossed the Colorado on a raft in the first year of the eighteenth century. His stay was of the briefest, but with his confrères he dreamed of one day evangelizing and civilizing the alluring country that lay on the far side of the historic stream ¹⁰⁶

At Coloma on the American River in upper California gold was discovered by James W. Marshall in the January of 1848. The news spread like wild-fire and soon a steady stream of prospectors, adventurers and immigrants of every type began to pour into this new El Dorado from the four quarters of the globe. So many Oregonians turned gold-seekers that the forward-looking valley of the Columbia, then on a rising tide of prosperity, received a violent economic set-back from which it was to be long in recovering. When Father Michael Accolti returned from the mountains to the Willamette in the March of 1849 he found the country beside itself with excitement over the sensational finds in California. He was moved by the situation to express himself thus to Father De Vos:

On my return I found everybody attacked amazingly by the gold-fever. A few days after my arrival here a big crowd of people who left for California when I left for the Mountains returned by sea and land. Thing unheard of! Some with two thousand, others with three thousand, still others with as much as seven thousand dollars in their pockets in gold ore, bullion, silver money and gold-dust procured in two or three weeks of light

¹⁰⁵ Arthur L. Stone, *Following Old Trails* (Missoula, Montana, 1913), p. 284.

¹⁰⁶ H. E. Bolton (ed.), *Kino's Historical Memoir of Pimeria Alta* (Cleveland, 1919), I, 316. For the Jesuit missions of lower California cf. Marguerite Eyer Wilbur (tr.), *Juan Maria de Salvatierra by Miguel Venegas* (Cleveland, 1929), Z. Englehardt, O.F.M., *The Missions of California*, Vol. 1, H. F. Bolton and T. M. Marshall, *The Colonization of North America*, H. E. Bolton, *Rim of Christendom: a Biography of Eusebio Francisco Kino, Pacific Coast Pioneer* (New York, 1936).

and convenient toil This has caused terrible excitement among all classes of persons Gold, gold, gold, it's the watchword of the day Go where you will, people speak of nothing but gold Old and young, women and children, lay-folk and ecclesiastics, all have on their lips only the word *gold* It's amusing to listen to everybody's plans and calculations, dreams and reveries Things are topsy-turvy all around No one can hold the people back Everybody is leaving and the country remains a desert¹⁰⁷

At the time Father Accolti penned these lines he was in the prime of his physical and mental vigor, having just rounded out his forty-second year He came of an aristocratic family of Bari in the Italian province of Naples and showed all the vivacity of manner, lively fancy and exuberant emotional life which one is accustomed to associate with people of southern Italian stock Father Joset wrote that "he seemed always to have big things before his mind," and a lay friend of his described him as uniting "a powerful bodily frame to remarkable intellectual powers His composure was beyond ruffling by any incident and his cheerful bonhomie won friends in every class with which he was brought into contact His magnificent voice was a special gift and drew admiration whenever raised in singing Mass or Vespers"¹⁰⁸ He was already a priest and even a domestic prelate of Gregory XVI before he became a Jesuit at the age of twenty-five His correspondence whether in Italian, French or English is marked by recurring narrative and descriptive touches of graphic power as also by a fluency and exuberance of expression that often run into the diffuse Back in St Louis Father Elet, not finding leisure to read through Accolti's "big, thick letters," as he described them, urged upon him the wisdom of expressing himself in more restricted compass "I am sorry I have caused you to lose time by my long tirades," he apologized to Elet "Ever since I gave up the study of my dear Tacitus, I have got to be more and more prolix and diluted I begin to grow old and that also is a reason for my being a little boresome Thanks to the advice your Reverence gives me, I will try to condense my style and make it as laconic as possible, provided I cannot say of myself afterwards, '*brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio*,' or that your Reverence does not address to me the reproach of Horace, '*Dum vitant stulti vitia in contraria currunt*' But enough of this lest I lapse if I have not already lapsed into the very fault which I have just now promised you to amend"¹⁰⁹ Nor was the art of restrained and tempered statement at all times practiced by this son of southern Italy, an idiosyncrasy to which he apparently recog-

¹⁰⁷ Accolti à De Vos, ———, 1849 (AA)

¹⁰⁸ Bryan J Clinch in *RACHS*, 17 125

¹⁰⁹ Accolti à Elet, May 15, 1851 (A)

nized men of his stock were liable. In a letter of his to Father Roothaan presently to be cited he prayed the General to accept his words as the literal truth and not as mere "Neapolitan fanfaronade." But, idiosyncrasies aside, he was, if one may use a somewhat threadbare tag of speech, a "man of vision," a large man intellectually as well as physically as one seems to read clearly enough in the manly sweep of his curiously American-like handwriting.

It was, then, the vigorous and expansive personality of Michael Accolti that was to play the foremost part in the introduction of the Society of Jesus into American California. But his first plans for venturing into that inviting land had something about them which, from a Jesuit point of view, one may only qualify as bizarre. In the letter to De Vos from which an extract was made above he pointed out to his correspondent that the gold-fields of California besides enriching a horde of fortune-seekers might offer a remedy for the disconcerting financial status of the Oregon Missions. Prices in Oregon were enormously high and were still on the rise. The subsidies from Europe amounted in 1849 to only fifteen hundred dollars. "Shall we be able to get ourselves even a good cup of coffee?" The Pícpus fathers of the Sandwich Islands being in the same quandary as the Jesuits had sent two of their lay brothers to work incognito in the California mines under the protection of the French consul. The idea appealed strongly to Accolti, who now proposed to go himself to California with two lay brothers, preferably Magri and McGean. The brothers would take up a mining claim somewhere and work it, while the father would engage in the sacred ministry and solicit alms. To Accolti the program assigned to the brothers seemed to be no more objectionable than it would be for them to enter a claim to government-land. Finally, he pleaded with Father De Vos, who was then stationed with Father Joset among the Coeur d'Alènes, to urge the latter to grant the necessary permission for embarking upon this singular adventure.¹¹⁰ In the event, Joset

¹¹⁰ Accolti à De Vos, March 15, 1849 (A). Bishop Maigret of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (Pícpus fathers) and superior of their mission in the Sandwich Islands, wrote November 20, 1848, to the Archbishop of Calcedonia, superior general of his congregation, his letter being curiously alike the one addressed by Father Accolti to Father De Vos, *supra*, § 6. "California is going to be an important country. Everybody is going thither. Soon there will be over a million of inhabitants. Gold mines have been discovered there, out of which they draw gold with full hands. They are making up to 100, 200 and even 300 dollars a day. There is gold everywhere, in the rivers, in the plains and in the mountains. The clergy of California have written to me that I should come to their rescue. The faithful have expressed the same wish. We have a great many Hawaiianes over there. All these considerations, together with the prospect of finding some resources for our Sandwich Mission have engaged us to send thither Fathers Lebret and Chrysostome accompanied by Brothers Eliseus and Ladislas. We could

granted Accolti permission to go to California though he did so, as Accolti later declared, "very reluctantly." Three years before, when he first entered on the duties of superior of the mission, Joset had been cautioned by Father Roothaan that no one was to be sent on far-away excursions, California being expressly debarred.¹¹¹ In February, 1849, Elet had likewise been advised by the General that no one was to be sent to that particular quarter.¹¹² As a matter of fact Joset was later called upon by the General to explain his action in permitting men of his jurisdiction to venture into California when instructions had been issued from headquarters against excursions of any kind to such remote parts. Probably the instructions, though issued from Rome, had never actually reached the Oregon superior, more probably still the acute economic embarrassment of the mission constituted in Father Joset's eyes sufficient ground for going against the letter of Father Roothaan's orders, which did not presumably contemplate such an extraordinary set of circumstances as had arisen now.

The project of an extension of Jesuit activities into California as it first shaped itself in Accolti's mind was communicated by him to the General in a letter from Oregon City, the original of which is in French

Scarcely did the news arrive last year of the discovery of the prodigiously rich gold-mines of California than the Archbishop of Oregon City tried to send thither as soon as possible the Vicar-General of the Bishop of Walla Walla, [Rev.] Mr. Brouillet, to see whether it would be possible to find some person willing to lend forty or fifty thousand dollars with which to pay his (the Archbishop's) debts to the Hudson's Bay Company. How this gentleman succeeded in his undertaking I do not know. I only know that a great number of Americans made up in a few weeks a subscription of almost 25,000 dollars to enable him to take in hand the building of a Catholic church among them at a distance of 25 to 30 miles from San Francisco, the capital of New or Upper California.¹¹³ Attached as he is to our Society through the esteem he has for it, especially after the retreat which he made last year under my direction, he did not fail to keep the Society in mind, while at the same time he acquitted himself in thoroughgoing fashion of the business committed to him. Here is what he wrote to me from Santa Clara under date of March 28 past

not have done it if we had to pay the passage, but a benevolent society has taken upon itself to defray the expense. Father Lebret has been appointed Superior." Reginald Yzendoorn, SS CC, *History of the Catholic Mission in the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu, 1927), p. 187

¹¹¹ Roothaan ad Joset, February 18, 1846 (AA)

¹¹² Roothaan ad Elet, February 17, 1849 (AA) "*Nemo in Californiam mittendus*" ("No one should be sent to California")

¹¹³ The place referred to has not been identified

“Reverend dear Father! Once more the door to California lies open before you. The people desire you warmly and are urging you to come. Everybody is asking for a Jesuit college and here is what they put at the joint disposition of yourselves and the Sisters of Notre Dame: an entire mission, one of the finest and best equipped in the whole of California with a magnificent church. The Father [Franciscan] who has charge of it offers to give it over with all his rights, together with the rights of his Order, to the Jesuit Fathers and the Sisters of Notre Dame on condition that a college and convent be set up there with the least possible delay. With a little trouble money will be found for putting up the buildings necessary for these two institutions. You will find there all possible encouragement on the part of everybody. Living expenses will not be higher than in Oregon and you will be able to charge stiff boarding-rates with no fear of frightening anybody, and so you are assured a gross revenue which will be of aid to you in supporting your missions in the Mountains. But above all other considerations the spiritual needs of California, the immense good to be done there, and the opportunity created by circumstances ought to make you decide. If you think you can accept this offer, I advise you to come without delay and get acquainted on the ground with things and take every measure you think timely as well for your Order as for the Sisters of Notre Dame. If you think you cannot accept, have the kindness to inform the Most Reverend Archbishop [Blanchet] to this effect for in this case I beg his Grace to send some one of his priests to take over and retain possession of this property until it be possible to find a religious order willing to accept it. But pray you, overcome whatever difficulties may present themselves and set up an establishment in California. I am going to write at once to Father Gonzalez (Prefect Apostolic) to obtain his formal authorization for the introduction of new religious orders into California. The answer is well known in advance and is bound to be here when you come.

“P.S. I must have you take notice that it is possible without my thinking it to be probable, that the American Government may claim the property of the mission offered you along with that of all the missions in California. But even supposing such to be the case, you will have the enjoyment of it for 2 or 3 years and this is enough, for independently of the mission, an individual of the town of Pueblo San Jose, which is probably going to become the capital of California, has in reserve for you a magnificent piece of property, and another individual said lately that he would give 15,000 dollars (Roman scudi) for the building of a college. True, it is easier to say than to give, but at least I regard the land as assured and I am convinced that everyone would subscribe generously for the building of a college. When I say everybody I mean people from outside for from the natives of the country there is nothing to obtain for these purposes, at least one cannot in any way count upon them.”

Your Paternity sees then what the matter is in hand. It is a matter of grave importance, it is a question of opening up again to the Society the door to California after an exile of almost a hundred years from that land bedewed with the sweat of her erstwhile children. Yet I see clearly enough

that we must not run as fast as Mr Brouillet should like, for all that glitters is not gold and certain pictures which present a fine appearance from afar show only striking irregularities and disfigurements as you draw close to them Mr Brouillet in his letter shows himself more zealous than well-informed about our Society On the other hand, I think we ought not to show ourselves indifferent to the suggestion of a project which, when everything will be in order, will not fail to offer considerable advantages Now a matter of this kind cannot be treated by exchange of letters, it is necessary to go and investigate the matter on the spot Fortunately some days before receiving this letter of Mr Brouillet I received another from Father Joset authorizing me to leave for California with two brothers and some Indians, who had come down from the Mountain, expressly to go and seek in this land of inexhaustible riches not wherewithal to enrich ourselves but wherewithal to keep alive and support our missions A very necessary step certainly in view of the unfortunate circumstances of Europe and the lack of aid ordinarily supplied by the work of the Propagation of the Faith The Jesuits would not be the first to set this example The Reverend Picpus Fathers, who reside in the Sandwich Islands, preceded us to California last December with the same object in view, the same motives¹¹⁴ Monseigneur Magret, Bishop of the Islands, and several members of the same congregation thought such a step indispensable The California mines, they said in consultation, are a benefit held out by Providence to everybody without distinction Everybody is profiting by them, even the wicked, and why should not the servants of God profit by them, especially when circumstances make it a necessity to do so? And to some few who said, "but what will the world say?" they answered, "but will those who blame us come and extricate us from our miseries?" The Reverend Oblate Fathers of Mary residing in Oregon are getting ready to go there¹¹⁵ The Bishop of Walla Walla [Blanchet] is sending some of his people The Archbishop would like very much to do so, but has no means to get up such an expedition, of his priests, he has been able to send only one along with the Canadians who are going there on their own account and this priest goes in the hope of being able to collect something among his parishioners And the bishops, very far from blaming us, are even encouraging us to do this The most respectable people in the country are all either already on the way or are getting ready to start To all the reasons pointed out above it must be added that without this plan it is impossible for the missions to subsist in view of the enormous and frightful increase in the prices of commodities, the discovery of the mines, and the duty lately placed by the Government on foreign merchandise entering by the Columbia The result is that what cost one dollar last year costs at present three or four dollars more This is the benefit which the gold mines of California have procured us The quantity of money which circulates now in the country is incalculable And the poor missionary, who has no resources

¹¹⁴ *Supra*, n. 110

¹¹⁵ The Oblates of Mary Immaculate were established in Oregon as early as 1846.

or funds except from the charity of the faithful, already nearly dried up owing to circumstances in Europe, must in the midst of so much wealth suffer all the more the effects of poverty and misery. But let us leave aside digressions and come to business. I am then on the point of going to verify for myself how things stand. What course, then, am I to take? I consider the contents of Mr. Brouillet's letter. They petition for 1 a Jesuit college. 2 They offer big advantages, they offer to cede an entire mission, one of the finest certainly in all California, according to information received by me from every quarter. 3 They ask for an answer with as little delay as possible as to the acceptance or non-acceptance of the offer, the understanding being that if we refuse, they would address themselves to another religious order and in the interim ask the Archbishop of Oregon City to send one of his priests to take possession of the establishment for fear the government might confiscate it. 4 All this would be done during the vacancy of the see [Monterey] and before the coming of a new bishop, whose views and attitude would not be known. Here then are all the circumstances of this affair. Far from your Paternity [ms. 2] Far from the mountains, I cannot have an answer from Father Joset, to whom I have already written. Far from the United States, I cannot expect an answer from Father Provincial [Elet], whom I have just informed about everything, except in California, by steamship. Isolated as I am, it seems to me that I can authorize myself to take the initiative in this affair. I have tried to consider the matter before God. What I must, then, look into on the ground is to see whether there is anything solid in what they propose to me, whether the Administrator has the power to cede the rights to this mission, which he calls his own, and the rights of his order, whether Father Gonzalez, the Prefect Apostolic and Administrator of the Diocese, has powers so extensive that he can dispose at will of the missions in California, whether, in the sequel, there would be difficulties to fear on the part of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide, which might later on inject itself into the affair,¹¹⁶ whether the Society by accepting the offer would involve itself in difficulty with the Bishop who perhaps will come shortly to succeed the one deceased, whether in the National Council lately held in the United States any deliberation took place in regard to the ecclesiastical affairs and reorganization of the missions of California, which now forms part of the Union,¹¹⁷ whether it would not be better, seeing that the Government asserts its rights over the missions, to receive this grant from the hands of the Government rather than from the hands of the ecclesiastical authority. If everything is in due order and I see that the Society will be subsequently immune from all embarrassment in the affair, what should I do? To accept formally or in any manner at all is forbidden to me by the Institute, which reserves such matters solely to the hands of your Paternity. On the other hand, to refuse in case they press me, would perhaps be to close forever the door to California. I could do nothing else except temporize and

¹¹⁶ The United States as a missionary country was under the jurisdiction of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide until 1908.

