

THE EARLY FRANCISCAN MISSIONS IN THIS COUNTRY.

- Luis Geronimo de Ore, Relacion de los Martires de la Florida*, 1604.
- Memorial que Fray Ivan de Santander de la Orden de San Francisco, Comissario General de Indias presenta à la Magestad Catolica del rey Don Felipe Quarto, Hecho por el Padre Fray Alonso de Benavides, Custodio de las Conversiones del Nuevo Mexico.* Madrid, 1630.
- Histoire du Canada et Voyages que les Frères Mineurs Recollects y ont fait pour la conversion des infidelles.* Par le F. Gabriel Sagard Theodat, Mineur Recollect de la Province de Paris. Paris, 1636.
- Description de la Louisiane.* Par le Père Louis Hennepin. Paris, 1683. Translated, New York, 1880.
- Establissement de la Foi dans la Nouvelle France.* Par le père Chrestien le Clercq. Paris, 1691. Translated, New York, 1881.
- El Peregrino Septentrional Atlante, delineado en la exemplarissima vida del Venerable Padre Fr. Antonio Margil de Jesus.* Valencia, 1742.
- Relacion Historica de la Vida y Apostolicas Tareas del Venerable Padre Fray Junipero Serra, y de las Misiones que fundò en la California Septentrional.* Mexico, 1787.
- Travels in North America.* By M. Crespel. London, 1797.

BUT a few years since men traversed this broad land in every direction, wrote of it and described it, treated of its history even, with scarce a thought of the early pioneers of the Cross, who facing every danger went from tribe to tribe announcing the truths of the gospel, and seeking to win the natives from the idolatry and superstitions into which they had sunk.

Light has penetrated the darkness,—the history of the United States as now understood devotes to the early Catholic missionaries chapters which for heroic grandeur, for self-devotedness, courage, and perseverance, are unsurpassed. The long-bred aversion to the religious of the ancient faith yielded to the instinctive reverence awarded by an honest heart to virtue of heroic mould.

Yet it is chiefly to the Jesuit laborers in the mission-field that the credit is given. To them Bancroft devoted glowing pages; it was their letters that Bishop Kip gleaned and translated; and to them Parkman pays tribute in his *Jesuits in North America*, without covering all their labors in the pages where his vivid style invests his long research with all the charms of an epic.

But great as were the labors, the sufferings, and the zeal of the

sons of St. Ignatius, it would be unjust to rivet the attention solely on them. They were not alone in the field. Side by side with them labored the sons of St. Francis; still full of the generous ardor and intrepidity of their earlier days. Sometimes they preceded the Jesuit Fathers, as in Canada, or succeeded them, as in Florida and California, or were the sole regenerators and spiritual conquerors of fields peculiarly their own, as in New Mexico and Texas. They are, however, too little known, and the works recording their services have not been made accessible to the general reader, yet in their annals stand out in grand relief men who would be venerated in the history of the Church in any country. Mark of Nice, Caron, Le Clercq, Margil, Serra, Massey, Bishop St. Buenaventura Tejada, and their glorious army of Franciscan Fathers, who sacrificed their lives on the missions within our limits, were men of no ordinary virtue and ability.

The Franciscan history in this country opens with Father Juan X Suarez and Brother Juan de Palos, two of the Apostolic Twelve who founded their order in Mexico. With three other friars of St. Francis they zealously went, in 1527, to Florida, hoping to raise up a new Christendom in the realm which the Adelantado Pamfilo de Narvaez was to add to the dominions of the Spanish king; but the expedition, ill conceived and ill managed, involved all in destruction, and the good Franciscans crowned their lives of mission zeal by Christian patience and fortitude amid disaster, suffering, and starvation.

When the survivors of that expedition reached the shores of the Pacific, and Alvar Nuñez, whose curious family name was Cabeza de Vaca, or Cow's Head, told of the strange half-civilized tribes he had met in his long and unparalleled wanderings across the continent, a Franciscan stepped forward ready to bear the gospel to them, with the graces of which Christ made his Church the channel to men. Alvar told how five Fathers of St. Francis had perished on the coast of Florida, but the brave Friar Mark from Nice and the sunny Riviera did not recoil. Open the grand old folios of Ramusio, clear and handsome, though printed in 1565, and read Father Mark's narrative telling how "with the aid and favor of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, our Lady, and of our Seraphic Father St. Francis," he with Friar Honorato set out from San Miguel de Culiacan, on Friday, the 7th of March, 1539. Soon after Easter the intrepid missionaries reached Cevola, one of the New Mexican towns, with its curious houses rising story after story, offering no means of entrance but by ladders. The people were decently attired in cotton garments and robes of buffalo and other skins, with gold and silver vessels, and turquoises, used both as ornament and as

money. Here he planted the Cross, and nearly three centuries and a half ago initiated a mission of his order which was for years to spread Christian light over the interior of the continent.

