

THE INTERMOUNTAIN CATHOLIC

UTAH IDAHO NEVADA COLORADO WYOMING MONTANA

Denver

A Catholic Paper for the Catholic Home

Salt Lake

Pro Deo, Pro Patria (For God and Country)

Butte

VOLUME I, NO. 48, \$2.00 PER YEAR.

SALT LAKE CITY AND DENVER, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1900.

COLORADO CATHOLIC, SIXTEENTH YEAR.

THE PIONEER CATHOLIC MISSION IN THE NORTHWEST

Rev. Thos. H. Malone's Travels in Ireland.

(E. A. Bridger in the Catholic World for September.)

The inexperienced traveler in the Northwest finds a constant source of amazement in the rude chapels which he encounters in all parts of this vast area, and the bronzed and hardened prospector and the veteran trapper, accustomed as they are to the sight, can never fail to be impressed by these silent monuments to the devotion and sacrifice of those noble men who left behind them the hopes and ambitions of early life to bring to the Indians of that region the light of the Gospel, to the advancement of which they had consecrated their lives.

In Montana and Idaho the traveler finds these white crosses and tiny spires in the most unexpected places, and the surprise is invariably a pleasant one. No valley was too secluded and no mountain range too inaccessible for the zealous ardor of these black-robed messengers of peace, and no tribe was too fierce for their earnest endeavor. And thus it is that the white traveler—from the gold hunter of the early days to the pleasure seeker of the present—finds in lonely vale and upon towering peak the white cross which tells of saintly devotion to the Gospel of Peace.

The crucifix penetrated where the sword was powerless in those days of old, and in the reclaiming of the wilderness of the Northwest the priest has played as important a part as the soldier. Without their peaceful agency the white man's progress would have been retarded for years, and the settlement of the fertile fields and the development of the mines of wealth would have been seriously checked.

The priest's was a peaceful mission. No trumpet of fame has ever heralded the noble deeds of sacrifice and devotion wrought by these men. Their names are comparatively unknown, and their sole earthly reward is found in the veneration and respect entertained for them by the sons of the forest and plain whom they came to reclaim for the kingdom of their Master.

Long before the great northwest had ceased to form a part of "the great American Desert" of the atlas, these black-robed priests had begun their work of Christianity and civilization. The earliest of the gold-seekers found the Catholic missions an established feature of this unknown country, and the outposts of the fur companies were scarcely in advance of the westward march of these heralds of the Gospel. They were more than priests. They were physicians, teachers, and counselors. Many a miner and trapper owes his life to the ministrations of these men, and to the Indian they are still in memory—the embodiment of the peace and good will which they taught.

At the name of Father Ravalli the sternest Indian will display emotion, and even old Charlot, the stubborn chief of the Bitter Root Valley Indians, mentions his name with reverence. It was of these men that Longfellow wrote:

"On the western slope of the mountains
In his little village, the Black
Robe
Chief of the mission;
Much he teaches the people,
And tells them of Mary and Jesus."

It was nearly seventy years ago that the Indians of the tribes now represented upon the Pacific coast had learned the Christian religion. The bearers of the tidings were men of their own race—Iroquois, and it had been taught the new religion in the missions of the Mississippi valley. The story told by these messengers awakened a desire among the Indians to know more of the wonderful religion, and to have among themselves some of the white teachers of whom they had heard.

As the council drew the matter was discussed again and again until, in 1821, it was decided to send representatives to St. Louis (2,000 miles distant) and known to the Indians through the fur traders) who should tell them the story of the new religion. No tidings ever came back of this party, which probably was exterminated by the hostile tribes through whose territory it had to pass. Undaunted by this occurrence, a second delegation was sent forth, and this time the Indians secured a promise that a priest would be sent to them.