¹¹⁷ The Seventh Provincial Council of Baltimore took place in 1849.

speaking fair words until an answer from your Paternity or from Father Provincial [Elet] should arrive and so afford me a line of conduct. In case I see anything irregular in the cession of the mission they offer us, I think I might be able to take preliminary steps for a foundation other than the above in profiting by the good dispositions of the individuals announced to us in Mr. Brouillet's letter. It is evident that in an affair of this kind the presence of one of ours is absolutely needed. In his letter Father Joset does not fix any time for me to return. If he does not write about the matter before my departure from here, it will be all right both as regards the primary purpose of my expedition and the other incidental purpose. If he fixes a time for me, it will be necessary for me at all costs to drop everything so as to obey instructions unless Father Provincial should order me to remain, taking it upon himself to come to an understanding with Father Joset by letter. Still, I have written to Father Provincial that I should scarcely be in California before I would collect the necessary money for the passage by steamship of two of Ours from the United States and forward the money to him by letter of exchange, so that he himself in person or someone else might come to California and learn the real state of affairs. For the love of God, Very Reverend Father, I beg Your Paternity to be so good as to write on the subject as soon as possible to Reverend Father Provincial and also to communicate to me some line of conduct in this affair so that I may proceed with safety in so delicate a matter, in which I might perhaps compromise the Society whereas all my desire is to promote its interests and the greater glory of God.¹¹⁸

Father John B. Brouillet, the zealous priest who took it upon himself to act as intermediary in the negotiations here being detailed, was a notable figure in Catholic beginnings in San Francisco. He was vicar-general of Bishop Magloire Blanchet of Walla Walla and had come down from Oregon to California in the autumn of 1848 to collect money to relieve the financial needs of the Archbishop of Oregon City and the latter's brother, the Bishop of Walla Walla. He appears to have visited the gold-fields where the Catholic miners were generous with their alms, but passing on his way thither through San Francisco, he was so impressed by the spiritual distress which prevailed in the new-born city, then without a single resident priest, that he decided to settle therein on his return. He was joined in a few months by Father Antoine Langlois, a Canadian, who had been attached for some few years to the archdiocese of Oregon City and was now assigned by Archbishop Blanchet as chaplain to accompany a group of French-Canadians who went down to California to try their fortune in the mines. Langlois, "always exemplary," as Archbishop Blanchet wrote of him in 1846, was desirous of becoming a Jesuit, but on Accolti's advice re-

¹¹⁸ Accolti à Roothaan, May 24, 1849 (AA)

mained as a secular priest in San Francisco, the religious destitution of the place being extreme ¹¹⁹

The Jesuits Kino and Salvatierra had dreamed of carrying the Faith to upper California. It was left to the Spanish Franciscans to realize the dream in the immortal chain of Indian missions which they wove along the windings of the Camino Real from San Diego to San Francisco and beyond. Then came civil revolution, the overthrow of Spanish rule, the attempted substitution by the Mexican authorities of Mexican for Spanish friars and in the end the complete destruction of the missions. A tradition in California has it that the Franciscan Fray Magin Catala, the "Holy Man of Santa Clara," predicted the catastrophe with the loss to its perpetrators not only of their ill-gotten gains but of the glorious country itself, which was to pass into foreign hands. The turn of the tables came with the war between Mexico and its northern neighbor and the subsequent treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, May 30, 1848, which gave upper California to the United States. The ecclesiastical organization of the territory had begun with the erection of the diocese of Monterey and the Two Californias and the consecration of its first incumbent, the Franciscan Fray Garcia Diego y Moreno in 1840. When he came to die in 1846, he named the superior of the Mexican Franciscans, Fray Gonzalez Rubio, and the superior of the Spanish Franciscans, Fray Duran, joint administrators of the diocese until the Holy See should be in a position to name his successor. The Spanish friar died shortly after his appointment and Fray Gonzalez was left to shoulder alone the difficult administration of the forlorn diocese. Its condition from a religious point of view was deplorable as Gonzalez frankly avowed in a pastoral which he addressed to his diocesans the very day that upper California passed under the American flag ¹²⁰

On September 17, 1776, the Franciscans Palou and Cambon entered into possession of a tract of land on San Francisco Bay and proceeded to lay it out as a missionary center, which subsequently took the name of Mission Dolores. Sixty years later, in 1836, was built the first house of a pueblo or civil settlement known as Yerba Buena and situated only two miles by the shore from Mission Dolores. In January, 1847, Alcalde Bartlett issued an ordinance changing the name of the pueblo from Yerba Buena to San Francisco, both bay and pueblo perpetuating

¹¹⁹ "Mr Langlois, a worthy Canadian priest, came here [San Francisco] from Oregon to remain until other priests arrive to replace him when he will remove to Canada, his native land, to enter our Society." Accolti à Roothaan, February 29, 1850 (AA). "Mr Langlois decides to return to Canada. I think he wishes to enter among the Jesuits." Blanchet à l'Evêque de Québec, April 9, 1849. Québec Archd. Arch. In the event Father Langlois became a Dominican.

¹²⁰ *RACHS*, 17: 50

the memory of the gentle saint of Assisi. When Father Brouillet arrived in San Francisco in 1848, the place was without a Catholic church. This need the energetic clergyman promptly proceeded to meet, starting a subscription for five thousand dollars, which sum enabled him to buy property and erect a modest little house of worship. It stood on Vallejo Street, on the same site on which St. Francis of Assisi Church stands today, and the first mass was said in it on June 17, 1849. Here Father Langlois, as he records in a memoir, addressed the motley congregation successively in English, Spanish and French, so that all might understand, being at pains to bring home to his hearers the consoling truth that "it was possible for a person to save his soul in San Francisco."¹²¹ Apparently one needed to be assured on this score, for, wrote Accolti in later years, "whether it [San Francisco] ought to be called Madhouse or Babylon I am at a loss to determine, so great in those days was the disorder, the brawling, the open immorality and the reign of brazen-faced crime on a soil not yet under the sway of human laws."

Accolti's lurid picture of San Francisco is paralleled by another even more lurid which is found in a letter written from that city by the Picpus father, Joseph Venissi, September 18, 1851. "What a port! What a town! What a population! French, English, German, Italians, Mexicans, Americans, Indians, Canacs, and even Chinese, white, black, yellow, brown, Christian, pagans, protestants, atheists, brigands, thieves, convicts, fire-brands, assassins, little good, much bad, behold the population of San Francisco, the new Babylon teeming with crime, confusion and frightful vice."¹²²

To Brouillet and Langlois it soon became evident that Catholic life in San Francisco would continue to run at a low ebb unless additional workers in the ministry were supplied. To help relieve the situation they resolved to call the Society of Jesus to their aid. Father Brouillet's appeal to Accolti has already been set before the reader. From Santa Barbara he sent through Elet under date of July 25, 1849, a direct message to Father Roothaan himself.

Since my arrival in this land about seven months ago I have conceived the desire of seeing the Rev. Jesuit Fathers come and begin here as soon as possible an educational establishment, entertaining no doubt that they will meet with all desirable encouragement. I opened myself on the subject to some lay persons and some religious, who all manifested the best will and promised assistance. Knowing the zeal of the Rev. Jesuit Fathers of Oregon and the desire of some of them to pass into California, I wrote to them urging them strongly to come and I wrote at the same time to Rev. Father Gonzales

¹²¹ Riordan, *Half Century*, p. 20

¹²² RACHS, 17 58 *Ann Prop*, 24 412

(Governor of the Mitre of the Californias) [Administrator of the diocese] to communicate my hopes to him and beg him to approve of the coming of the Reverend Jesuit Fathers into his diocese in case it were possible for them to come I spoke to him at the same time of an establishment of Sisters of Notre Dame for the education of girls Here is the answer of Reverend Father Gonzales dated from Santa Barbara, May 29, 1849

“I give God infinite thanks for having put into the hearts of the Jesuit Fathers of Oregon and the Sisters of Notre Dame the thought of coming to California To you also I render due gratitude for the pains you have been at to procure educational institutions for this country Would that I had at my disposition the necessary means for founding houses and colleges and assuring them subsistence, but I have nothing at my disposal This entire enterprise must be financed by the same faithful for whose benefit the institutions are to be set up Write accordingly in my name to the Superiors of the Jesuit Fathers and of the Sisters that I not only give my consent to their establishing themselves here in this diocese, but will help them as far as I can in this design, insist with them that one or two [of the Fathers] come as promptly as possible to collect alms from the inhabitants of the land so that they may settle here on a basis of the utmost solidity and splendor, with the result, so I am persuaded, of great honor to God, great prestige to their Order, and great profit to the people of this pueblo In this city of Los Angeles I shall see to it that means are obtained for a college of boys and another of girls as soon as you assure me of the coming of the Fathers and the Sisters Perhaps also in the community of Santa Barbara, very poor though it may be, it will be possible in time to erect similar colleges for boys and girls Employ, then, all your attentions and influence, all your cleverness and pains in setting up these colleges at once and on a solid basis It is a great work leading to far-reaching and beneficent results and heaven and this grateful pueblo will bless you for having procured for it so great a favor ”

One of the Reverend Jesuit Fathers of Oregon writes to me under date of April 14, 1849, calling my attention to the fact that there are a number of exiled Jesuits from Italy and Switzerland whom it might be easy to obtain for California where he knows the need of evangelical workers is making itself keenly felt, and he urges me to write to this effect to Reverend Father Elet, Provincial of St. Louis, Missouri

I address myself, then, to you, my very Reverend Father in the name of the Governor of the Mitre [Administrator] and of the entire church of California to beg you earnestly to procure for this country with the least possible delay an educational institution of the Reverend Jesuit Fathers on the same footing as those which you have in the United States I have already set before the Right Reverend Archbishop of Baltimore the urgent necessity of such an institution and I know a gentleman of San Francisco of great merit who is to write by the same mail to the Reverend Jesuit Fathers of New York on this identical business I hope then to see my desire shortly realized I am confident that means for organizing and maintaining the institution will not be lacking Only it is necessary that one or two Fathers come on ahead to determine its location and supervise its erection

If you deign to do me the favor of sending an answer, kindly address it to San Francisco, my ordinary place of residence, or, in my absence, to Very Reverend Father Gonzales, Governor of the Mitre of the Californias, at Santa Barbara ¹²³

Somewhere about 1865 Father Accolti drew up a memorial setting forth the circumstances of his first visit to California. Written approximately fifteen years after the incidents recorded, the document is not free from inaccuracies, but it gives the various stages in the development of the story as they actually occurred. The invitations extended by Fathers Brouillet and Gonzalez are mentioned, also Accolti's own appeals to Fathers Roothaan and Elet and even to the Jesuit superior in Chile, Father de la Pena, also his anxiety to secure the sanction of the ecclesiastical authorities in California, "for I did not wish that myself or others of Our people should enter as intruders or adventurers a country, into which, from the time of its suppression, our Order had not been readmitted." ¹²⁴ Meantime, Father Nobili, recalled from New Caledonia, was admitted to his solemn vows as a Jesuit at St Ignatius Mission, May 13, 1849, Father Joset presiding at the ceremony. Later, September 29 of the same year, Nobili himself was the officiating priest in the cathedral at St Paul on the Willamette at the final vows of Father Accolti, who also became a solemnly professed member of the Society of Jesus. The two Italian fathers were now designated for the California venture, Joset immediately sending notice of his action to the Father General, who was able to answer back from Rome as early as March 17, 1850, "Now that you have sent Father Accolti with Father Nobili to California, you must perforce continue to await the outcome of this affair." ¹²⁵ Father Accolti's memorial states that he and his companion took ship "on the day sacred to the memory of Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez," which is October 30, but were prevented by contrary winds from sailing before December 3, 1849. Having on the 8th of the same month put into San Francisco Bay, they disembarked the following day. They found Father Langlois, now vicar-general for the northern part of upper California, the only priest in San Francisco, Father Brouillet, who had been anxiously awaiting their coming, having left to return to Oregon the very night before their arrival. "We passed each other at sea," says Accolti, "having scarcely time to salute each other from the quarter deck" ¹²⁶

¹²³ Brouillet à Roothaan, July 25, 1849 (AA)

¹²⁴ Accolti, Memorial, in Riordan, *op. cit.*, p. 22. The order had never been established in upper California.