Father Mark opened the way, but the mission was not effectively begun till many a zealous Franciscan had laid down his life in the attempt to win the natives to listen to the Christian doctrines of which he was the herald.

While the Friars Minor were thus aiming at the spiritual conquest of New Mexico, Florida summoned them. The Dominicans, pioneers of the Faith on our coast, had bedewed the soil of the peninsula with the blood of the martyr of obedience, Father Luis Cancer, and his companion Garcia. They had labored on the shores of the Chesapeake, but discouraged by the obdurate and animal hearts of the people, they had turned to other fields. The Fathers of the Society of Jesus came. Their missionaries announced the Faith from the Rappahannock to Cape Sable; they tried to convert the old and educate the young; but when the line of martyrs begun with Martinez, closed with Segura and his comrades, even the untiring Father Rogel lost heart, and they turned away from the sterile and ungrateful field.

It was no light undertaking to expect any meed of success where two such orders had failed. But the Franciscans were not disheartened. About 1590 the first attempt was made, and the pioneers felt so encouraged that two years later a body of twelve—the favorite number of the Franciscan apostles—eleven priests and a lay brother, began a series of missions, extending from Tolemato, now the cemetery of Saint Augustine, along the coast to Amelia Island. Each mission station had its chapel, its house for instruction, and the reception of those who came to see the Fathers. The missionaries labored earnestly to establish morality, to prevent polygamy and licentiousness. The better disposed readily entered into the views of their new teachers, and Christianity found many ready to embrace its doctrines, but the lawless fretted under the strict rule, and sighed for the old system of license and licentiousness. A young chief resolved to rid the country of the missionaries, and easily drew some of the licentious into the sanguinary plot he formed. In 1597, stung by the reproof of Father Peter de Corpa, the Franciscan missionary at Tolemato, he killed him as he knelt before his altar. The confederates at once rushed to the other stations to complete the work. Brave Father Blas Rodriguez, met the murderers, and professing his readiness to die, asked only time to offer once more the holy sacrifice. The cool courage of the brave priest touched even the brutalized hearts of these men. They consented, and flung themselves down in his chapel with all the stolidity of their race, to wait till the doomed

priest had said his last mass. When it was ended, he calmly knelt before it to receive the death-blow from a tomahawk. Two other missionaries, Father Auñon and Father Antonio de Badajoz, were killed at Ossibaw, and Father Velascola at Asao. One only escaped; he fell into the hands of the Indian, who spared his life, only to make him die daily in the torments and outrages inflicted on him.

The Franciscan mission in Florida seemed annihilated, but other Fathers were ready to take their posts on the ground reeking with the blood of their brethren, to restore the chapels, and resume the instruction of the natives. The missionaries sought no vengeance, but the Spanish authorities punished the offenders with sound judgment, in order to prevent a recurrence. The evil-disposed Indians submitted or withdrew. The missions entered on a new era of prosperity, and the Fathers so increased in number that in 1612 Florida was formed into a province of the order.