Patience they waited until 1823, when they sent a third embassy to the settlements of the Sioux, and still no priest came. But the desire for knowledge of the new religion was so strong that the Indians were not deterred by the failure of these two successive expeditions, and in 1828 two young Iroquois braves set out to run the gauntlet of foes and to leave the hardships of the long journey. The attempt was doubly successful. They made the journey safely, and brought back with them Father de Smet of the Society of Jesus—the savior of Christianity in the northwest. One of these young Indians, whom the fathers christened Peter, set forward in haste to prepare the people for the coming of the Black Robe, while the other, Ignatius, remained on his long journey to an unknown land and an unknown people. It was in April, 1840, when Father de Smet and his dusky companion joined a west-bound caravan for the trip to the Rocky Mountains. The priest was stricken with fever on Green River in Wyoming, met a delegation sent by the tribe to welcome him.

Evening of that day, "two thousand Indians recited a prayer and chanted a hymn." Before the month had ended Father de Smet had baptized six hundred Indians, and the new religion was well established in the wilderness. The brave and true friend of the Indians, who remained for several months studying the people and the country, and then decided to return to St. Louis for aid. The way was long and the journey perilous. At the end of the month the Indians occupying much of the intermediate country—but the backwoods of his society was a sure device to reach his friends, and in the spring of the following year returned to his Indian charges with two priests and three lay brothers were mechanics, and under their direction the first mission church in what is now Montana was erected. The location chosen was on the Bitter Root river near the present site of Stevensville, the exact spot being where the wagon bridge of that town now spans the clear blue stream which waters this remarkable valley. On Rosary Sunday, 1841, a cross was raised, and fearful faces were turned toward Heaven while the pioneer of Christianity prayed for the success of this new mission. But the tears were tears of joy and hopefulness, and the fathers carried on their work unceasingly. Not only did they labor for the spiritual welfare of the Indians, but they also sought to improve their physical condition. The Indians were instructed in agricultural pursuits, which they eagerly followed, and their condition was greatly improved.

A chapel and a residence were completed that year, and surrounded with a palisade for defence, for there were hostile tribes across the mountain range.

This was the first mission in the Northwest, and here was planted the germ which was likened to a mustard seed. Faithfully and devoutly did the heroic priest labor in their new field, and the Eternal Father whom they served indeed blessed their efforts. In the rocky log church which was erected in the shadow of the cross which was planted on that Rosary Sunday the faithful teachers led their savage charges in the way of Christian truth. Their daily life was one of constant service and untiring devotion to duty. They never faltered in the good work which they had undertaken, and they ministered faithfully to the moral and physical needs of the Indians—priests, teachers and physicians, as the case might be.

It is a source of regret that the log building which served them as a church in these early days was afterward pulled down when the permanent mission was located a little farther up the river.

After spending a busy year at the mission, organizing the work and studying the needs of the new field, Father de Smet returned to St. Louis, and from there went to Europe, where he obtained new assistants to accompany him to his field of labor in the distant west.

In the latter part of 1843 they sailed from Antwerp for the Pacific coast, the party including several priests and lay brothers, and six sisters of the Congregation of Our Lady. After an uneventful, although tedious, journey they reached Fort Vancouver in August, 1844. The fathers and lay brothers then made the perilous overland journey to the Bitter Root valley in safety, and, with additional help, Father de Smet took up again the work which he had inaugurated three years before.

Among the fathers who came with Father de Smet from Europe at this time was Father Ravalli, the grandest figure in all the history of the Northwest. A man of wonderful ability and amazing capacity for work, he entered into the duties of the mission with a zeal which could have been inspired by no ordinary motive. His career has been recorded in the annals of civilization. He was a man among millions.

With this strong support Father de Smet was able to accomplish much in the way of the good work which he had undertaken. The work progressed rapidly, and for six years was uninterrupted. But the advent of the fur traders caused trouble, and the unbounded faith which they had had in the fathers was disturbed. The position of the missionaries became dangerous, and in 1850 the mission was regrettably abandoned. For sixteen years it was unoccupied.