¹²⁵ Riordan, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹²⁶ Accolti, Memorial, in Riordan, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

Accolti's first letter to Father Roothaan from San Francisco, the original being in Italian, is dated the February following his arrival

Here we are in California, as I wrote to you under date of May, 1849, come, not to seek for gold in this country of wealth and treasure but come to do a little good. Though at first there was thought of sending me with two Brothers to the mines to seek means for the support of our missions, on further consideration it was thought best to abandon such project, which has its dangers, however you look at it. The object of our expedition to this country according to Father Joset's instructions, is three-fold: 1. To exercise the ministry, especially in assisting the sick, who are always very numerous in this city. 2. To see if things are as favorable for the establishment of the Society as the Rev. Mr. Brouillet wrote to us. 3. To make a collection in favor of our Missions. As to the first, we are still in suspense, expecting day by day the necessary faculties from the Vicar-general, Father Gonzalez, a Franciscan religious, who lives at Santa Barbara almost 200 leagues from this post, and communications are neither frequent nor easy. As regards the second [third] point I do not think it prudent to attempt anything since Mr. Brouillet busied himself last year begging for the Archbishop of Oregon City under the name of the "Missions of Oregon." It remains then for me to occupy myself only with the second point, and of this I come to give you an account in the present letter. As this is an affair which your Paternity will have to treat directly with Rev. Father Provincial and as I have given him an exact account of everything and am certain that he will inform your Paternity thereon, I have no idea of entering into details but will confine myself to the essentials. Upper California is a country which began to shape itself with the discovery of the mines. Here everything is in the way of being made. Progress is rapid and great, new and magnificent cities are rising everywhere and a new population is being formed out of a concourse of all the nations of the world. Hence proceeds an ebb and flow of circumstances so many and so varied as to make the aspect of things change at every moment. This premised, it is not to be wondered at if on my arrival here I found the state of things a little changed from what it was as described for me by Mr. Brouillet last year in his glowing and very pressing letters. What embarrassed me greatly on first reaching here was not to find Mr. Brouillet, who not seeing us arrive had left for Oregon in order to [ms?]

see and decide on what was to be done. I had to open a way for myself practically alone. I have scrutinized closely the state of things, the conditions of the country, its needs. I have gathered the most accurate information about places and persons. They directed me to the Pueblo S. José. There I found a friendly attitude on the part of several Irish Catholics pretty well-off and well-disposed. But in America and especially here it is very difficult to find persons as in Europe who are willing to despoil themselves entirely or in part to make religious foundations. Here you have to get together many little bits to make a total of any size. That is the American style. This granted, not to lose time and prolong the affair endlessly and at the same time let opportunities slip by, I thought it opportune to open a subscription to see on

what funds I could rely as capital for the foundation of a college. At the first opening of the subscription I received pledges for 8,000 dollars and 200 acres (*arpenti*) of good land in the vicinity of the Pueblo S. José. The site is the best you could imagine for an establishment of the Society. The inclemency of the season prevented me from continuing my rounds. As soon as the weather moderates, I will take the matter up again. Everybody assures me that I shall easily get together 20,000 dollars. I hope so. If things turn out this way, we shall have enough to begin with. In a month or two I shall be able to put up a college large enough to accommodate 12 of Ours and 50 boarders (*collegiali*) with good class-rooms for the day-scholars. The houses sold here are all made of wood. There is no other kind of building. Structures [ms[?]] and cost much. Everything will come with time. To inject into the affair all necessary movement and energy, nothing remains for me except to be authorized by your Paternity and by Father Provincial [Elet] to proceed with the execution [of the plan]. In giving your Paternity these assurances all I can say is that California is in great need, that there is an immense amount of good to be done there and that once established the Society will have every necessary advantage in its favor. If we do not move in the matter, the Protestant ministers are there to appropriate all the Catholic youth. The consequences are easy to see. There is no reason to fear any lack of means of support, I should dare [ms[?] to rely only on[?]] the charity and liberality of the Catholics, especially the Irish.¹²⁷

Though there could be no doubt of the earnest desire of the Franciscan administrator of the diocese, Father Gonzalez, to see the Society of Jesus enter the California field, Father Accolti was eager to secure from him an explicit authorization of the step. On February 1, 1850, Gonzalez communicated to the two Jesuits the necessary faculties or license for the exercise of the sacred ministry in the diocese of which he was administrator. Moreover, to Accolti's first letter to him, dated January 15, 1850, he answered with great cordiality from his residence at Santa Barbara, March 5, 1850.

With unspeakable satisfaction have I received your most welcome letter dated January 15 and written in San Jose. I answer it by saying that I give infinite thanks to God, our Lord, for the singular favor that he has deigned to confer upon this people in the arrival, so opportune, of your Reverence and a worthy associate to help me by the exercise of your holy ministrations in correcting the morals of my flock, in the education of youth and the preservation of Catholic worship throughout this vast diocese committed to my care. I give thanks, under God, to your Reverence for the will, no less ready than good, which you show by employing your talents, zeal, and worthy service in this diocese, which is as destitute of every help as it is weakened in morals and beset with dangers.

Already through Father Brouillet have I expressed my desire that two

¹²⁷ Accolti a Roothaan, February 29, 1850 (AA)

colleges of the Society of Jesus be established here, one in the north where you are and another in the south With this object in view your Reverence was invited to come, some donations were solicited for the founding of such colleges, but, as the offerings contributed up to the present are small for so great an enterprise, I insisted with Father Brouillet that he should urge you to come, since your presence and the influence that you would acquire by the exercise of your ministry would be the most efficacious means for bringing about the foundation of the two colleges desired, for, I repeat, the presence of your Reverences will dissipate many prejudices and warm the hearts of those who are able to aid with their donations so holy a work

The administrator then proceeded to say that he approved in explicit terms the establishment of the Society of Jesus in his jurisdiction "I desire it and have eagerly desired it, I have begged it of God with earnest pleadings" ¹²⁸

In acknowledgment of the welcome which the highest ecclesiastical authority of the diocese had thus extended to them, Accolti and Nobili sent from San Francisco April 7, 1850, a joint letter of thanks They were grateful for the permission accorded them to start a college at San José "By this, however, it is not intended that they are to exclude or neglect the other forms of ministry proper to the Society, namely preaching the word of God, hearing confessions, conducting missions etc, and especially giving retreats, by means of which, through God's grace, the Society has ever reaped a rich harvest of souls, just as by the same grace the venerable Order of St Francis by means of the Way of the Cross, has at all times and all over the world worked, as it works today, the wonderful conversion of so many sinners" Fathers Accolti and Nobili then speak of the opportunity offered them to begin a college at San José Property and a modest sum of money had been offered for the purpose and there was every prospect that the project could be seen through to a successful end Nothing remained but the Father General's permission, that of their Superior in St Louis having already been obtained

Our Provincial at St Louis University has told us in letters which we received last month, March, 1850, that so far as he is concerned, he approves this work which is for the greater glory of God, that he has, moreover, chosen suitable priests and offered them to Very Rev Father General, and lastly, that he only waits for the answer of the General, to whom he has not ceased to recommend the matter, to send them hither Your Reverence urges also that we found another college in some southern city, e g Los Angeles, since, if this were done, provision would be made for the southern part of the diocese, as by the college in San José provision is made for the

¹²⁸ Riordan, *op cit*, p 25

northern Undoubtedly Your Reverence's interest merits high approval and the work itself, already begun in some measure by Father Brouillet and so much recommended by Your Reverence, ought not, so it seems to us, in any manner be refused We would, however, make an observation, namely, that once our Society shall, like a vine, have been lawfully planted in California and shall have taken root, it will be easy for it afterwards to spread its branches, hence, when we shall have established one college, it will be an easy matter to put our minds and our hands to the starting of another Thus shall everything be rendered more solid than if we were to keep many things at the same time before our eyes ¹²⁹

On March 28 Father Accolti penned a third letter to the General on the California affair, this time in French It is too long for reproduction here, but an extract follows

No schools except those of the Protestants, who make every effort to show the inadequacy and sterility of Catholicism Churches are lacking everywhere and yet everybody wants them, everybody offers to put them up provided only there are priests The people are preponderantly Catholic They cry aloud for priests but the only response one can give them is a sigh from the heart The French number at least 12,000 (the bulk of them, it is true, *gens de barricades*), but they change their communist ideas on arriving here Almost 8 or 10,000 Germans, 3 or 4,000 Italians, an uncounted number of Spaniards coming from the various Republics of South America With this concourse of people from all the nations, the number of families goes on increasing and so there is a great host of children needing the benefits of an education without anybody being in a position to satisfy this need In three or four years we could have three or four colleges in this country, all of them well provided for Means here are ample and abundant provided one shows good will and determination to do something for the good of the public, for the advancement of our holy Religion If there were the Irish alone in the country, one need never fear failure It must be admitted that the Catholic body is well disposed It realizes the void around it and would like to fill it in some or other way

The town of San Francisco is the leading commercial place of California and will soon be such of the entire world For the present I do not think it well enough suited for a college in view of the continual ebb and flow [of conditions] which prevails there But beyond all doubt it would be a place for a Residence with plenty to do for four or five good workers speaking the predominant languages of the country, namely, English, French, German, Spanish One would do an immense amount of good in the town and environs Father Santillano, missionary curé of [Mission] Dolores, has just offered me a property of 400 square rods (*verges*) for an establishment of that sort near this city, the limits of which are daily extending The sale of a few lots

¹²⁹ *Idem*, p 30

from this property would bring enough to build with in case other resources should fail in the beginning, a thing I do not fear. If one only knew how to take things in hand here at the outset, the Society would be able some day to play a magnificent role, all chances to be taken are in our favor. The outcome would be that California and Oregon together might give another Vice-Province to the Society. And as the sea in receding from the shores of one country proceeds to enrich with its waters the littoral of another, so in like manner the Society, in losing its Provinces in Europe through the adversities of the times, will come to pour out its blessings on American soil.¹³⁰

In the meantime Accolti had received news which placed him in a new relation to the task he was now engaging in of securing for his Society a foothold in California. He had taken the task in hand with dependence on Father Joset, superior of the Oregon Missions, who had given it approval, however qualified, only in deference to Accolti, the originator of the idea and its tireless promoter. But now Accolti had himself been appointed superior of the Oregon Missions in succession to Joset. "We were uncertain," he wrote to De Smet, "of the approbation of our superior, Father Joset, who very reluctantly had sent us thither to comply with my very warm and earnest solicitations. My nomination to the superiorship of these missions arrived timely indeed for our circumstances, but one year after its date."¹³¹ Even before the General's letter of appointment came into his hands, Accolti had learned from Father Elet that it was already on the way. Elet's own letter was received by Accolti in March, 1850, and under peculiar circumstances Judge Pratt of Oregon had obtained permission from the postal authorities in San Francisco to open the Oregon mail-bag and take from it some dispatches which he was expecting from Washington.¹³² As he was going through the mail he came across a letter addressed to Father Accolti, which he made bold to appropriate and carry directly to his friend. "He could not," said Accolti, "have rendered me a greater service," the letter was Elet's long delayed response to Accolti's petition to him for approval of his California plans. In July, 1850, he returned to Oregon to discharge the new duties laid upon him, leaving Nobile alone in California. Shortly before his departure from San Francisco he sent off to the Father General, June, 1850, an Italian letter, his fourth on the California question, all these communications

¹³⁰ Accolti à Roothaan, March 28, 1850 (AA). The Picpus fathers had been invited by Padre Gonzalez to open a college in San Francisco. See an account of their experiences in this connection in Yzendoorn, *op cit*, pp. 189-191.

¹³¹ Accolti to De Smet, November 8, 1852 (A).

¹³² Orville C. Pratt, associate judge in Oregon, who figured in the Whitman massacre cases and the land controversy of 1851-1852. Bancroft, *California*, 7 223.

having been sent through the medium of Father Elet in St. Louis, and all of them still awaiting answer

Having received no answer (either from your Paternity or from Father Elet) in regard to our accepting this new enterprise, I stopped going ahead with the subscriptions, which would without fail have amounted to a very considerable sum. Not to expose myself to ridicule in case of a negative answer from your Paternity, I have been unable to give the affair any great air of publicity. For the rest, things are in such state that no sooner would your Paternity give his consent than a boarding-college would rise at once. I should not wish your Paternity to take these expressions of mine as Neapolitan fanfaronade. In a country like this where cities of 40, 20, 15 thousand souls are made to spring up in the space of 18 months, and cities, too, that lack none of the luxuries of the leading cities of the United States, it is no wonder if in a short time a house can be put up of capacity enough to lodge a small-sized [religious] community and some hundred boarders. What is being done in California is in the nature of a creation. Since I have been here this town has grown one-third in the number of houses. I have been witness of two great conflagrations, which have destroyed at two different times the largest and most central quarter of the city. The loss from the two fires has been estimated at 10 million dollars. My God! [ms?] it was nothing at all. The fire was scarcely out, the smoke was still annoying passers-by, to be short, 24 hours after, thousands of workmen were on the ground to restore the area destroyed by the flames and they worked with such rapidity that in less than a month business was as active and flourishing in that quarter as before. Should I wish to give an exact account of California and of what is being done there I am sure Your Paternity and everybody else would consign my letter to the ancient tales of the Arabian novels. Besides the Pueblo San José we have a donation of three thousand squares [acres?] of land at Sonora, a new city in course of construction, with a view to opening a college there. To possess land in this country and land such as this, is to possess a priceless treasure. At Pueblo Los Angeles in the southern part of Upper California the people offer us land and means enough for the establishment of schools and missions. The people are almost entirely Catholic. Many American and German families are settling in that place. Rev. Father Gonzalez has already written me several letters recommending this establishment. However, I don't think it well to take everything in hand at once. If for the present a boarding college be opened at Pueblo San José, we shall be doing not a little. But this much is altogether necessary so as not to lose time. If your Paternity delays to answer, we shall without fail lose this very important point of the country, a point so coveted by the Pious Fathers, who have arrived here from Valparaiso with ample faculties from their Superior General to open an establishment wherever opportunity offers. Already I know that several of our supporters seeing themselves trifled with, as it were, by us, are inclined to turn to these Fathers. At the moment I write this letter, your Paternity, I believe, must have already made his decision and communicated it to Rev. Father Provincial. However this may be, I don't

think it useless to bring again to your attention the importance of this country for the Society. One must consider California not by itself alone but in connection with all the favorable circumstances bestowed upon it by its geographical position. California just now commands the whole Pacific, being as it is chief commercial center, and it offers a naturally made port which, so all the seamen declare, has no equal not merely in all the extent of the Pacific but in all the rest of the world. Brought as it is into communication with the United States at present by steamships, and to be brought into communication more effectually on the completion of the railroads already begun and of the canals at the Isthmus of Panama, all the [products?] of that country are being transported to this one, which, youthful and in its very infancy, will soon be grown-up and, I should say, even mature, when other countries old in years will not yet have emerged from childhood. But leaving aside all other considerations, I wish to set before you but a single one, which perhaps your Paternity has not up to this time paused to dwell upon. A steamship line is shortly to be established between San Francisco and Canton in China. The result will be to reduce the travelling distance from here to Europe by one-half. I am assured that one will need only three weeks to go from here to Canton. This country is therefore going to become the world's emporium, it being a country which offers of itself so much treasure in gold, silver, mercury, platinum, zinc, coal and I know not what else. I don't mean to say by all this that the Society ought to run after all this temporal prosperity, but I do wish to say that it would be well to run after so many thousands of men who come here in search of this prosperity, I wish to say that this prosperity offers great [ms] and occasions for doing good and good that has to be done on an immense scale. Poor California! No one can form an idea of the miserable condition of the people. I do not speak of the Indians, of whom there is an immense number in the interior, with no one to bring them the succours of religion, the beneficent influence of which they experienced in other days, while there is a considerable number of tribes who before the discovery of gold never saw the face of a white man. I speak here especially of all those thousands of Spanish or mixed stock living in a state of great and gross demoralization. The population is composed of all the peoples of the world. The prevailing languages are English, French, Spanish and German. The number of Catholics exceeds that of all other denominations taken together, if indeed the 15 or 20 thousand French who live in this country must be counted among the Catholics and not rather among the unbelievers. In spite of this preponderance in numbers the Catholics are in comparison the least provided for.¹³³

Meantime, Father Nobili after the departure of Father Accolti for Oregon was making himself as useful in a priestly way to the neglected Catholics about him as he possibly could. On May 13, 1850, he had received from the administrator, Gonzalez, an appointment as assistant, "especially for those who speak English," to the parish-priest of San

¹³³ Accolti à Roothaan, June 12, 1850 (AA)

José, a Spaniard, Father Piñero,¹³⁴ who is described by Accolti as an Andalusian, who knew "nothing about Jesuits except what he had been taught by Eugene Sue in his *Juif Errant*"¹³⁵ "Father Nobili remains in California," Accolti wrote just before he left for Oregon, "until your Paternity's decision regarding this establishment becomes known. If the answer be favorable, it is necessary that one of Ours be on the ground to make the first move. It is true that this Father is not over-much of an expert in these matters and when it comes to building I shall be at pains to leave him all necessary instructions. He is now residing at Pueblo San José in order to assist the pastor there, a Spaniard, who is unable to lend spiritual aid to the English-speaking people and they are not a few. He [Nobili] can preach and does preach in English and in Spanish to the great edification of his hearers though his pronounciation especially in English is not all that might be desired. Should a college be opened here he will be able to render great service in the exercise of the sacred ministry"¹³⁶

In his first communication to Father Gonzalez Accolti had petitioned for leave to erect a Jesuit oratory or succursal church in San José. This had been refused by the administrator on the ground that the time was not yet ripe for the erection of separate churches for the nationalities other than Mexican or Spanish now represented in the Catholic body in California. His instructions were that the Jesuits should not preach, hear confessions or otherwise exercise the ministry except in the existing parish churches. With these instructions they promptly complied. "As to the Oratory that we wished to build in San José we most readily acquiesce in the reason given by your Reverence, for it has ever been the practice of our Society, whenever possible without prejudice to the substance of our Institute, to depend not only on the commands of the Church's princes, but even on the least indications of their will, to no parish-priest would it willingly give just cause of offense, no right would it knowingly invade, nor would it even make use of its privileges unless they contribute to the greater glory of God and the good of souls"¹³⁷ All this time Nobili, for all his tireless zeal in the ministry, was in wretched health, afflicted as he was with pericarditis and other chronic maladies.