By this time they had gained a permanent foothold in New Mexico. Father John de Padilla, Brother John of the Cross, Father John of St. Mary, Father Francis Lopez, Brother Augustine Rodriguez, had all fallen victims to their zeal, but in 1595 Don John de Oñate entered New Mexico with a well-equipped expedition, accompanied by eight Franciscan missionaries, selected by the Commissary-General Father Peter Pila. The superior of this body was Father Roderick Daran, but he was not equal to the task; and having been compelled to return, Father Alonzo Martinez was appointed and became the founder of the missions in New Mexico. How these prospered may be seen in the statement made to the king of Spain in 1630, that up to that time eighty thousand had been baptized. The fruit at first had been small; but the Franciscans persevered; as one sank beneath his labors and hardships, another took his dangerous and difficult post. In 1622 New Mexico was formed into a custody, and Father Alonzo Benavides appointed the local Superior. His memorial to Philip IV. gives a full picture of the Church established in the heart of the northern continent. The Pecos were all converted and churches established at Socorro, Senecu, and Civillata; the tribe of Tioas followed their example, and the Catholic churches of Sandia and Isleta antedate any raised on the Atlantic coast; the Tompiras, Sanos, Pecos, Teoas, Hemes, also embraced the faith. Though the Pécuries at first resisted, and laid violent hands on the missionaries, they were at last overcome by the patience, humility, and unflagging zeal of the Franciscans, the missionary escaping from attempts on his life in a way that all regarded as miraculous. The Taos clung to the polygamy they had so long practiced. In vain the missionary preached and exhorted. An old hag, regarded

as a witch, exercised such an influence that she even weakened the faith of some women converted and married with the sacramental rites. Her death, by a stroke of lightning while she was plying her satanic wiles, aided greatly by the terror it inspired to commend the teachings of the priest. Acoma and Zuñi, both under the slavery of the medicine-men, had sturdily resisted the envoys of Christianity, but they, too, had yielded at last, while the truth was preached to the towns of the Moquis and the wandering tribes of the Apaches, as untamable two centuries ago as they are now.

To effect conversions in Florida and New Mexico required a knowledge of the various languages spoken, and even among the Pueblo towns on the Rio Grande, where houses, and arts, and progress seemed alike, the Indians were really of far different stocks, speaking several languages unlike in principle and form. Before the settlers of Virginia or New England had acquired any insight into the languages of the redmen, the Franciscans of Florida and New Mexico had reduced languages to rule and system, had all the needed rudimentary works on them, and were training Indian children to read and write. Many books were printed which remain as monuments of the zeal, learning, and ability of the early missionaries, who, like Pareja, acquired thorough mastery of aboriginal language and thought. Still further west Father Perdomo, after early essays in mission work in Florida, went with Vizcaino to be one of the first apostles of California, a pioneer of the coming work of his order in that land.

While the Spanish Franciscans were thus extending their labors in the south, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, other bands of Friars Minor were emulating their example in the north. France was occupying the valley of the St. Lawrence and the territory near its mouth. Champlain, the founder of Quebec, as soon as colonization showed promise of success, sought to obtain clergy for the French settlers, and missionaries for the poor heathen Indians, whose spiritual degradation excited his compassion. A man of robust and earnest faith, he felt the importance of religion for the well-being of the future state. He applied in the first instance to the Recollects or Reformed Franciscans of the Province of Aquitaine, in France, but various difficulties arose which prevented those Fathers from undertaking the good work. Father Garnier de Chapouin, Provincial of the province of St. Denis, of the same order, entered into Champlain's plans and obtained the necessary authority to found a mission in America. In the spring of 1615 a little party of apostolic men, Father Denis Jamay as Commissary, with Father John d'Olbeau, Father Joseph le Caron, and a lay brother, sailed from Honfleur in the St. Etienne, and on the day in May

when the order celebrates the translation of the relics of the holy founder, they anchored in the roadstead of Tadousac.

A vast field was before these clergymen. Chapels were to be erected at Quebec and the minor posts, Tadousac and Three Rivers; the French settlers were to be formed to the practice of religious duties, to which some had long been strangers, and the Indians, from the Saguenay to the friendly Hurons, on the upper lakes, were to be won from their barbarous fetichism to the knowledge and worship of the one true God. After Cartier's days, the first mass offered at Quebec, Tadousac, Three Rivers, Sault St. Louis, as well as in Upper Canada, was offered by these Franciscans. In the mission they formed Father Joseph le Caron is the great central figure, the real founder, a priest of great zeal, discretion, energy, and patience. He interested many leading men of France in Canadian affairs, brought over other Fathers to aid in the work, stimulated the study of the Indian languages, so that in a few years dictionaries were prepared of the tongues spoken by the Nasquapees at Tadousac, the Montagnais on the St. Lawrence, and the radically different language spoken by the Hurons, among whom Father le Caron himself founded the mission, wintering in their remote palisaded towns. One of these brave Franciscans, Father Nicholas Viel, perished, a victim to his zeal, having been treacherously hurled from his frail canoe, with his little Indian acolyte, at a rapid that in its name, "Sault au Recollet," still, after the lapse of two centuries and a half, chronicles his death.