One can imagine the grief of the fathers as they saw the results of their labors, and that by the faithfulness of the whites. It was a sad blow, and the missionaries felt it keenly. They had possessed the unbounded confidence of the red men until men of their own race set the example of cowardice and fraud, which the Indians followed. It must be confessed, however, that they had learned the lesson of the priests. The discontent of the Indians was aggravated by the invasion of their hunting grounds and grazing lands by the trappers and traders, and they rebelled.

The fathers driven out, the Indians soon relapsed into the old conditions and habits of their savagery, and it was not until 1862 that the mission was reoccupied. In that year Father Ravalli returned to St. Mary's—"dear old St. Mary's," he always called it—and he never left it again. There his remains lie in the little graveyard near the church, amid scenes which he loved so dearly.

Their own younger days. The buildings are all well preserved and are scrupulously cared for by John Ravalli, the custodian, who is always willing to guide visitors through the old structures, and who is eloquent in his praise and earnest description of the work and achievements of "the old father." Under his escort it has been the good fortune of the writer to visit these old buildings, hallowed by sacred associations, in several occasions, and each time the impression made has been deeper and more significant.

The church tower is 152 1/2 feet, built of heavy logs and chinked with mortar. The front of the building is chaplain John Rainey, in charge.

Across the front of the mission building is a row of stately cottonwood trees, ninety more than thirty years ago by the priests, forming a delightful



FATHER DE SMET

ONE OF THESE YOUNG INDIANS, WHOM THE FATHERS CHRISTENED PETER, SET FORWARD IN HASTE TO PREPARE FOR THE COMING OF THE BLACK ROBE, WHILE THE OTHER, IGNATIUS, REMAINED TO ACCOMPANY THE MISSIONARY ON HIS LONG JOURNEY TO AN UNKNOWN LAND AND AN UNKNOWN PEOPLE. IT WAS APRIL, 1840, WHEN FATHER DE SMET AND HIS DUSKY COMPANION JOINED A WEST-BOUND CARAVAN FOR THE TRIP TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS. THE PRIEST WAS STRICKEN WITH FEVER ON THE PLAINS, BUT RECOVERED, AND IN JUNE, AT GREEN RIVER, IN WYOMING, MET A DELEGATION SENT BY THE TRIBE TO WELCOME HIM.

an octagonal belfry, in which swings a small bell. The interior is still furnished—the altar with its images and candles; the nave with chairs, many of them made by the fathers and lay brothers by hand labor; the little gallery with wooden benches. Everything is as clean as if services were to be held there immediately. Half way down the nave is a diminutive confession, formed by a small latticed screen built out from the wall. As the visitor gazes at this, he can fancy the venerable father listening with averted head to the self-accusations of his dusky charges, and dismissing them in peace. In fact, everything about the mission is tenderly suggestive of some phase of the life of this remarkable man.

Adjoining the church at the rear, and communicating with it by a small door opening at one side of the altar, is a low, one-story log building of one room, which was evidently used by Father Ravalli as a study. Here is his heavy, old-fashioned mahogany secretary, still containing many of his papers, and upon the walls are religious pictures, as he hung them years ago. Here, the zealous priest performed much of his work, planning for the improvement of his charges, and for the advancement of his church. It is a room which has played a vitally important part in the history of Montana.

Back of this second building, and attached to it, is a well-showered room, which, while apparently built at an earlier time, yet forms a portion of the united structure. In this room Father Ravalli died. Here is his medicine chest, from which he administered to the physical ailments of all who suffered. Here, too, is the bed upon which Father Ravalli spent the last few years of his life, hopelessly crippled, yet always cheerful, and from which his soul took flight to the eternal reward so richly won.