Father Langlois, the devoted Canadian priest who was left alone in San Francisco after Accolti's departure for Oregon, kept a journal which closes with this entry "December 6, 1850 at 11 o'clock at night,

¹³⁴ Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., *The Missions and Missionaries of California* (San Francisco, 1915), 4 681

¹³⁵ Accolti to De Smet, November 8, 1852 (A)

¹³⁶ Accolti à Roothaan, June, 1850 (AA)

¹³⁷ Riordan, *op cit*, p 32

the steamship *Columbus* brought us the Rev Joseph Alemany, Bishop of Monterey and California, with the Rev Sadoc Villarasa, O P”¹³⁸ The prelate’s coming had not been announced and with it San Francisco learned for the first time that the vacancy in the see of Upper California had been filled. The appointment had first gone to an American Dominican, Father Montgomery, who pleaded successfully to be spared the burden. “Things have turned out so,” Bishop Alemany wrote at the time, “that I have been obliged to wear the heavy mitre put off by Father Montgomery”¹³⁹ Alemany, himself a Dominican, was a native son of Catalonia in Spain and had seen some years of service on the American missions. His consecration took place in Rome, June, 30, 1850. No one could have befriended the Jesuits in their first struggling days in California with greater cordiality than this prelate of the great order of St. Dominic. A little more than two months had passed since his arrival in San Francisco when he penned this letter to Father Accolti.

The honor of God requires, I feel, that establishments be made in the Diocese for the *good* education of youth. I believe we should have at least two colleges in this state. The lower part of the state has no facility to communicate with this upper one. Hence the Fathers of Picpus will have a College in the Southern part of the State, another college should be established in, or near Sta. Clara. For this, it would not be necessary to have many Fathers to commence, yet Father Nobili alone could not probably undertake to commence it. Will you not, then, be so good as to send him one or two Fathers more? The Mission of Sta. Clara will soon be vacant, and might be transferred to your Society for that purpose. It is true that Mission has been squandered, but from all my researches upon the subject of Missions, I entertain the hope that the American Government will feel disposed to give us considerable. At any rate the people of California commence to feel the necessity of education, and could no doubt, aid greatly the enterprise.^{139a}

Shortly after his return to Oregon Father Accolti wrote, under date of August 18, 1850, still another letter to the Father General on the California question. Of this letter as also of his previous one of June 12 sent from San Francisco he received acknowledgment from the General, whose communication was dated January 14, 1851. “However great be the hope of doing good and very much good in that country, I cannot agree to houses or colleges of the Society being established there unless the Province of Spain take upon itself the charge of furnishing subjects. Father Nobili, who is better, can work there—and

¹³⁸ *Idem*, p. 35

¹³⁹ *Idem*, p. 34

^{139a} Allemany to Accolti, February 11, 1851 (AA)

look about for teachers of elementary schools. Then, if possible, let him be given a father for companion."

As to Father Nobili, he had by an unlooked-for issue of events remained in California when he had long been expecting to leave it. He had come with Accolti from Oregon in 1849 in shattered health and the only hope of recovery held out to him by the doctors was a return to his native Italy. Twice, January 24 and February 28, 1850, he had written the General for leave to take the step. In a letter of July 12 of the same year Father Roothaan not only permitted him to return to Europe but gave him positive instructions to do so. "As regards California," said the letter, "we can undertake nothing for the moment." Men, travelling-money, everything was lacking. If a beginning of Jesuit work was to be made in California, it should be with the sacred ministry, a more imperative need for the country at the moment than education, and not with a college. But, added the General, let primary schools be opened and these taught by laymen under the direction of the missionary. At the time this letter of the General's came into his hands, Nobili's health had so far improved that he had decided to remain in California, where his services in the ministry were in constant requisition, the more so as Father Accolti, his superior, had instructed him to do so. The General later expressed his satisfaction at the step taken as it anticipated his own wishes in the matter, his previous instructions to Nobili to return to Europe being predicated merely on the circumstance of bad health. But not only was Father Nobili committed at this time to continued residence in California, he was actually at the head of a school, which he had set up with an optimism that one can only qualify as audacious. On March 21, 1851, he had taken over from its Franciscan incumbent the old Mission of Santa Clara on an understanding with Bishop Alemany that it was to serve the purpose of a college. The letter in which the prelate broached the subject of a college at Santa Clara has already been cited. A communication of Nobili's, July 20, 1851, acknowledging one of January 14 of the same year received from Father Roothaan, begins with expressing the relief it brought him, by removing misgivings that he had not correctly divined the General's intentions in the important transaction to which he had been a party.

Your Paternity tells me in his last letter that, seeing I am in better health, *he hopes I shall therefore remain here to do good*. Now, in view of my health, which is already improving, and much more of the good which can be done, I had made up my mind many months ago to remain here. Your Paternity wishes a companion to be given me as a help and consolation, Father Goetz has been here since the 17th of April past and Father De Vos will be here in a few days. He must already have left Oregon for San Francisco.

Your Reverence tells me that the only thing to do just now is to organize elementary schools conducted by good teachers under the direction of the missionary, it is now three months since I organized one under my direction, which by the grace of God goes on very well and is now, I flatter myself, the best to be found in California Your Paternity suggests to me the thought *with time little things grow Man's works, in order to prosper, ought to imitate God, who operates slowly—a minoribus ad majora—from the seed, the tree* These words, it seems to me, can be taken as sanctioning what I have already done here Your Paternity, *motu proprio*, not only permits the province of Spain to take in hand the spiritual cultivation of California but gives assurance of having already appealed by letter to the fathers expelled from New Granada and now in Jamaica It is true that Your Paternity seems to foresee the difficulty, perhaps even the impossibility of carrying the business through, as he intimates to me in his last letter of January 14, 1851, as also in his preceding one of July 12, 1850 But God has deigned so to bring things along that, I make bold to say, all the difficulties pointed out by his Paternity were smoothed away before his last letter came into my hands One difficulty was, "money is lacking to meet travelling expenses" Now money is here at hand for the journey of three or four fathers and two coadjutor-brothers from Jamaica to the port of San Francisco The other difficulty was "money is lacking to provide the necessary living-quarters" But what if a house large enough even for a future college—a church—and an annual income be already available? This, Your Paternity, is the case Bishop Alemany has already ceded to our Society, and I have been in possession of it for now five months, a spacious, substantial house with five large halls and seventeen living rooms, together with a little garden and court and a large tract of adjoining land, to say nothing of the other houses close by and a vineyard and a big garden, things which undoubtedly will be restored to the Bishop by the government of the United States and which the Bishop has promised, even in writing, to leave to our Society The church is one of the largest and richest in gold and silver of all in upper California Moreover, if it be necessary to repair the house, the Bishop in a letter which he wrote me from his see of Monterey has promised to assist with money Your Paternity will certainly ask me on what authority I have dared to accept such things in the name of the Society and even to take actual possession of them It would be too long a story, and as to justifying myself, I have no need of it I was a subject of Father Accolti, the only one to whom I could have recourse, when the proposition, which admitted of no delay, was made to me Father Accolti, in a letter which I preserve, and which I think it superfluous to send your Paternity, answered me, "accept the college of Santa Clara"

There was no need for Father Nobili to enter at length into the reasons which had prompted Father Accolti and himself to accept Bishop Alemany's offer. But he mentioned three He and his colleagues, Fathers Goetz and De Vos, would be in need of some perma-



Michael Accolti, S.J. (1807-1878) in his early years
Founder of the Jesuit Mission of California

San Francisco Jul 5th 1851

Rev & Dear Father Nobile

I received your favour by St. Agosta,
and by the same I send you this, begging for an answer
as soon as convenient

As you are aware a kind of indisputable title must
be secured from the Government to the Mission. This, evidently
must be attended to by me for all the reasons. In this
purpose one or two good lawyers must be employed. I have
already done considerable in this affair, and I was on the eve of
signing a contract with a firm of two good lawyers, but I have so far
deferred, reflecting that what they ask is too much. They want \$1000,
down, & then one year after the grant from the Gov. \$500, for each
man we would use the time & proceed dwelling and garden grounds.
If, in a man's will, no doubt, be recovered and for the certainty
it appears too much to pay \$11000, or more. Do you not think so?

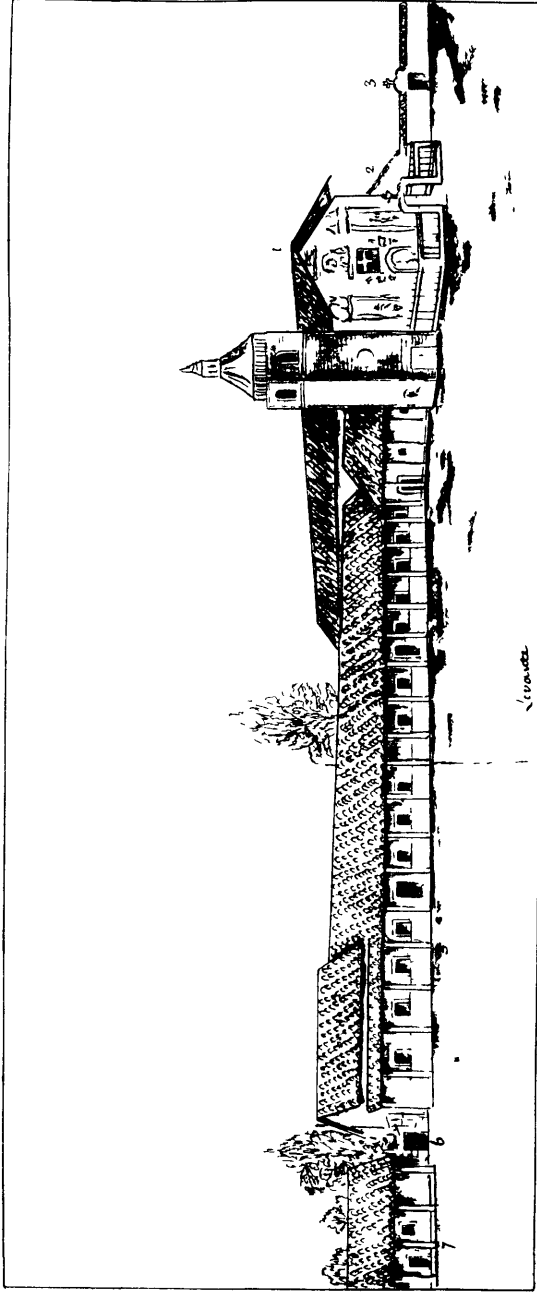
I think it a better plan to employ a good conscientious catholic
lawyer to collect all information and documents, necessary to make a
report to the Commissioners (who, as you will know, are not to decide,
but only to report to Washington on the basis of property) and after
that let the counsel of another grave lawyer be also employed to
aid in perfecting the report before presenting it to the Commission-
ers. You no doubt will not mind less, and probably will come as
good or better in as I should like your opinion on it.

May God bless us all

Your brother - *Amédée*
Joseph J
Bp of Monterey Cal

Letter of Bishop Allemany to John Nobile, S.J., July 5, 1851, on procedure to be
followed in securing title to Santa Clara Mission General Archives of the Society
of Jesus, Rome.

Benvenuto



Veduta della Chiesa e casa de Santa Clara come si trovava nel 1851 quando vi entrò il P. Nobili
 1 Chiesa - 2 Battistero - 3 Convento - 4 Casa del fornaio - 5 Parte del fabbricato occupata dal Sig. Forbes - 6 Ingresso alla vigna - 7 Casa rustica degli indiani,
 la quale si estendeva tutto il lungo del muro orientale della vigna -

"View of the church and house of Santa Clara as they were in 1851 when Father Nobili took possession 1 Church 2 Baptistry
 3 Cemetery 4 Pastor's house 5 Part of the building occupied by Mr Forbes 6 Entrance to the vineyard 7 Indians' huts,
 which extended the whole length of the east wall of the vineyard" Drawing with Italian legend, 1854 General Archives of
 the Society of Jesus, Rome

ment shelter as also of means of subsistence, and these problems seemed to find their solution in a school at Santa Clara. Moreover, the Sisters of Notre Dame, who had come down from Oregon, were looking to the Jesuits for spiritual direction. Finally the Oregon missions were in a precarious condition, their dissolution was likely and in this case it would be expedient for the mission-staff to have a refuge in California.¹⁴⁰

It transpires from the foregoing data that Santa College began its career as a sort of grade or grammar school and not as a college in any legitimate sense of the term. A prospectus of the school appeared in the form of a letter addressed by Father Nobili under date of February 16, 1852, to the editor of the San Francisco *Picayune*. "We do not claim for it," the prospectus declared, "even the name of a college but have looked upon it merely as a select boarding and day school,—the germ only of such an institution as we would wish to make it, and as the wants of the community will require."

In December, 1851, Bishop Alemany also conveyed to Father Nobili the parish of San José, which adjoined that of Santa Clara, it was in Accolti's words, "the most valuable and delightful portion of the country." Jesuit plans of the moment received from him sympathy and support. "I am glad," he assured Nobili, "that your General seconds our views. In my opinion California at some future day will be a very great country. I should be most happy to have contributed to the establishment of Jesuits and Dominicans and to see the sons of the two great Patriarchs harmoniously fighting the battles of the Lord against Antichrist and his forerunners. When you write to the General I beg you to offer him my kind regards."^{140a}

Father Accolti's correspondence bears witness to the services rendered by Bishop Alemany to the Society of Jesus in these days of its pioneering in California. "And here I must confess for the sake of justice and truth," he confided in 1852 to Father Murphy at St. Louis, "that if we have laid some solid foundation for our future and permanent existence in California, all [this] we owe to the disinterested and charitable liberality of the zealous and wise Prelate, Bishop Alemany."¹⁴¹ Again, he wrote to De Smet

¹⁴⁰ Nobili à Roothaan, July 20, 1851 (AA). In a document preserved at Santa Clara, March 21, 1851, is entered as the day on which Father Nobili took over the mission from Father Real, the Franciscan superior. "Recibi en el dia 21 de Marzo de 1851 P. Juan Nobili, S. J." Zephyrin Engelhardt, O. F. M., *The Missions and Missionaries of California* (San Francisco, 1915), 4:691.