Another intrepid son of St. Francis, Father Joseph de la Roche d'Allion, not only reached Upper Canada, but, seeking new mission fields, must have crossed the Niagara, and standing on the soil now claimed by New York, announced within the limits of our republic the truths of Christianity to the neutral Indians, amid the thunderous echoes of the great cataract. He wellnigh gained the crown of martyrdom, and another, Father Poullain, fell into the hands of the cruel Iroquois, and suffered great cruelty at their hands. Finding the labor far beyond the ability of his province, Father le Caron solicited the aid of the Jesuits, and the two communities labored side by side till the English, some years after, wrested Canada from the French.

When Cardinal Richelieu effected the restoration of the colony, he seems to have excluded the Recollects, offering the Canadian missions to his favorite order, the Capuchins, another branch of the great Franciscan family, and when they declined it, to the Jesuit Fathers, who have made their labors on that field so famous. It was not till years after that the brown robe and sandalled feet of the Recollects were seen in Canada.

The Recollects of Aquitaine, to whom Champlain had applied

in vain, assumed, in 1619, the charge of missions on the Acadian coast, and for several years threaded the forests from the Atlantic to the St. Lawrence, following the Indian trails, through woodland paths, over rugged portages, and down the rivers. The book describing their labors has eluded all the search and investigations of our "Americana" hunters. We know but little of their hopes and trials, the spiritual joy that buoyed them up, the obduracy that made them despond. We know that one of them, Father Sebastian, starting from Miscou to return to their chief mission-house on the river St. John, sank under misery and hardship in his forest journey, and died a victim to his zeal, alone in the wilderness. Others crossing to the St. Lawrence by the Rivière Loup, traversed territory that Maine now claims. This mission was in time broken up by the English, and though the Recollects, on the restoration of the country, renewed their work, Cardinal Richelieu replaced them by Capuchin Fathers.

This branch of the Franciscan order had for years missions on the sea-coast now claimed by Maine, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, zealously discharging the ministry for French and Indian. Men of renown, like Father Archangel of Pembroke, served with zeal on these coast missions; and not many years ago a Maine farmer turned up with his plough the leaden plate that had once been inclosed in the corner-stone of a chapel of Our Lady of Holy Hope near the river Penobscot.

When at a later period Catholics from the British Isles were sold as bondmen in the growing English colonies in America, the spiritual needs of these poor people, deprived of priest and altar and sacrifice, roused the sympathies of the French king, and English-speaking Capuchins were sent to the frontier posts to afford, when they could, the comforts of religion to the victims of bigotry and religious hatred.

Thus in the earlier part of the seventeenth century we behold Franciscans laboring on the southern and northern frontiers of our present territory; but it was not only there. In the very heart of the English colonies they were also found, some Fathers of the order having been sent by the Propaganda to Maryland at the request of Lord Baltimore, a few years after the settlement, and for some years they labored side by side with the Jesuit Fathers, till the occasion which required their presence no longer existed.

In the reign of Charles II. the Society of Jesus, from the effects of the civil war, which diminished and impoverished the Catholic body in England, and terribly thinned the ranks of the secular and clergy, was unable to send members enough to meet all the wants of the American mission. Again the English Franciscans came to the rescue, with some also from Scotland. From the year 1672.

for full half a century humble and devoted Franciscans labored in Maryland and the adjoining colonies, not only caring for the scattered Catholics, but evidently winning converts to the faith. Every incident points to them as the pioneers of the faith in Pennsylvania, the founders of the Church in Philadelphia, where their mass-house and conversions, early in the eighteenth century, provoked angry comment. Of these Franciscan missionaries the prominent figure is Father Massæus Massey à Sancta Barbara, called by Oliver "a truly apostolic man," who on three different occasions discharged the duties of Provincial of his order in England.