One cannot help but pause here and gaze reverently about him. It is a hallowed spot. It preaches a silent sermon of devotion and self-denial that even the most heedless must consider. Opening from the rear of this room is the kitchen, dining room and store room used by Father Ravalli and his associate, the venerable Father D'Asie,

while he was McKee's assistant, he was engaged in many celebrated cases. He prepared the evidence on which the British minister, Sir John Crofton, and two British consuls were ordered out of the country for violating the neutrality laws. As recorder he was feared by all criminals. He had no sympathy for the habitual offender, he was rarely lenient to such, and it is said that he pronounced more death sentences than any other man who was recorder for the same length of time. Among the celebrated trials over which he presided were those of Carlyle Harris, Dr. R. W. Buchanan, Danny Driscoll, "Frenchy" and "Biff" Elison. John W. Gott defeated Smyth for recorder in the election which put

Extending north at a right angle from the rear corner of this building is a line of sheds and poultry houses, and at right angles to these again are the stables and wagon sheds, all built by these countless missionaries, and all still in good repair. The workmanship of all is excellent. Surmounting the pyramidal roof of the love case is a weathercock, fashioned, it is said, by Father Ravalli from an old tin can, and still showing traces of the bright colors with which it was originally decked. It shows how the great mind found recreation and enjoyment in little things. It had been seized by scores of people, but the piece will not be despoiled by relic hunters while Ignatius John Rainey is in charge.



the Strong administrator. Shortly afterward Smyth was appointed to the supreme court bench.

Justice Smyth was a member of the Episcopal Church, but in 1835 he became a Catholic. His wife had died but a short time before, and he was seriously ill at his residence, 18 West Forty-eighth street, on Saturday, Feb. 19, the justice sent a messenger in a carriage to the parish house of St. Gabriel's Church in West Thirty-seventh street. The messenger bore a note to Mr. Farley, pastor of St. Gabriel's and auxiliary bishop of the archdiocese of New York, who had been a friend of Justice Smyth for years. The note requested Bishop Farley to call at his earliest convenience. Bishop Farley responded at once, and when he was shown to the sick man's room, Justice Smyth informed him that he wished to be received into the Catholic Church without loss of time. The request surprised the bishop somewhat, as the applicant is usually required to prepare himself by a course of instruction covering several months. Upon questioning Justice Smyth, however, the bishop found him well prepared, and after the justice had made a profession of faith, Bishop Farley baptized him and administered the last rites of the Church to the justice, as it was thought that he could not recover. Justice Smyth's daughter joined the Catholic Church two years before his conversion.

It is announced that a plenary Synod of the Irish Council will be held this year at Maynooth College. Fifty years have now elapsed since the first plenary Synod was held at Thurles, and twenty-five years since the second was celebrated at Maynooth. The Synod will consist of the members of the Irish Hierarchy and the mitred abbot of Mount Mellary.

Justice Frederick Smyth of New York is dead at Atlantic City, N. J., of pneumonia. Justice Smyth went there July 2 for his health. Several days ago he contracted pneumonia. The patient's constitution was so weakened that medical aid was of no avail.

Justice Frederick Smyth was known from one end of the country to the other, especially as Recorder Smyth, for he never was rarely reversed. By birth and long allegiance he was an Episcopalian. Two years ago, however, during an illness, he was converted to the Catholic Church.

Justice Smyth was born near Galway, Ireland, in 1822. His father left no inheritance. Young Smyth came to the United States and was a clerk in John McKee's law office when McKee became a marine court justice. He was admitted to the bar in 1855. He was a delegate to the Tilden national convention and was a Tilden elector. He was appointed recorder in 1879 to fill out John K. Hackett's unexpired term, and was elected to succeed himself for fourteen years in the fall of that year. As a practicing law-

yer, while he was McKee's assistant, he was engaged in many celebrated cases. He prepared the evidence on which the British minister, Sir John Crofton, and two British consuls were ordered out of the country for violating the neutrality laws. As recorder he was feared by all criminals. He had no sympathy for the habitual offender, he was rarely lenient to such, and it is said that he pronounced more death sentences than any other man who was recorder for the same length of time. Among the celebrated trials over which he presided were those of Carlyle Harris, Dr. R. W. Buchanan, Danny Driscoll, "Frenchy" and "Biff" Elison. John W. Gott defeated Smyth for recorder in the election which put

(Editorial Correspondence.) KILKENNY, Ireland, Aug. 11, 1900.—Since my last letter, descriptive of my travels in Ireland, I have managed to see a large portion of the Emerald Isle. Some of my journeys have been by rail, some 200 miles by coach, and nearly 100 miles on horseback.