^{140a} Riordan, *Half Century*, p. 36.

¹⁴¹ Accolti to Murphy, November 8, 1852 (A). In a letter of Nobili's of about the same date (copy, AA) occurs this testimony: "Novus Episcopus, J. M. Alemany, O. P., vir eruditione et zelo clarissimus et re magis quam verbis Societati

My hopes are very sanguine and I trust in God's benevolent assistance that we shall succeed in casting [laying] down a solid foundation for the permanent existence of our Society in that wonderful and extraordinary country. The worthy Prelate of that Diocese has the best dispositions towards us and he has found in Father Nobili's cleverness and activity those qualities which are the most proper to foster in him these happy dispositions to patronize our society in his jurisdiction, to give her his hearty assistance and to develop her elements of good in the most simple and extensive manner.¹⁴²

The beginnings of Santa Clara College were sketched by Father Accolti with customary exuberance of phrase

Thither [Santa Clara] the benevolent Prelate sent Father Nobili to take the spiritual charge of both places [Santa Clara and San José] with [the] recommendation of opening a school under his direction. Our aim was attained not by "intrigues" but by the singular dispensation of the wise Providence of God. Father Nobili, true to my instructions and agreeably to the suggestions of his Paternity, took possession of the old mission of Santa Clara already plundered and reduced to the condition of a big stable by the *Molto Reverendissimo Padre*, his predecessor. He gave commencement to a boarding school of young boys with the assistance of some secular teachers. Poor and ugly school, to be sure, the circumstances allowing no better, but all according to the eternal laws of a wise Providence, which in the common order of things operates nothing completely and *ex tempore* but exerts its creative power by slow and gradual development, so from the Chaos the Cosmos, from the seed the tree, and from a monstrous and sloathing [?] embryo the most beautiful and perfect of creatures. But that school was not to remain long in such chaotic condition. The industrious Father Nobili tho' tossed [about] by many contradictions from within and without, tho' disappointed in many ways, still exerted all his power and activity with unrelenting perseverance and in less than one year fitted the decaying building so as to provide both for decency and capacity without contracting any debts. The number of scholars increased ever since the commencement of the establishment and the acquisition of two first-rate Catholic teachers gave much credit to it. The end of the first scholastic year was closed last July with a public examination and solemn Distribution of Premiums which succeeded with great *Eclat* and [to the] full satisfaction of the respective parents of our pupils. Such a success was echoed everywhere by the felicitations of all those who were anxious for the education of their children.¹⁴³

The health of good Father Nobili is considerably impaired. I find him in a more delicate condition than I left him [in] last year. The burden of

nostrae addictissimus, quam nuper concione publica coram maxima populi frequentia extollere non dubitavit, etc."

¹⁴² Accolti to De Smet, November 20, 1852 (A)

¹⁴³ Accolti to De Smet, November 8, 1852 (A) Accolti's comment on the dilapidation of Santa Clara Mission should be checked with Engelhardt, *Mission and Missionaries of California*, IV, 360, 587 and *passim*

labors he has to bear is far beyond his physical strength, not to say [that] of any other of stronger and more vigorous complexion. The sphere of his duties is so large and extensive that he could not fulfill one of them without omitting others. The supervision of the pupils, the temporal administration of the establishments, the attending to the material work of the laborers, the incumbent obligation of preaching every Sunday, the visiting of the sick even in different distant places, all of these are duties of such a nature as to give, each of them, abundant matter of occupation to many persons. Imagine [whether] if put together, they are not superexceeding the strength of one single individual. We have spared neither ink nor paper in writing very urgent letters to his Paternity in order to obtain some efficient help.¹⁴⁴

Four years later, March 4, 1856, Father John Nobili, founder of Santa Clara College, succumbed to the burden of anxiety and toil he had carried ever since he came in broken health to California.

At St. Louis the Jesuit enterprise in California now on foot met with sympathy and approval, but no material aid for it in personnel or funds was to be forthcoming from that quarter. Father Accolti, at least in the early stage of the negotiations, had assumed the indorsement of his plans by the Missouri vice-provincial to be indispensable. So long as no formal decree had been received from the Father General detaching the Oregon Missions and their men from the jurisdiction of St. Louis, it was taken as a matter of course that connection between them was still to be maintained. Hence, Accolti's repeated letters to Elet and the latter's attitude to the California experiment as one which it was within his competence to approve or reject. The relation of the St. Louis superior to the experiment may be traced in his correspondence. Even before Father Accolti had taken up the matter at all with St. Louis and Rome, an exchange of letters on the extension of Jesuit activities to California was already in progress between Fathers Elet and Roothaan. On March 25, 1849, the former, who was distinctly in favor of California as a promising field of Jesuit missionary and educational endeavor, wrote to the General: "I think your Paternity is misinformed as to the state of things in California. A large number of Catholics are going to leave in the spring for that country and if they are taken care of, it will remain eminently Catholic despite the efforts which will be made by the Bible Societies to protestantize it. The Most Reverend Archbishop of St. Louis has assured us that one or two bishops will be nominated for that region in the approaching Council of Baltimore. No one of this Vice-Province will go there without authorization from your Paternity. Fathers Parrondo and Irisarri would suit admirably."¹⁴⁵ The two fathers named, members of the province of Spain,

¹⁴⁴ Accolti to De Smet, April 5, 1853 (A)

¹⁴⁵ Elet to Roothaan, March 25, 1849 (AA) The Archbishop of Baltimore

had some years previously been assigned by the General to St Louis as professors for the scholastics but had since returned to their own country In April, 1849, Father Roothaan wrote to St Louis "There are no Spanish Fathers available for California, for the rest the moral condition of that country is too bad for us to think of sending anybody there" ¹⁴⁶

In forwarding to the General Father Brouillet's appeal of July, 1849, for a Jesuit college in California, Father Elet appended to it the following indorsement

I must add a few words to put your Paternity *au courant* with what is going on here Just now there is being held in St Louis a convention of delegates from all the states of our Union to examine and discuss a plan for the construction of a railroad from St Louis to San Francisco I can say that the matter is all settled The railroad, says today's paper, will be finished in seven years and will cost 27,000,000 dollars or a hundred and fifty million francs, a mere trifle in a country like this ¹⁴⁷ The journey from St Louis to San Francisco will then be made in a few days and the importance to the society of having there a foothold, a college, is inestimable If I have one piece of advice to give, it is to send there at once Fathers Parrondo and Irisarri with an American Father, e g Father Samuel Barber or Father Carrell, for my opinion has not changed in regard to California ¹⁴⁸

It was not long before Father Roothaan himself began to take a sympathetic view of the possibilities of Jesuit work in California As early as December, 1849, he was writing that this newly opened region held out promise "As to California he [Elet] may send suitable Fathers there if he has them, but nobody will be sent from Europe The two Spanish Fathers whom he would like to have are no longer available In accepting an establishment in California care must be taken to proceed with great prudence and especially to avoid infringing on anybody's rights" ¹⁴⁹ These lines from the General are significant for they indicate that at this juncture, to wit, in the December of 1849, he was not averse to the Society's entering California if the step could be conveniently taken Father Elet himself, without adequate help for the few struggling houses of his vice-province, had no workers to spare

and the Bishop of Philadelphia had appealed to Father Brocard, head of the Jesuit province of Maryland, to send some fathers to California, where the Catholic immigrants were without a priest "No doubt it would be a good thing if this vast and rich country were to be opened up to the Society, but we have so few men at the moment" Brocard à Roothaan, February 27, 1849 (AA)

¹⁴⁶ Roothaan à Elet, April 7, 1849 (AA)

¹⁴⁷ It was not until 1869 that railroad communication between the Mississippi and the Pacific coast was finally established

¹⁴⁸ Elet à Roothaan, July 1, 1849 (AA)

¹⁴⁹ Roothaan à Elet, December 6, 1849 (AA)

for the proposed new mission on the Pacific Coast "The Vice-Province alone," he informed Father Roothaan in February, 1850, "cannot charge itself with California, so I give it up, but with the greatest regret The future will prove whether or not I did wrong to urge this matter with your Paternity" ¹⁵⁰

An attempt made sometime in 1851 to interest European Jesuits in California likewise proved abortive. The revolutionary disturbances of 1847 and 1848 in Europe had disorganized many of the Jesuit provinces of Europe, notably that of Upper Germany or Switzerland, as it was sometimes called, the houses of which were all closed and their occupants dispersed. This province of German-speaking Jesuits might possibly find a home for its scattered members in California where, besides, large numbers of German immigrants were beginning to arrive. So at least thought Accolti, who broached the idea in a letter to Father Simmen, assistant to the Father General for Germany

I think his Paternity must have passed over to you my relations concerning California, thus dispelling any fears that may have arisen that we went there in search of gold. I have received with great disappointment the negative answer of Father General as to an establishment of Ours in that prodigious country, which is now a grown-up without even having been an infant. California has just now been declared one of the stars of the great American constellation. California is now one of the sovereign states of the Union, a thing which presupposes extraordinary progress if you only reflect a little what California was three years ago before it was declared a part of the United States. I know the Swiss Province was anxious to have some sort of establishment of its own on the Pacific. Behold here, Reverend Father, a whole region where not one establishment, but ten, if you wish, can be found in less time than one can think, the wishes of the people being in proportion to the urgency of the needs. Confer on the matter with Very Rev. Father General. The number of Germans at the time I was staying in that country was as high as ten thousand, as subsequent immigration has counted at least two hundred thousand persons, it is to be supposed that the number of Germans has increased in proportion" ^{150a}

In the August of 1851 the Spanish Jesuits were instructed by Father Roothaan to send two of their number to California and in December of that year Father Nobili was aware that the incipient mission he had helped to plant had the unreserved approval of the General ¹⁵¹. But by this time the Oregon Missions together with their offshoot, California, had been completely severed from St. Louis and placed by Father Roothaan in immediate dependence on himself. In

¹⁵⁰ Elet à Roothaan, February 14, 1850 (AA)

^{150a} Accolti à Simmen, 1851 (AA)

¹⁵¹ Riordan, *op cit*, p. 36.

November, 1852, Accolti was urging De Smet to try to prevail upon the Father General to have the California Mission attached to some American province as the only means of insuring its permanence. "The plan of the venerable Prelate Alemany is to put all that district—the best part of Upper California—under the spiritual and educational sway of our Company. But he don't suffer delay, he likes action and effective action. I hope that Your Reverence, having everything well considered *coram domino* would propose to his Paternity a good plan for obtaining an effectual and not a merely nominal connection of California to the Vice-Province of Missouri or the Province of Maryland. Without that I fear—humanly speaking—that all our hopes will fall short and our projects vanish."¹⁵² On August 1, 1854, Father Nicholas Congiato was appointed superior of the united Oregon and California Missions, which simultaneously with Congiato's appointment were made a dependency of the province of Turin. Four years later, in 1858, the two missions were separated, each being given its own superior, though both remained attached to Turin. The question of adequate resources in men continued for years to be a vexing one, so much so that in 1870 Fathers Accolti, Bayma, Varsi, and Raffo, who constituted the consultorial board of the California Mission, appealed to the General, Father Beckx, for the separation of the Mission from Turin and its annexation to Missouri or Maryland. Time brought the remedy with increasing numbers of Jesuit recruits from the American youth of the Pacific states so that California had no longer to look to Europe or the older American provinces for needed reinforcements. In 1907 the Rocky Mountain and Southern Alaska Missions were united with the California Mission, the resultant unit which was known as the California and Rocky Mountain Mission, being raised in 1909 to the rank of a province. Twenty-one years later (1928) the province of California, prospering with the accession of new recruits, underwent provisional division, its northern territory, which included the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana, being detached December 25, 1930, by decree of the Father General to form a (dependent) vice-province under the name of the "Region of Oregon." This was the historic mission-field of De Smet and his associates, which thus assumed once more the rank of a separate administrative unit in the Jesuit governmental system. In 1931 the "Region of Oregon" was given the status of a province.

§ 7 THE MISSION SUPERIORS, 1841-1852

The beginnings and something of the development of the various units in the group of Oregon or Rocky Mountain Missions have been

¹⁵² Accolti to De Smet, November 8, 1852 (A)

sketched out in preceding pages. It remains to trace the general fortunes of the group under Fathers De Smet, Joset and Accolti (1841-1852), these years covering the period during which the Rocky Mountain Missions remained in connection with St. Louis. In that city originated the missionary effort that gave them birth. "The Province of Missouri," Father Congiato wrote from San Francisco to De Smet in 1860, "has all the honor of having founded the Indian Missions of W. T. [Washington Territory] and it is but natural that we should regard her as our Mother and that we should continue to be regarded by her as her children. May Almighty God continue to bless that noble Province."

De Smet's connection with the missions in the capacity of superior terminated with his return to St. Louis in 1846. He had laid the foundations of the missions and given them a measure of initial impetus and enthusiasm and to this extent his work had been crowned with success, but on the whole his career as a superior can scarcely be said to have been a satisfactory one. For one thing, he was embarrassed at times in his management of things by the singularities of some of the missionaries subordinate to him. Two of them he was on the point of dismissing from the Society. Happily, they were allowed at their own vehement petition to remain in its ranks and did excellent work for years after among the Indians. It may be pointed out that of the fathers engaged in the Rocky Mountain Missions in the first fifteen years of their history, to go no farther, all, with the single exception of Father Soderini, remained Jesuits to the end.¹⁵³ Some proved themselves indifferent Indian missionaries, but all had the good-will to carry on, often with the most gratifying results, in some or other corner of the vineyard of the Lord.

As to De Smet himself, he was scarcely fitted by temperament to be a successful manager of men. To Father Roothaan, when they met in Rome in 1843, he declared that "he was not made to be a superior," an estimate in which the General frankly concurred.¹⁵⁴ He himself was indeed under no illusions as to his lack of administrative ability, especially when it involved the management of others, and for this reason wished to be supplanted in the office of superior. He suggested to Father Roothaan the appointment of Father Elet as his successor. Elet, who was at this time rector of St. Xavier College, Cincinnati, had repeatedly asked of the General to be sent to the Rocky Mountains.¹⁵⁵ "It is not the burden I dread," De Smet confided to the General in

¹⁵³ "I deem it necessary to acquaint you that I have found myself in the unhappy necessity of dismissing him [Soderini] from the Society." De Smet to McLoughlin, July 18, 1845. CR, *De Smet*, 4:1470.

¹⁵⁴ Roothaan ad Accolti, February 18, 1846. (AA)

¹⁵⁵ *Infra*, Chap. XXX, § 3.