About the time that the English Franciscans returned to Maryland, the Recollects of France received the object of their long vows and prayers, permission to resume in Canada the labors of le Caron, Viel, and Sagard. Political and worldly wisdom had excluded them on the ground that a new colony was no place for a mendicant order. The same false wisdom recalled them when it found that the Venerable Laval, bishop of Quebec, as well as all his clergy, secular and regular, held doctrines too severe for their liking. Four Fathers were dispatched from France in 1669, but tempestuous weather forced the ships back to the French coast; but the next year Father Germain Allart, who afterwards filled the see of Vence with honor, sailed from La Rochelle with Father Gabriel de la Ribourde and two other priests, as well as the artistic deacon Luke le François, recognized as a distinguished painter in France, and two lay brothers. The convent of Our Lady of the Angels soon rose from its ruins, and when other Fathers came they spread through Canada as useful auxiliaries on the outlying districts, and preparing for Indian missions and permanent work. Father le Clercq, the author, took his post at Gaspé, where, to instruct more promptly the Micmac Indians, he adopted some rude hieroglyphics he found in use among the natives, and developed them into a system by which he taught his flock their Christian doctrine and prayers so successfully that other missionaries, appreciating its immense value as an aid in their labors, adopted it so generally that to this day these symbolic prayers are to be found in every Micmac cabin, and a few years ago type were cut at Vienna, from which three books have been printed in these Franciscan hieroglyphics. Brother Luke le François adorned with the works of his hands many of the Canadian churches, and was undoubtedly the only artist of merit to be found in America north of Mexico.

A new field was opened to the zeal of the Recollects by the scheme of western exploration, colonization, and trade, projected by Robert Cavellier, Sieur de la Salle, but which, from his sheer incompetence, resulted ultimately in disaster, misery, and loss. The arms of Louis XIV. had wrested Artois from Spain, and many

Flemish Recollects from that province were sent to Canada. Several of these, Fathers Gabriel de la Ribourde, Louis Hennepin, Zenobius Membré, and Melithon Watteau, were named to attend La Salle's expedition, become chaplains at the posts he might establish, and found missions to convert the friendly Indians among whom they found docile to the world. A chapel rose at Niagara; another at Fort Crevecœur on the Illinois. Father Hennepin set out with two companions, and ascending the Mississippi reached its first fall, which he named after the patron of the mission, Saint Anthony of Padua, falling a prisoner into the hands of the Sioux, to whom he announced as he could the doctrines of Christianity. Meanwhile the venerable Father Gabriel de la Ribourde fell a victim to his zeal, having been murdered by some prowling Kickapoos. After a time La Salle, accompanied by Franciscans, descended the Mississippi to its mouth, connecting, as it were, the labors of the different nationalities in the order.

When later he sailed from France, ostensibly to settle the mouth of the Mississippi, but really to land in Texas and attack the northern provinces, rich in precious metals, Franciscans accompanied him, Fathers Zenobius Membré and Maximus le Clercq to perish by Indian hands in Texas, and Father Anastasius Douay, who was spared to return and chronicle the fate of the unwise La Salle.

The Franciscans in Canada, then with convents at Quebec, Three Rivers, and Montreal, did good mission work, and as chaplains to the French forts and king's posts were the pioneers in many of our dioceses. They were chaplains at Fort St. Frederic on Lake Champlain, at Niagara, at Erie, at Fort Duquesne (now Pittsburgh), at Detroit, where one, Father Constantine, was killed by the Indians. They attended expeditions, one, Father Emmanuel Crespel, recording in pages of deep interest his labors in Wisconsin and his later sufferings when shipwrecked on Anticosti. Some of these Recollect Fathers were employed in the Indian missions in Maine, and others, English by birth or speech, like Father Eyston, whose quaint signature, "Recollect Anglais et Pauvre Pêcheur," still remains on registers, were placed near the frontier, to give comfort to Catholics in the colonies or to instruct in the faith English Protestants in Canada.

In Florida meanwhile the Franciscan missions, after several vicissitudes, were pushed in all directions, converting the various tribes, till the whole of the Apalaches were gathered into the fold. But with the progress of the neighboring English colonies new dangers came. The people of Carolina stimulated and led Indian expeditions to attack the villages of the neophytes, and return with numbers of "Indian converts of the Spanish priests," who were sent off to the West Indies to be sold as slaves. The Quaker gov-

error, Archbold, in vain protested against this cruel and unchristian system.