Before leaving Dublin I paid a visit to All Hallows' College, beautifully situated in Drumcondra, one of the charming suburbs of the city. All Hallows', as is well known, is the Irish Missionary College which has supplied so many able priests to foreign missions. The readers of "The Intermountain Catholic" will understand the character of All Hallows' when they recall that Bishop Scanlan of Salt Lake is one of its graduates.

A beautiful chapel has recently been erected on the grounds, which, with numerous other improvements, make All Hallows' College an ideal seminary. From Dublin I started out toward the west of Ireland.

The first point of interest was Maynooth, famous for its college, which supplies the Church of Ireland with its priesthood. The College of Maynooth was founded in 1726. Previous to this students intended for the Catholic priesthood were obliged to seek their education abroad. In consideration of the difficulties attending such a course, the Irish Parliament appropriated a sum of money for the establishment of a clerical college, to which the royal assent was given. The Imperial Parliament granted an annual sum for the support of the college which was inadequate to its needs.

In 1845 Peel, in spite of strong opposition, carried a measure appropriating £20,000 for building purposes and an annual grant of £25,000.

Under the Irish Church Act of 1869, the college received the sum of £250,000 in lieu of the annual grant. Since this date the college has been under the special protection of the Irish hierarchy. When the supply of priests of Maynooth exceeds the needs of the Irish mission they are allowed to seek places elsewhere. Hence, a number of priests, some of them very able men, are to be found in various dioceses in the United States.

At the close of my visit to Maynooth I went on to Mullingar, in the County West Meath, which had especial interest for me, for it was here that my father was born. Mullingar is noted as one of the most extensive military depots in Ireland. Although it is one of the oldest of Irish towns, its appearance would indicate that it was of modern origin.

Mullingar is the center of a large trade in agricultural produce and livestock. The land about it is productive and a general air of prosperity surrounds the place. I was quite satisfied, however, after visiting the city, that my father had left it to take up his abode in the United States.

From Mullingar it is a pleasant journey to Athlone—that most famous of Irish towns which has played a most important part in the history of Erin. Athlone is beautifully situated on the Shannon, and, like Mullingar, is one of the principal military stations. Although the land in this part of Ireland is unusually fertile, the prospects for the present year are anything but bright.

The crops have suffered materially owing to the recent rains, and the damage done by the incessant downpour has been further increased by the heavy gales. The potato crop has suffered largely, and the corn, where uncut, has in many places been beaten down, and where cut it has deteriorated a good deal in value. With the all-around rise in the prices of foodstuffs, and the partial loss of the harvest due to the causes mentioned, the prospect for the winter is not a cheerful one to contemplate.

Athlone is not obliged to depend entirely upon agricultural products, for it possesses woolen and other industries. On the last bank of the Shannon are to be seen some of the remains of the old Franciscan Abbey, which was built in 1241. It seems that centuries ago the Franciscan Monks were numerous all over Ireland, for in various parts ruins of their old monasteries are to be found.

At Kilkenny, about fifteen miles west of Athlone, is to be found one of the most interesting of the ruined abbeys in Ireland.

The abbey at Kilkenny also belonged to the Franciscan Friars and was founded for them by William O'Keefe, as far back as the year 1460, although it is not improbable that it was built on the site of a much earlier church, erected by St. Connall.

With the exception of Muckross Abbey, the Abbey at Kilkenny interested me more perhaps than any of the ruins I have seen. Speaking of it, a writer says:

"As picturesque a ruin as can be seen where there are neither hills, rocks, lake nor river, and but a few distant trees; perhaps its ivy-mantled tower and roofless gables were better in keeping with the waste and desolation that

presided over the place, destitute as it is of any modern improvement, and denotation whatever."