September, 1843 "I fear and tremble because of my incapacity and lack of virtue" ¹⁵⁶ The following month he wrote again "His [Elet's] capacity, his prudence, his zeal are known to you, we should have everything to hope for from the success in which they would issue As to myself, I tremble to find myself at the head of so important a mission" ¹⁵⁷ In November of the same year Father Roothaan authorized De Smet to call Elet to the Rocky Mountains and, when the latter should have made himself familiar with the situation there, to appoint him "in his [the General's] name," superior of the mission ¹⁵⁸ But there was one hitch in this arrangement Father Elet was first to be released from his duties in Cincinnati and this required the concurrence of the vice-provincial of Missouri, Father Van de Velde The General merely expressed a wish, albeit a very earnest one, that the superior would "make this sacrifice," as he expressed it, he did not strictly enjoin him to do so As a matter of fact, Van de Velde thought Elet's presence in the vice-province quite indispensable He was the rector of a college, moreover, he was the only professed father in the vice-province at the time besides Van de Velde himself and was therefore almost necessarily to be held in reserve as the next vice-provincial De Smet believed, however, that other reasons would prevent Van de Velde from complying with the General's expressed wish He wrote from aboard the *Infatigable* on Christmas day, 1843, while on his way to Oregon "I fear that Rev Father Van de Velde will not let him [Elet] go without a positive order from your Paternity Reverend Father Van de Velde has never showed himself very favorable to the Indian missions" ¹⁵⁹ Father Elet never saw the Rocky Mountains At the same time, Van de Velde, whatever his attitude toward the Indian missions, pursued an obviously necessary course when he kept Elet in the vice-province, of which the latter did, as had been expected, become the superior in 1848.

The reports that reached Father Roothaan from Oregon led him to conclude that De Smet was doing a deal of unnecessary journeying and was attempting a program of expansion altogether beyond the limited resources in men and money at his command "In my letter [to him]," he advised Joset in reference to the notice sent to De Smet

¹⁵⁶ De Smet à Roothaan, September 20, 1843 (AA)

¹⁵⁷ De Smet à Roothaan, October 27, 1843 (AA) Elet himself had written to the General "Continue Father De Smet in the office of Superior and, if you are so kind as to grant me the favor (oh! I have asked it from you so many times) I will go and work there in cooperation with him" Elet à Roothaan, December 23, 1844 (AA)

¹⁵⁸ Roothaan à De Smet, November, 1853 (AA)

¹⁵⁹ De Smet à Roothaan, December 25, 1843 (AA) Van de Velde had volunteered for the Rocky Mountains at the time the missions were started

that he was relieved of office, "I have stated that the Society cannot assume charge of all the countries to which his taste for travelling would carry him" Some time later Father Roothaan wrote again to Joset "Let him [De Smet] think now not so much about fresh and far away excursions as about building up the missions already founded and little by little drawing the neighboring tribes into the Church" ¹⁶⁰ To De Smet himself the General sent word in September, 1846, that by an agreement he had made with Archbishop Blanchet the Jesuit field of labor was to be restricted to the Rocky Mountain Missions in the region around St. Mary's where "we began the work" "To accomplish anything solid it is necessary to expand little by little, and organize residences according as one has the personnel, two fathers in each, one of whom can make excursions from time to time to the neighboring tribes to baptise the children and old people. It is my hope that in this way good will be done solidly and according to our resources. We have neither the men nor the pecuniary means to take in the whole of Oregon at once. It would be a veritable folly. Now that the boundary between England and the United States is fixed, our mission is confined within the limits of the latter country" ¹⁶¹ Somewhat later Father Roothaan repeated to De Smet the same warning against premature expansion. "So you have just opened a new mission and Father Miège whom I had sent out for Oregon will not be there. But take care. In forever starting new undertakings the old ones will never be consolidated. Better do less and do it well" ¹⁶²

As to De Smet's alleged fondness for travelling without reference to the actual needs of the missions, something will be said on this head at a later stage of this narrative. Here it will be enough to note that his journeys were at no time mere pleasure trips in the ordinary sense of the term. They were as a rule either imposed on him by superiors or, when he was himself superior, undertaken on his own account with a view to rendering what he at least conceived to be some important service to the missions. Sometimes, too, as in the latter period of his life, they were occasioned by petitions from government for his intervention with the Indians.

In regard to De Smet's subsequent relations with the missionaries associated with him in his Rocky Mountain days, it is significant that all with the apparent exception of Mengarini (at least no letters of Mengarini to his sometime superior seem to be extant) corresponded with him in later years on the most cordial terms and rendered un-

¹⁶⁰ Roothaan à Joset, August 6, 1845, February 16, 1847 (AA)

¹⁶¹ Roothaan à De Smet, September 1, 1846 (AA)

¹⁶² Roothaan à De Smet, February 17, 1849 (AA)

grudging testimony to his early successful work in setting the missions on foot. From Canada the zealous but eccentric Father Point wrote to the General petitioning to be sent back to the Rockies under De Smet as superior.¹⁶³ Earlier tributes from fellow-missionaries are also on record. Nobili in a letter of 1845 to Father Roothaan describes himself as "a pigmy alongside of De Smet who walks with giant strides in the way of the apostolate."¹⁶⁴ The return of De Smet in 1844 to the Rocky Mountains after his first recruiting expedition to Europe moved Father Adrian Hoecken at St. Ignatius to express himself in these terms to the General: "In November (1844) came at last our Superior Father De Smet, whom every one was expecting with such persistent and eager longing. From the day the Indians first saw the whites, never has any one been so generally known among them and so sought for and beloved. Certainly no one has ever understood the Indians' character better or known so well how to get along with them."¹⁶⁵ Father Hoecken's testimony is significant as indicating the prestige which De Smet had acquired within three or four years of his first arrival in the mountains. A testimony of later date (1865) from Lieut. John Mullan indicates that this prestige was still maintained: "The country and the Indians are mainly indebted to the zealous labors of the Reverend Father De Smet in establishing all these missions, for he truly is the great Father of all Rocky Mountain Missionaries. By his travels and his labors and the dedication of his years to this noble task he has left a name in the Mountains revered by all who knew him and [is] a household god with every Indian who respects the Black Gown."¹⁶⁶ Forty-six years later (1911) an opinion of like tenor was expressed by Father Joseph Cataldo, last survivor of the Rocky Mountain Indian missionaries contemporary with De Smet: "It is beyond all question that Father De Smet was a superior man and one sent by Providence to the missions. Humanly speaking, without him or some one of the same calibre, the Mountain missions would never have existed, and, failing these, the California Mission would not now be in existence. He was not a resident missionary, it is true, but he was the great organizer of the missions. He knew how to approach and charm the Indians and to lead them under the direction of a Father. He found not only the means, but the men, whom he accompanied to the scene of

¹⁶³ Father Point, zealous and efficient as a missionary, but odd, had involved himself in difficulties with De Smet when under the latter as superior.

¹⁶⁴ Nobili à Roothaan, August 4, 1845 (AA)

¹⁶⁵ A. Hoecken ad Roothaan, October 13, 1845 (AA)

¹⁶⁶ *Report of a construction of a Military Road from Fort Walla Walla to Fort Benton*, Washington, 1862

their labors, taught them how to manage the Indians and only departed when he saw them with the work well in hand" ¹⁶⁷

A judicious appraisal of Father De Smet's work in the Pacific Northwest was put on record by Father Congiato, the able superior of the Rocky Mountain Missions, who, after commenting in a letter to Father Beckx on the apparent failure of the missions for many years to realize their early promise, continued

All the blame fell then on the poor Superior. But I who know the characters of all find that the fault lay entirely in the very strange character of the subjects. In my visits I examined thoroughly into the doings of Father De Smet and found 1, that he is the founder and the principal promoter of the missions of Oregon, 2, that he is a wonderful man for opening up the way and disposing the savages for conversion, 3, that his name is everywhere in benediction and that all the savages speak of him and ask when he will return among them. Things being so I regard it as a great misfortune for the Missions that this man was recalled from them and continues still to remain far away from them. Wherefore looking to the good services I owe to the missions entrusted by your Very Rev. Paternity to my care, I cannot do less than earnestly beg that Father De Smet be sent back to the Mountains, for which he seems destined in a special manner by Providence and which despite their distance from him he has always continued to love, favor and promote in every way by speaking and writing about them and lending them effective aid. Thus this year he sent from St. Louis more than \$1500 in goods, all alms collected by him ¹⁶⁸

Some time after Father De Smet's withdrawal from Oregon exception began to be taken in some quarters to his published letters on the ground that they gave a much more flattering picture of the attitude of the Indians to religion and of the general prospects of the missionary field in Oregon than the facts seemed to warrant. Missionaries who had obtained their first ideas of the mountain tribes from the impressive accounts in the letters were said to have met with disillusionment when they arrived on the spot. De Smet felt this criticism acutely. His answer to it was that he did not stand alone in picturing the Oregon missions in such attractive colors but drew upon reports of like tenor furnished him by his colleagues. De Smet's sensitiveness in this matter was perhaps extreme. Thus Father Accolti had no intention,

¹⁶⁷ Laveille, *De Smet*, p. 247

¹⁶⁸ Congiato à Beckx, December 10, 1858 (AA). De Smet's difficulties with some of the missionaries are hinted at in a letter to Van de Velde: "Black gowns! Black gowns! is the watchword of the mountains at present, but for the love of God let none be sent, but such as are worthy of it, true, humble, Jesuits, men full of zeal and courage. This is no place for persons wedded to their own opinions, for conflicting elements."

it would seem, of disparaging the good results actually achieved nor in all probability was there an understatement of the truth when he wrote to Father Roothaan in 1850 that the Oregon missions "were still in embryo" But the expression gave umbrage to De Smet, to whom apparently Accolti had in all frankness communicated a copy of his letter to the General De Smet wrote on the matter to Father Nobili

Reverend Father Accolti in his letter of March 28 last to his Paternity says among other things "our missions in the Rocky Mountains are still in embryo They are like the [ms ?] of Naples, rich in reputation, but poor in water" And yet here are some extracts from letters of Fathers Accolti, De Vos, Ravalli, Joset and Mengarini, which were written from the Rocky Mountains since I left them and which have figured in the Catholic papers of the United States and even of Europe I regret not being able to send them to you in their entirety Father Accolti wrote in 1847 to Rev. Father Van de Velde, then Provincial (extract from the *American Gazette* [?]) "It is true that at a distance from us, some persons, fond of criticizing, may suppose that there is some exaggeration in our statements, but I assure your Reverence that when seen near and without prejudice the reality far surpasses any account that is given of them I speak conscientiously I exaggerate nothing I express the unanimous opinion of all strangers, even of protestants, whom the evidence of facts compels to bear witness to the truth" He [Accolti] then gives to his Provincial and Superior the most encouraging and flattering details about the dispositions and zeal of the Indians Father De Vos in a letter to his Superior in the United States names all the stations, missions and residences and adds "This is the result of what Almighty God has already done (and still does) in this distant corner of the world—incalculable good could and would be done among the settlers, but more especially among the native tribes" Father Joset writes to Father Van de Velde "Must not our hearts bleed when on one side we see so many thousand souls so well disposed, so eager to taste the bread of life, so docile to the voice of the ministers of God, and when on the other side we see so many of these souls perish or at least languish for the want of apostolical laborers who might help to instruct them Yet I must avow what is true Good and very great good is done All the Flatheads and almost all the Kalispels and the Pointed Hearts have been baptized A great number of them have made their Easter Communion and are very regular in frequenting the Sacraments About 600 Indians have been baptized in New Caledonia Many have been added to the Church among the Kootenays, Flatheads, Blackfeet, etc" Father Ravalli writes to Father Van de Velde, Provincial, from St. Mary's among the Flatheads "In the letters of Father De Smet which I read in Rome, in the various accounts which I read about the Flatheads whilst I sojourned at Wallamette, I fancied that I saw some exaggeration—that perhaps rhetorical ornament had been resorted to in order to please the reader, but when Divine Providence at length satisfied my longing desires and sent me among them, I was truly astonished to discover that if

anything be objected to in the letters and accounts I had read, it was that they fell below the reality in what concerns the benign and pious dispositions of these good Indians. How excellent their dispositions, how tender their attachment to our Holy Religion, how fervent and sincere the piety which they manifested in all occasions. May God be thanked and praised, etc.”

I possess a great number of letters of Reverend Fathers Point, Hoecken, Joset, and others, written at St. Mary's, the Sacred Heart, St. Ignatius, the majority of which have been published. These letters, which are unanimous on the point, as also the extracts I have just cited for you together with those from Reverend Father Accolti, are good proof and testimony that by the end of 1846 and even into 1847, according to Fathers Accolti, De Vos, Joset, Ravalli, Mengarini, Hoecken, “our missions were not at that time in embryo.” There was then unanimous agreement as to the good dispositions of the Indians and of their zeal for the holy practices of Religion.¹⁶⁹

Notwithstanding the fact that the De Smet accounts, as pointed out in the foregoing letter, seem to have merely reflected the opinion of the missionaries generally regarding the work being done in Oregon, Father Roothaan could not bring himself to regard them as sober statements of fact. In April, 1851, he declared to Bishop Miège that the De Smet letters were “poetry and romance,”¹⁷⁰ while to De Smet himself he wrote at the same time “More than one person assures me that your relations, published with so much *éclat*, are products of imagination and poetry.”¹⁷¹

As might be expected this estimate of his letters coming from the Father General was very distressing to Father De Smet. To Bishop Van de Velde, who was about to visit Rome, he wrote in May, 1852, in the expectation that the prelate would take up his defence with the Father General

When you were my Superior you frequently corrected me for being too easily affected and dejected when things were said against me, to which I must plead guilty. Something of the kind has occurred again and from headquarters which has brought me low indeed—the more so as I have the full conviction in my heart that the charges against me are untrue, false and unjust and bring along great evil in their consequences—the neglect in a great measure, of the Indians, for whom I would have gladly sacrificed the remainder of my days. I stand accused of the following: “First That my letters have done a great deal of harm in America. Second That my letters are only imagination and poetry, false and untrue. Third That I have lost the missions by over-liberality to the Indians and by promises to them which the Fathers have been unable to fulfill.”

¹⁶⁹ De Smet à Nobili, May 25, 1850 (AA).