The devoted Franciscans had not only to behold the labor of years annihilated, their churches pillaged and burned, their neophytes slaughtered or dragged off as captives, but laid down their own lives amid the ashes of their children in Christ and of the altars they had reared. Sad was the fate of the mission of Ayabala, among the Apalaches, where Fathers John de Parga, Marcos, Delgado, and Manuel de Mendoza were butchered, beheaded, and given to the flames. So terrible was the destruction caused by these inroads, unprovoked and murderous, that in a few years the extensive missions, which had numbered twenty, with thousands of converts, were reduced to four, under the walls of the Spanish forts, and not numbering five hundred souls in all.

The Franciscans, however, pursued their labors among Spaniard and Indian, and found a new field in the negroes who escaped from slavery among the English. Early in the last century St. Augustine became the residence of a bishop, auxiliary to the bishop of Santiago de Cuba; it is an honor to the Franciscans that they can claim as belonging to their body this holy prelate, Francisco de San Buenaventura Tejada, who, after governing with zeal and ability the portion of the diocese assigned to him, was promoted to a see in Mexico, and died from the fatigue he underwent in making his episcopal visitation of the missions and churches in Texas, that great province forming only a part of his bishopric.

When La Salle's invasion of Texas convinced the Spanish government of the necessity of occupying that province, the Franciscan Father Damian Macanet accompanied the first expedition, and in 1690 returned with three Fathers, to found the mission of San Francisco and that of "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph." Disease and want soon swept away these early missions, but the Franciscans returned and renewed the attempt at various points, but after losing some of their members were again forced to await a happier time.

God soon raised up his chosen servant in the person of the Venerable Antonio Margil—venerable because the Congregation has proceeded so far in the matter of his canonization as to permit the use of the title. This remarkable and apostolic man was born in Valencia, Spain, on the 18th of August, 1657. From childhood he showed the greatest piety, a love of virtue, and a horror of offending God; his pious mother constantly instilling into his mind his obligation to seek perfection. At the age of seventeen he took the Franciscan habit in a very strict Recollect convent at Valencia, called "The Crown of Christ." His novitiate showed his real and solid virtue, which increased in fervor during his studies and at his

ordination. After laboring as much by example as by words at Denia he solicited the American mission, and was permitted to join Father Linaz, who was taking a number of new missionaries to the provinces beyond the seas. Arriving at Querétaro in August, 1683, he became one of the founders of the Apostolic College, which has ever since been a hive of zealous missionaries for Mexico. Yucatan and Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Guatemala were the first fields of his labors, his missions rousing all to new zeal and fidelity in their Christian duties. Years after the bishops in those parts attested the extent, thoroughness, and clearness of their labors, and the permanence of the good effected by his corps of missionaries. They visited the Talamancas, who had always refused to accept Christian instruction, and so won them that eleven churches were established in their territory. But the heathen element rose against them; the missionary and his companion were tied to stakes, and fagots heaped around them and fired. They escaped by what was deemed a miracle, but the Indians kept them as prisoners, without food for a long time, hoping to see them starve to death. When released they proceeded to the better disposed villages of the nation and converted many. They confronted the fierce Lacandones, and established a hospice of missionaries in Guatemala. His wonderful powers as a missionary, and the reputation of sanctity which he had already acquired, induced his superiors to recall him to Querétaro to direct the missionary college. After being here the father and propagator of the missions he returned to Guatemala, where he established a similar college. Here his ministry in reforming the morals, checking disorders, and restoring piety were attended by many marvels. Similar results attended his labors in other parts.

His next great work was the establishment of the Apostolic College at Zacatecas, worthy rival of that of Querétaro. Then, by direction of the King of Spain, he undertook the conversion of the Nayarits.

When missionaries were selected for Texas he was chosen Superior, and laid out the whole system of missions, but falling sick at the Rio Grande, seemed to be at the point of death. He received the last sacraments, and was left to die. Recovering, however, he followed his companions, who had begun their work under his directions, and he himself founded the mission of Our Lady of Guadalupe among the Nacogdoches, that of Dolores among the Ays, and a third mission among the Adayes, near the French post of Natchitoches. He even extended his ministry to the settlers there, not only saying mass for them, but hearing confessions and instructing them. Dolores became his home and the scene of his rigorous and penitential life, till a French invasion from Louisiana broke up

the missions. As soon as peace was restored he renewed the mission of St. Michael at Adayes, and having been appointed Prefect of the Missions *de Propaganda Fide*, established the mission of San Xavier and that of Bahia del Espiritu Santo, on the site of La Salle's fort.