Indeed, I found the whole effect of the place one of entrancing interest. After seeing it I could well understand how Ferguson referred to it as: "More like a chaucer in Sicily or Spain than anything in these islands."

In one corner of this Abbey there is a tablet erected to the memory of the father of the rector of the Denver Cathedral, Rev. M. F. Callanan. I had the pleasure of spending a day at Kilkenny as the guest of Father Callanan's mother, who made my stay extremely pleasant.

Closely by Kilkenny is a spot of historic interest which marks the battle of Agincourt. But I must hurry along, as space will not permit me to make reference to all the places of interest, which beset the traveler on all sides in Ireland.

From the west of Ireland I returned to Dublin and started for Cork via Kildare, Thurles and Malton, and observing the interesting towns en route. Perhaps the point of greatest interest on the route is to be found in the neighborhood of Thurles, where Most Rev. Archbishop Crooke resides. I am sorry to say that this intellectual giant of Irish hierarchy is, to use an expression of the late Cardinal Manning, "snowing in to the terminus." His state of health is so precarious that his death may be looked for at any time. His loss will indeed be an irreparable one to the Irish people.

Father O'Hyan of Denver was, I believe, born in this part of Tipperary, and he will, I am sure, learn with regret that the great Metropolitan of Cashel is in such poor health.

Of the interesting places in the neighborhood of Thurles, such as Cashel, intensely attractive to the visitor, I need not speak at length, for they are well known throughout the world.

There are three objects of attraction in Cashel: First, the Ecclesiastical Buildings on the Rock; second, Horse Abbey below it, and, third, the Dominican Abbey in the town. I might also add that Father Matthew, the Apostle of Temperance, was born near Cashel. Within a few miles of the town of Knocking, further on towards Cork, I came to Hospital, which is associated with the early history of the Knights of St. John. I am sure that many Denver Catholics, especially those who are members of the Modern Knights of St. John, would have enjoyed a visit to this place with me.

Hospital was founded in 1215 by Geoffrey de Marisco, which Queen Elizabeth afterwards gave to one of her favorites, Sir Valentine Brown, who erected what was known as Kenna Castle. The hospital from whence the town derived its name has passed away, but there remains in the church a figure of a knight in a niche of the chancel.

One can understand after a trip through Tipperary how, in the matter of buildings, it is said to be a land of decay.

But the length of this article admonishes me that I must confine myself to briefer reference, and hence I hurry along to Cork. "The spreading lake that, like an Island floats, Enclaves Cork with his divided floods."

Cork is in every way a splendid city and is stamped with an air of progress which is pleasing to observe. Like many other parts of Ireland, it possesses a magnificent cathedral, in addition to which there is also the world-famed St. Fin Barres, once the possession of the Church, but which was robbed and plundered by modern Protestants.

In one paragraph Macaulay thus briefly summarizes the history of Cork: "In 1588 the city extended over about one-tenth part of the space which it now covers, and was intersected by muddy streams, which have long been concealed by arches and buildings. A desolate marsh, in which the sportsman who pursued the waterfowl sank deep in water and mire at every step, covered the area now occupied by stately buildings of great commercial societies."

To be sure no one visits Cork without going out to Blarney, so I took a jaunty car and drove on a beautiful morning to "The groves of Blarney, They look so charming, Down by the portals Of sweet silent brooks."

I went through the athletic or rather acrobatic performance of kissing the Blarney stone which if any one thinks is an easy task, will find out the contrary with a vengeance once he attempts.

Mr. James T. Finlan of Butte, Mont., can bear testimony to the truth of this latter assertion. For the benefit of Mr. Finlan's friends in Montana I must tell a story out of school. On this first attempt to kiss the Blarney stone he was unaccompanied by a body guard, and being deficient in acrobatic qualities, his courage failed him and he returned to Cork without accomplishing his purpose. Nothing daunted he returned to Blarney the following day, having en-

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