¹⁷⁰ Roothaan à Miège, April 14, 1851 (AA)

¹⁷¹ Roothaan à De Smet, April 14, 1851(?) (AA)

After declaring that he pardoned his accusers he proceeds to say

All my letters have been written by special requests of my Superiors, chiefly Very Reverend Father General I declare to have written them all with uprightness and sincerity and that I have never exaggerated, at least wilfully, in speaking of the dispositions of the Indians and of the good which was done in their midst, and of this in particular most of the Fathers have said, spoken and written more highly than I ever did (Fathers Point, Joset, Mengarini, Ravalli, Hoecken, Accolti, De Vos, Nobili, etc.) I have many of these letters still in my possession. They have written the truth and so have I.¹⁷²

It is not unlikely that De Smet in his ardent way overstated at times the literal fact or went beyond the limits of reasonable expectation in picturing the prospects of the new mission-field opened up in the Pacific Northwest. But from any critical point of view his letters in their substance must be regarded as embodying fact, not fancy.¹⁷³ It is to be noted that Father Roothaan's criticism of the letters was not so much his own as that of others on whose judgment in the matter he was disposed to rely. Moreover, he died in 1853, when it was scarcely possible to realize the part the letters were playing and were to continue to play in the missionary propaganda of the day. No contemporary accounts of Catholic missionary enterprise were read as widely as De Smet's or were in any way as effective in fulfilling their object of engaging the sympathy and support of the public on behalf of the missionary cause. Moreover, in the literature of pioneer American travel and exploration the De Smet narratives readily found a place of importance as is evidenced by the appreciation in which they were held by such frontier figures, among others, as Governor Isaac Stevens, Governor Gilpin of Colorado and Lieutenant John Mullan. All in all the missionary's letters in their wealth of detail on the fauna, flora, geography, physical features and Indian life of western America carried on nobly the tradition of the classic Jesuit relations of earlier days.¹⁷⁴

One important phase of Jesuit mission organization must be touched on here before this narrative continues on its way. Whatever success the Oregon missions achieved with the Indians must be credited in no small measure to the coadjutor-brothers. The services they rendered to the

¹⁷² CR, *De Smet*, 4 1479

¹⁷³ For a discussion of De Smet's literary methods, accuracy, etc., cf. CR, *De Smet*, I 136 *et seq.*

¹⁷⁴ Father Roothaan after forwarding two letters of De Smet to the Society of the Propagation of the Faith for publication wrote to him that one bespoke more the missionary, the other, the traveller. The older Jesuit *Relations* were replete with geographical and topographical data, this being one of the chief features which lend them value today.

missionary cause were of the first importance. Not only, as the rules for members of their grade in the Society of Jesus prescribe, did they leave the priests free for their ministerial tasks by relieving them of the burden of domestic and economic cares, they also, as carpenters, farmers and the like helped to build up the missions on the material side and by the contacts they made with the Indians were able to influence the latter in all sorts of beneficent ways. The brothers sent to the mountains in the opening years of the mission were remarkable for loyalty and devotion to their work. Among them were numbered Claessens, Specht, Huet, Magri and McGean. Somewhat later came the Belgian, Huysbrecht, and the Italians Bellomo, Marchetti and Savio. Three defections from the ranks of the coadjutor-brothers are recorded, Thomas Burris, Daniel Lyons and Daniel Coakley. The last named, who was admitted by Father De Smet, had one time been a member of the Dominican order and had apparently been permitted to take his vows without having previously been relieved of the canonical impediment he was under as an erstwhile member of another religious order. In 1849 an Austrian named Weyering, who had formerly been a teacher in the elementary school at St. Paul's known as St. Joseph's College, was admitted as a novice by Father Joset. The thirteen named fill up the list of coadjutor-brothers employed in the Rocky Mountain Missions during the decade of years they were attached to St. Louis.

In the fifties and sixties Father Congiato paid repeated tribute to the services rendered by the pioneer brothers. "Old, sickly and broken down as they are," he wrote in 1858, "the poor men work with a zeal and an energy that astonish and edify everybody."¹⁷⁵ Three years later he further testified: "For the last fifteen years they have labored like martyrs and suffered great privations as true religious and worthy sons of the Society."¹⁷⁶ When Brother Huet came to die in 1868, he was buried in the Coeur d'Alène mission-church of the Sacred Heart, which he had helped to build. This mission he had aided Father Point to organize in the fall of 1842. "The beginnings were hard everywhere," recorded Father Joset, "and there were numerous privations in the midst of painful labor, but perhaps nowhere were beginnings harder than among the Coeur d'Alènes, our recent missionaries have not even tasted moss, which nevertheless made part of the nourishment of the first-comers. Brother Charles [Huet] endured everything with invincible patience. A devout child of Mary, an excellent religious, humble, obedient, indefatigable, he has, I think, merited a martyr's crown, for God contrived to send him in addition to the ordinary pains

¹⁷⁵ Congiato à Beckx, December 10, 1858 (AA)

¹⁷⁶ Congiato à Beckx, December 24, 1861 (AA)

[of the body] a special kind of suffering which he endured with unalterable patience. He was the Indians' friend and during his last sickness the son of a chief took it upon himself to be his infirmarian and was with him night and day" ¹⁷⁷

Brother Magri had come to the mountains with Fathers Soderini and Zerbinatti in the fall of 1844. Dying June 18, 1869, he had rounded out well nigh a quarter century of continuous service among the Indians. Father Joset bore testimony that he was a great consolation to superiors, their right hand, so to speak, thanks to his sound judgment and fidelity to duty. To the Indians he was the dearest of friends. He knew how to engage them in useful labor and with their aid built three churches, that of the Coeur d'Alènes among them, besides a number of other structures. The Coeur d'Alène church, considering the primitive appliances that alone were at hand, the hempen ropes, for instance, which were made on the spot, was considered a marvel of construction. The admiring comment it elicited from Dr. Suckley on his visit to the mission in 1854 has been cited on a preceding page. Magri succeeded in getting the Indians to work on the church without any assurance whatever of recompense or pay. "No one else besides Brother Magri," declared Father Joset, "would have been equal to such an undertaking." The brother worked all one winter preparing the lumber for a new mill. Pursuing his task daily, generally with wet feet, he contracted an infirmity which was an occasion for him of patience to the end. On his way with Father Tosi to meet the superior of the missions he was seized at Lewiston with a paralytic stroke. Here, after receiving the last sacraments at the hands of Father Cataldo, he died June 18, 1869, and was buried in Walla Walla. "Beloved of God and man," wrote Joset, "his memory is in benediction among Ours and externs, among whites and Indians, but most of all among his Superiors, who will feel his absence" ¹⁷⁸

When Father De Smet withdrew from the mountains in 1846 to return to St. Louis, he left Father Joset in provisional charge of the missions. His opinion as to the latter's fitness for the task was also shared by the General, who, as a matter of fact, had already, August 6, 1845, written to Joset appointing him superior of the missions in succession to De Smet. "I relieve him [De Smet] of the superiorship by a letter which I am writing to him on this same occasion—and it is on you, my dear Father, that I have my eyes as the one to replace him. Be not afraid. . . . Your mission is for the present the Oregon Country on the hither side [south] of the Columbia River, the habitat of

¹⁷⁷ Joset à Beckx, December 29, 1868

¹⁷⁸ Joset ad Beckx, July 7, 1869 (AA)

the Flatheads and other savage nations It is to be seen whether it be proper to keep up the establishment on the Willamette " 179

Father Joseph Joset, Swiss-born, was at this time only thirty-five. Personal traits of the man are touched off in contemporary correspondence Accolti speaks of his "Swiss simplicity" Vercruysse notes his "unquiet, indecisive, precipitate character, which makes him do everything in a hurry This excellent religious and indefatigable missionary recognizes his faults, acknowledges them, is humbled and distressed on their account" Vercruysse also records that as superior he gave umbrage to the other missionaries by alleged partiality to the Coeur d'Alène mission, where he ordinarily resided, and that he displeased the Flatheads and Kalispel by not adjusting his words to their peculiarities of temper 180 Father Gazzoli characterized him as being "without a sense of the practical" and Father Congiato in a report to Father Beckx, dated 1858, described him as "an excellent missionary, a good religious but odd and highly imaginative" 181 Joset's administration of the mission failed to commend itself to Father Roothaan He was taken to task for having closed the New Caledonia Mission, which had started out auspiciously under Nobili, as also for not having made greater exertions than he did to save the mission among the Flatheads It is not easy to determine to what extent, if any, he was to be held responsible for these two setbacks to the progress of the missions He himself maintained that he was without available personnel to continue the missionary venture begun in New Caledonia, as to the Flatheads it is not clear that in his position as superior he could have saved the situation at all But these two developments made an unfavorable impression on Father Roothaan, who wrote to De Smet that Joset was without the capacity requisite for the superiorship. "*Pauvre P. Joset! Il n'a pas la tête*" 182 But if nature had not bestowed on him a capacity for affairs, which seems to have been the case, grace made amends by giving him a measure of zeal and single-minded devotion to duty that made of him an outstanding missionary He stayed with the Indians to his last day and that was fifty years after he first came among them. In the troubles that broke out among the Coeur d'Alènes in the late fifties he was the dominant influence making for peace and saving the tribe to civilization and the Church. 183 Moreover, as a recorder of missionary history he wielded a graceful and effective pen His various

179 Roothaan à Joset, August 6, 1845 (AA)

180 Vercruysse à Roothaan, ——— (AA) Cf *supra*, Chap XXIII, § 8

181 Congiato à Beckx, December 10, 1858 (AA)

182 Roothaan à De Smet, 1849 (?) (AA)

183 For Joset's attempt to pacify the Coeur d'Alènes in the outbreak of 1858, cf San Francisco *Monitor*, March 24, 31, 1860

memoirs on the Rocky Mountain Indian tribes are important and illuminating documents recalling in their wealth of ethnological and other data, as do De Smet's letters, the Jesuit relations of other days

In appointing Father Joset superior of the missions Father Roothaan cautioned him against attempting too much with the meagre resources at his command. The territory to be cultivated was now restricted to upper as distinct from lower Oregon.

The field, therefore, which the Lord now assigns to you is by no means the whole of Oregon but the district on the hither side [south] of the Columbia River, in which residences have already been established. Meanwhile, let Lower Oregon, as it is called, and the district to the north of the river, be left to the care of the Rt. Rev. Vicar Apostolic and his associates. As to excursions to long distances, particularly to California, they must not even be considered. In starting new residences the same plan ought to be followed, so it seems, which the Hudson [Bay] Company has been accustomed to follow in erecting its posts, so that domiciles of Ours will be separated by only a few days journey and this with a view to facilitating mutual assistance and the visitations of the Superior. In this way, step by step, and not, so to speak, by immoderate leaps and bounds, should we go ahead. Finally, it is of the utmost importance that the best possible site be chosen for each residence so that the Indians can settle and build their villages around it.¹⁸⁴

The chief reason why the Rocky Mountain Missions were backward in redeeming their early promise, at least during the first decade or two of their history, was that they were altogether understaffed. An appeal which Father Joset addressed to Father Simmen, the German assistant, stressed the need of additional coadjutor-brothers.

What we all earnestly ask for now is that you send us as soon as possible a goodly number of capable collaborators.

On taking up the government [of the mission] I found 5 establishments started and promises made to I don't know how many tribes. These establishments were the three Missions of the Sacred Heart, Saint Mary and St. Ignatius, the Residence of St. Joseph and the one of St. Francis Xavier in Lower Oregon among the whites. I call missions those establishments where you have to open big farms, to feed the Indians and keep them from wandering away, and where the missionaries, holding aloof from every kind of material labor, busy themselves only with the spiritual interests of the Indians. . . . The Willamette farm started by Father De Smet's orders would be neither mission nor residence since there is no work there among the Indians (there are none in that locality), however it is commonly called a residence. The residence of St. Joseph (among the Okinagans) has just been suspended, the two Fathers previously engaged there being unfit for service for reasons of

¹⁸⁴ Roothaan ad Joset, February, 1846 (AA)

health But I sent Father De Vos here [St Paul, near Colville] not only to satisfy the incessant pleadings of these Indians but also because (for reasons foreign to my subject) I could not utilize the Father's zeal in any of the missions Here he does a great deal of good The residence of Saint F[rancis] Regis, established among the half-breeds, was closed for pretty much the same reasons, so as not to leave St Ignatius with only a single priest Now every mission would require at least 4 Brothers 1° the procurator or dispenser or *praeses familiae*, a man of brains, capable of dealing with the Indians, of putting them to work and of recompensing them without deviating from the path marked out for him [by superiors], a man of gentleness under every sort of trial, of firmness, even temper, constancy in all his dealings—such must be the qualities of this brother who would be the right arm of the Superior and more or less of all those sent among the Indians, 2° the carpenter, a jack-of-all-trades (*Jean fait tout*) in his sphere, 3° the blacksmith, 4° the cook *ad domestica* I do not speak of the farmer because the procurator might, strictly speaking, substitute for him At least the same number of brothers would be needed at the Willamette where in view of the present state of the country a competent man could save a thousand dollars every year for the Mission It is very hard on the Superior to be travelling six months of the year and more, he may fall sick as happened to me only last month I was going up from Vancouver with 32 pack animals when an ague (*fièvre tremblante*) reduced me to a state in which I was unable to supervise the caravan Fortunately my Indians were very reliable fellows, but, like all Indians, not capable of the attentions necessary under these circumstances Consequently animals and cargo suffered greatly as a result of my indisposition And so, counting in a companion for the Superior (without speaking at all of the residences) 17 Brothers would be required to keep up what has been begun

Our men are discouraged and the evil is becoming contagious They think themselves abandoned I do my best to check the discouragement but am being attacked by it myself When I ask myself why in spite of all our appeals we see no reinforcements arriving, at a time, too, when France & Belgium have a surplus of Fathers and Brothers, I can see no other reason for it except perhaps that they are counting on Superiors in the United States If this be the case, then nothing remains except to close all the missions one after another, unless relief arrives it will not be long before I shall have to make a beginning No, Reverend Father, they do not trouble themselves about us in St Louis and I blame no one for it It is his Paternity who has always governed the Mission and that immediately Reverend Father Provincial has never mixed up in our affairs So unless his Paternity appoints some competent man to select and bring out to us or at least send us a good number of recruits, my conviction is that this Mission is ruined ¹⁸⁵

While Father Joset was thus appealing for badly needed additional laborers in the Oregon field, the General's letter of February 18, 1849,

¹⁸⁵ Joset à Simmen, October 29, 1849 (AA)

giving him a successor in the person of Father Accolti, was on its way from Rome. The appointment reached Accolti about a year later than the date it bore and while he was in San Francisco on his first visit to California. The General, not aware that Nobile's promising mission had already been abandoned, constituted Accolti superior of all the Jesuit missionaries in the Pacific Northwest, including the "Rocky Mountains and New Caledonia." Joset, however, was to remain regional superior of all the missionary houses in the mountains but with dependence on Accolti. Something has already been learned of the activities of this forward-looking Jesuit of Neapolitan birth in connection with the Willamette residence and with Jesuit beginnings in California. Father Beckx, the General, was later to rate Accolti "not a good Superior, but otherwise a good man (*ceteroquin bonus vir*)" He had noted in some of Accolti's letters what he considered a lack of due respect for Archbishop Blanchet and he reprimanded him for this defect, so at cross purposes with traditional Jesuit reverence for ecclesiastical authority. Probably what militated most against Father Accolti's success in his position as superior in Oregon was his lack of interest, whether real or only apparent, it is difficult to say, in the Indian missions. Father Joset said of him in 1849 that he was "well enough affected toward the Indian Missions but that nearly all his affection was centered on the Willamette Residence"¹⁸⁶ He visited the Indian missions only once and that was before he became superior, as superior he didn't visit them at all though all his subjects with very few exceptions were engaged among the Indians.