Wherever duty called him, either as a simple missionary, or as local or general superior, he was regarded as a saint, and his sermons and missions and retreats produced wonderful fruits of grace. Failing in health he was summoned to Mexico, but reached his convent in a dying condition. Having made a general confession of his whole life, he received the last sacraments, and resigned himself to the will of God. The tidings spread through the city, and persons of all ranks hastened to see him. The holy man was troubled; "I wished to die and end my life," he exclaimed, "on some mountain among brutes and wild animals, and not in this holy place. God's will be done." He expired on the 6th of August, 1726, and was honored by all as a saint. The process of his canonization was soon undertaken, supported by the petition of the authorities in Mexico, and of the King of Spain; juridical investigations were made in the provinces of Guatemala and Mexico as to his virtues, labors, and supernatural gifts. The examination at Rome was favorable, and by apostolic authority his body was taken up and enshrined in a sepulchre in the sacristy on the 10th of February, 1778, in the presence of two bishops and under the direction of the Archbishop of Mexico.

Such was a typical Franciscan, a holy personage, connected with the Church in this country, who is unfortunately almost unknown among us, but whose process needs but a few steps to authorize the dedication of churches in Texas and Louisiana under his invocation as one of the blessed.

The missions founded and encouraged by Father Margil were continued, although several Franciscan Fathers shed their blood, martyred by those whose highest happiness they sought. About the time of the French revolution, the Spanish government by its action crippled the missions, and many were combined to enable the reduced number of Fathers to attend them. During the constant revolutions of the present century and the war on religion, the Franciscans were at last driven from Texas.

The missions of New Mexico prospered till 1680, when a revolt began against the Spaniards, headed by some secret adherents of the old idolatry. Twenty-one missionaries were butchered by the Indians, ungrateful for the long years of kindness. Church and convent perished. The next year, however, Father Ayeta revived the mission at Isleta, and in 1693 when Vargas restored authority eight Franciscan fathers returned to the land so dear to them.

When the missionary colleges were founded, New Mexico received some of the fervent priests trained in them. In 1812 there were twenty Indian pueblos and one hundred and two Spanish towns or ranches in New Mexico, all attended by the Franciscans. There, too, the Revolution wrought its work, and the habit and cord of St. Francis, so long identified with the faith in that territory, have disappeared.

The missions of Upper California were another fruit of the colleges with which the name of the Ven. Antonio Margil is associated.

They were founded by the illustrious Father Juniper Serra, the first in our territory being that of San Diego, established in 1769, soon followed by San Carlos de Monterey, San Antonio, Carmel, San Gabriel, San Luis Obispo, San Juan Capistrano. The first check was the destruction of San Diego and the murder of the missionary Father Luis Jayme by the Indians; but it was soon restored and new missions begun at San Francisco and Santa Clara. All these missions were remarkable for the thorough system introduced by Father Serra, a man of great zeal and piety, combined with extraordinary skill in the management of affairs. Each mission had its church and buildings; the Indians were collected, instructed in religion, and baptized when they were sufficiently prepared. They were weaned from their roving and precarious life, and trained to agriculture and the various trades. The missionary was the administrator of the little community, and under his direction the produce of the mission was regularly shipped to the Mexican ports and sold, purchases for the Indians being made from the proceeds. Each family received its earnings, and the whole was managed without causing a murmur or complaint. Happier or better communities probably never existed than the California Indians under the care of the Fathers of St. Francis.

Father Serra was made Prefect Apostolic by a bull of the Holy See, June 16th, 1774, and before his death had the consolation of seeing ten thousand converts in the ten missions he had established.

In time the number reached 30,000, but in 1832 the Mexican government dissolved the missions and seized the property. The Indians were scattered and left to perish; and when after some years California was acquired by us, the feeble remnants of the once happy mission Indians were ruthlessly swept aside or turned over to religious fanatics, who, hedged in by government authority, labored to root out religion from their minds.

When the diocese of the two Californias was created the Holy See made the Prefect Apostolic, Father Garcia Diego, the first bishop, and Fathers of St. Francis still at Santa Barbara continue the work of Serra and Palou.