It is clear, in truth, from his correspondence that Father Accolti was drawn to the white immigrant population of the Pacific seaboard rather than to the Indians as a class of people among whom the greater harvest of good in a religious way might reasonably be looked for. He was clear-sighted enough to foresee that Oregon and California were destined for a great economic future and he was interested enough in the welfare of the Church to wish to grasp the opportunities that lay about to secure her a foothold in these growing regions. This after all, from any point of view, was a praiseworthy attitude to take in face of the actual circumstances and that it had for its practical outcome the Jesuit Mission of California is evidence enough of the genuine services rendered by Accolti to the Church. If at the same time he had contrived to lend a greater measure of sympathy and support to the Indian missions, which alone had drawn the Jesuits in the first instance to the Oregon country, he would have met with good effect the demands of the moment. Unfortunately, Father Accolti became involved

¹⁸⁶ Joset ad Beckx, February 5, 1849 (AA)

in differences with Archbishop Blanchet over questions of jurisdiction, the prelate taking up an attitude in regard to the religious orders which the Jesuit believed to be unwarranted in church law. This circumstance, coupled with the economic depression and loss of population in Oregon ensuing upon the discovery of the California mines, seems to have led him to lose his earlier optimism as to Oregon's future and to turn his thoughts towards California. Archbishop Blanchet declared expressly that the immigration to California had discouraged Accolti while Bishop Demers wrote to Propaganda "Far from being favorable to our missions he [Accolti] has such a dislike for Oregon in general that he cannot refrain from expressing it on every occasion, but this way of thinking is far from being that of all the Fathers" ¹⁸⁷ Father Accolti himself revealed his mind in the matter in a letter to De Smet, wherein he wrote that lower Oregon, which formerly he had so much at heart, had no longer any claim on his affections, the condition of things there, especially in the ecclesiastical sphere, being "unpromising and discouraging" ¹⁸⁸

In the course of 1853 Father Accolti was instructed by Father Beckx to withdraw from Oregon City and proceed to New York. Father Mengarini, his companion in Oregon City, records the regret among all classes of people occasioned by his departure. To speak humanly, it meant a severe loss to religion. If the Catholic Church was respected in those parts, it was due in large measure to the influence which he exercised. "God had bestowed on him a gift difficult to find in others, that of gaining in a few moments of conversation the heart of every one he spoke to, especially if an American, if the person did not become a Catholic, at least he no longer was an enemy of the Catholic religion. The result was that Father Accolti had become a public man and popular to the last degree with all classes of people, beginning with the Governor of Oregon and the judges (all of them Protestants) and with artisans and soldiers. It was enough that it be known he was going to preach and the church would be filled with Protestants" ¹⁸⁹ In fine, so Mengarini declares, a petition was being prepared by the clergy of the diocese asking for Accolti's recall.

In 1854 Father Accolti, with a view to securing the adoption of the Oregon and California missions by some one of the European provinces as a measure necessary to insure their permanence, journeyed to Rome to negotiate the matter in person with the Father General. He was successful in his efforts, Father Ponza, provincial of Turin, writing May 16, 1854, to Father Nicholas Congiato, rector at the time of St

¹⁸⁷ Demers à Propaganda, November 30, 1853 (AA)

¹⁸⁸ Accolti to De Smet, April 15, 1853 (A)

¹⁸⁹ Mengarini à Roothaan, January 15, 1855 (AA)

Joseph's College, Bardstown, Kentucky "Very Rev Father General is about to assign to our Province the Mission of California After a few days I must start for Rome, where I shall arrange the affair with Father General and Father Accolti" ¹⁹⁰ On August 1, 1854, Father Congiato was appointed superior of both the Oregon and California Missions, which became on the same day a joint dependency of the province of Turin

§ 8 A SURVEY, 1841-1854

The Rocky Mountain Missions, Father De Smet's creation, had thus (1854) lost their affiliation with St. Louis to take up one with a European division of the Society of Jesus. Ten years before, in 1844, Father Roothaan had already written to the Missouri vice-provincial "Henceforth your missions [of the Rocky Mountains] are independent of the Vice-Province [of Missouri] in money matters," the reason assigned being that the most convenient manner of financing the missions was through the London headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company, which carried on a banking and general supply business for the Oregon country. In February, 1844, Father Van de Velde informed the Father General that all his consultors desired the separation of the Oregon Missions from Missouri and their attachment to the Jesuit Mission of Canada ¹⁹¹ When news that such a step was under consideration reached De Smet, he hastened to register a vigorous protest, writing to Van de Velde "I at the head of this Mission and for its welfare do formally protest against the separation. I glory personally to belong to the Vice-Province. I was amongst the happy first who commenced it and I feel attached to the spot where I first entered the Society. I hope for the interest of the Vice-Province itself that this Mission will remain attached to it, because it must bring down blessings and favors upon the whole concern" ¹⁹²

As Father Joset had written in 1849, St. Louis no longer concerned itself about the Rocky Mountain Missions for the reason that the General had taken the government of them practically into his own hands. Yet St. Louis, as late as 1850 or 1851, was still exercising control over them in some matters at least, while, on the other hand, the superiors of the missions were still recognizing some sort of dependence on that quarter. An instance of the latter fact is afforded by the negotia-

¹⁹⁰ Riordan, *op cit*, p. 43

¹⁹¹ Van de Velde à Roothaan, February 1, 1844 (AA) "I have separated this procuratorship [St. Louis] from that of the Rocky Mountains, the distance between them being too great." Roothaan à L'Oeuvre Propagation de la Foi, March 13, 1844. Archives of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith

¹⁹² De Smet to Van de Velde, December, 1844 (AA)

tions concerning California, in connection with which Fathers Accolti and Nobili appealed to the vice-provincial at St Louis for approval of their plans. Accolti was also sending data to St Louis for insertion in the printed register or catalogue of the vice-province, a thing he could not have done if there was no official connection between the vice-province of Missouri and the missions of which he was superior. Finally, we find Father Elet authorizing in 1851 the return to Belgium of one of the Oregon missionaries, Father Vercruysse, a matter beyond his competence unless he still had jurisdiction over that Jesuit group.¹⁹³ And yet the exact relations between the vice-province and the western missions continued to be obscure. When Father Murphy arrived in St Louis in 1851 to take up the duties of vice-provincial, he found no one able to enlighten him on the matter, whereupon he wrote to Father Roothaan that he saw no reason why the name of the superior of the Rocky Mountain Mission should continue to appear in the register of the vice-province. The question was finally set at rest by the General when he wrote to Murphy October 30, 1851: "The Oregon Mission is immediately subject to me nor has the vice-province any relations with its members save those of fraternal charity."¹⁹⁴

Thus came to an end a highly interesting chapter of missionary enterprise on the part of the middlewestern Jesuits. That the Oregon missions in their outcome measured up to the expectations they had raised was surely not the case. Father Roothaan, who had watched over their inception with the keenest interest and sympathy, who had financed them to the limit of his ability and to whom they were, in De Smet's language, "the apple of his eye," was openly disappointed. De Smet thought he saw an explanation of the phenomenon in the inefficiency of some of the missionaries. Father Congiato, a superior of clear head and sober judgment, was inclined to adopt the same explanation. He reported in 1858 that since 1847, a date coinciding approximately with the close of De Smet's superiorship, the missions had been stationary, that in the interval no new Indian tribe had been evangelized, the missionaries contenting themselves with the care of the tribes already converted, and that this condition of things was due to a "lack of zeal and ability" on the part of the missionaries. He further wrote apropos of the opening in 1858 by Father Adrian Hoecken of the Blackfoot Mission of St Peter: "This takes the missions out of the stationary condition in which they have been for ten years and more and opens up a vast field for the salvation of souls."¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ CR, *De Smet*, 4 1474

¹⁹⁴ Roothaan à Murphy, October 30, 1851 (AA)

¹⁹⁵ Congiato à Beckx, December 10, 1858 (AA).

Father Roothaan himself commented on the issue in a letter of 1852 to De Smet

It seems that the idea of renewing the miracles of Paraguay amid those mountains was a Utopia. In the first place, we could not hope for the means which our Fathers received from the Crowns of Spain and Portugal. Then, it was impossible to keep the whites at a distance, then, too, the nature of the land is quite different and one cannot hope to wean the bulk of the savages from their nomadic life during a great part of the year when they are on the hunt and scattered and disbanded, some to the right and some to the left. Impossible for the missionary to follow them—their savagery is renewed,—perpetuated, with great danger of profanation of baptism and the other sacraments. I declare, my dear Father, I don't see how one can have any success at all. And where should we get the necessary men and resources? The Willamette farm has also been a sink-hole. In fine, I don't see how these missions can be kept up. May the Lord enlighten us! ¹⁹⁶

Yet, while a new Paraguay had not been created offhand in the fastnesses of the Rockies, the missions achieved in the long run a substantial and in many respects a notable success. What was accomplished in later years on behalf of the Coeur d'Alènes and Kalispels is not inferior in interest and importance to similar achievements in the history of modern missionary effort among the aborigines. The dreams of De Smet and his associates were not to fail entirely. One may even accept, if with some reservation, the verdict of a one-time superior of the Rocky Mountain Missions: "Father De Smet's hopes have been more than realized" ¹⁹⁷. Then, too, there is always the inevitable viewpoint of the genuine Christian missionary which leads him to account any sacrifice worth while if it means the saving of a single soul. Thus, in a mood of depression De Smet wrote to Nobili on receiving the latter's account of the abandonment of the New Caledonia Mission.

I had the pleasure of course of perusing your welcome letter, which I did with no little delight and satisfaction though your allusion to New Caledonia started the tear in my eyes—the only thing that must console you is that many of the poor little ones who have had the happiness of being regenerated in the holy waters of baptism, through your ministry in that country, are now enjoying eternal bliss in heaven—the same consolation is all that is left to me from Oregon and of this I cannot be deprived ¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Roothaan à De Smet, April 15, 1852 (AA). De Smet had written to Father Roothaan in the beginning: "I hope that with the grace of the Lord zealous and laborious missionaries filled with the spirit of the Society will make the beautiful days of Paraguay live again." De Smet à Roothaan, February 7, 1841 (AA).

¹⁹⁷ Father De La Motte, S. J., in Laveille, *De Smet*, p. 248.

¹⁹⁸ De Smet to Nobili, May 6, 1852 (A).

A similar view of the situation was taken by Accolti, who in the same year thus summed up the status at that date of the Rocky Mountain Mission

The accounts I receive from the Fathers are rather satisfactory. The progress of the material improvements is slow but never stopping, still, the missionaries are now more comfortable than in former times, though very much exhausted by the continuity of their labors. They now have good substantial churches, and houses better adapted to protect them against the rigors of winter. Their fare is not luxurious, but conveniently abundant and healthy. As to the Indians, they are in general good, but in the totality they are always Indians, that is to say, incapable of being induced to better habits of life. Still I confess that this is less to be attributed to the incapacity of their nature than to the local circumstances of their country. The Indians, as every other living being, want to eat and cover their bodies against the inclemency of the seasons. If they have not at hand raiment and food, they must go to fetch them from elsewhere. On the other hand, the missionaries are not capable of supporting entire tribes at their own expense, then they must allow their sheep to rove here and there in order to get their livelihood. The necessity of being often absent from the Church must assuredly be very noxious to their spiritual well being. The Missionaries of California, following the footsteps of our ancient fathers, had very well known the necessity of keeping the Indians all round the churches in villages regularly built for that purpose, but, at the same time, they used to supply them with everything necessary for their preservation. But they had immense prairies for raising stock of thousands and thousands of head of every description which supplied them with plenty of fresh meat. The tallow and skins of many thousands of cows exchanged with clothing and blankets brought in by Spanish or Mexican vessels gave them every year the facility of being always supplied with decent and substantial raiment. Our Missions in the Mountains have no such advantages at all. The abruptness of those countries, the unproductiveness of the soil in its generality and—what is more—the severity of the winters are and ever will be difficulties for raising numerous stock, of so insurmountable a nature as to require the omnipotence of God to be removed. Therefore I confess that on that score I don't perceive the least beam of hope such as to let us anticipate the gratification of seeing these missions more advanced than they are at present. Nevertheless, I do not oppose their existence. However discouraging may be their future prospect of improvement to our pride and selfishness, still their utility shall always be a truth of an undeniable evidence. The souls that are every year marked with the regenerating water of Baptism and especially those that are so happy as to receive the sacramental comforts of the church in departing from this world, will rejoice forever in the eternal mansions of Heaven, will sing forever the praises of the eternal Lamb for having redeemed them with his blood and the poor missionary destitute of the means of doing better will one day find in them, at the shrine of mercies, that justification for his ineffectual exertions

which very often he could not obtain from the deceived and deceiving judgment of men¹⁹⁹

The estimate placed on De Smet's missionary program and its outcome by Chittenden and Richardson, editors of his letters, is illuminating

Father De Smet planned his work among the Indians on a far greater scale than he was able ever to realize. This was due in the first place to lack of resources. The Jesuits never either had the workers or the funds that were necessary. In the second place the field itself was entirely swept away. In 1846 Father De Smet no doubt anticipated that the seed he had sown in Oregon would grow into a mighty harvest. But what man proposes is rarely realized. In 1863, as he passed over the country again, he found it occupied by a new race, the hunting ground of his neophytes filled with settlers, the Indians struggling in vain for their lands and being rapidly huddled together on small reservations. The whole opportunity for a great work had gone in the twinkling of an eye. The work of the missionary among the Indians was confined to a few small localities whose influence upon the general community was wholly inappreciable.

This is not saying that their work so far as it went was not a success. There is no finer example of an Indian mission than St. Ignatius in Montana, but a few individual successes were not a vast field. The truth is the Indian was gone, swallowed up in the flood of settlement and no longer a factor in the life of the country.

It is a reasonable conclusion from the history of the Catholic missions in Oregon that if the Indians had remained in a state of primitive wildness the missionaries would have accomplished their conversion to the Christian religion, and that without interfering with their native customs to any great extent, they would have lessened the wars among the tribes, promoted cleanliness and virtue among them and at the same time have left them free in the exercise of all their manly sports, the chase, the nomadic life, and the gathering of furs by which their conveniences and comforts could be promoted through trade with the white man²⁰⁰

Father Congiato's statement that the missions had been stationary during the period 1847-58 has been cited. In the following years their status visibly improved so that in 1861 he could write to the Father General in these terms:

To conclude, the missions, however surrounded on every side by dangers they be at present, however few, old and tired out be the workers, however exposed to temptations of every sort the Indians find themselves at present while the whites make every effort to corrupt and ruin them with whiskey,

¹⁹⁹ Accolti to De Smet, November 20, 1852 (AA)

²⁰⁰ CR, *De Smet*, I 122

the missions, I repeat, flourish and the good which is being done is plentiful, the Indians listen to us with docility and only in few cases do they suffer themselves to be seduced. From what I have heard of other Indian missions on the far side of the Rocky Mountains, ours in comparison are in a veritable earthly paradise. The spirit of our men is in general good.²⁰¹

With this testimony of Father Congiato, the story of the Rocky Mountain Missions as far as it concerns the present history is brought to an end. An atmosphere of pious adventure and romance enveloped their beginnings, the shadow of indifferent success if not of open failure rested for a space upon them, but in the end a substantial measure of success in the civilizing and christianizing of the Indian tribes of the Pacific Northwest remains laid up to their credit.

²⁰¹ Congiato à Beckx, December 24, 1861 (AA)