The French colony of Louisiana was long a field for the labors of the Capuchin branch of the order. In 1722, with the consent of the Bishop of Quebec, the Capuchin Fathers of the province of Champagne undertook to supply priests for the various settlements; the Jesuit Fathers attending to the Indian tribes. When the province was transferred by Louis XV. to Spain, the Capuchins remained, and in 1776, the Bishop of Santiago de Cuba deputed his auxiliar, a Capuchin Father, Fray Cirilo, to visit Louisiana, as he had already done Florida. This good bishop introduced Spanish Capuchins, who were stationed along the Mississippi from New Orleans to St. Louis. With the change of flag, the cession to France, the sale to the United States, the Capuchins have ceased to be seen in this old field of their labors.

When our revolution opened this country to Catholic settlers and churches began to dot the surface of the republic, Pennsylvania seemed marked out as a home for the sons of St. Francis.

The pious Franciscan, Father Michael Egan, was authorized to establish a province of his order, and being raised to the new See of Philadelphia, his hopes seemed about to be realized, but the time had not come, and he died without accomplishing his design. A few Franciscan missionaries were scattered through the country, but no attempt was made to form a community, till at last in 1854, at the solicitation of Nicholas Devereux, of Utica, a little colony of Italian Recollects, Father Pamphilo de Magliano, with two other Fathers and a lay brother, with the blessing of the Holy Father, came from Rome and founded a house at Ellicottville, out of which has grown St. Bonaventure's Convent and College at Alleghany, sending missionaries to various dioceses, where they have labored with zeal and success.

Under the encouragement of Bishop Juncker, of Alton, Franciscan Fathers from Germany, about 1859, founded a convent and college at Teutopolis, from which arose others at Effingham and Quincy. Other communities have arisen at Oldenburg and Indianapolis in the diocese of Vincennes; at Jordan in Minnesota; at Louisville, Kentucky; at Paterson, in the diocese of Newark; among the Indians in the dioceses of Detroit and Green Bay; Croghan, N. Y.; Peoria, Ill.; Columbus and St. Bernard, Nebraska; at Cincinnati, and other points, with Conventual Franciscans at Syracuse, New York, and Chambersburg, New Jersey, which cannot be treated of in the pages of a review; nor is it possible to describe the revival of communities of the Third Order of St. Francis. Sisterhoods of various names and rules, all professing to revere St. Francis as their holy founder, have labored in education or works of mercy, from the early attempt of the Poor Clares down to our time.

One of the most remarkable events in our Church history is the revival of the Capuchins in Wisconsin, where two zealous priests, Rev. Bonaventure Frey, and F. Haas, feeling called to the religious state under that rule, obtained a Superior from Europe, under whom they made their novitiate and were received into the order. About 1864 they established the first convent, and the blessing of God was evinced in the fervor of those who came to solicit the habit. The community increased rapidly, and there are now Capuchin convents not only in Wisconsin, but also in the dioceses of Baltimore, New York, at Victoria, Kansas; at Fort Lee, in the diocese of Newark; at Pittsburgh and Herman Station, Pa.

Few perhaps are aware how the order founded by St. Francis is inwoven in the history of the Church in this country, and is still developing for good. In every direction we meet traces of the labors of earlier missionaries; the martyrs who have shed their blood for the faith on the soil of this republic number no fewer than fifty-five; it gave the earliest bishops who exercised jurisdiction in Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Pennsylvania, and California.

After what seemed the destruction of religious orders at the Reformation and the infidel uprising of the French Revolution, and its more recent apostles, one would suppose that in the order of human events the work of St. Francis of Assisi would disappear, but this country alone should teach these liberal tyrants the lesson that they can repress or crush for a time the growth of Catholic life and instinct, but they cannot root it out of men's hearts. Tyranny cannot be kept up forever; men tire at last even of the despots who flatter their worst passions. Sooner or later the time will come when they can no longer deny to Catholics the liberty which they so loudly claim to be the heritage of all men. The religious life is an instinct of the Catholic heart, and where that heart is left free to find expression, it will appear, as in the development of the Franciscans, which we have feebly attempted to trace.

St. Francis stands out the lover of Holy Poverty. He appeared when Europe, after the days of chivalry and the crusades had entered on a period of great commercial development, and the riches and luxury of the East were poured into the Western states. As pride had dominated before, so at this epoch the pursuit of wealth was in the ascendant. All sought to become rich, to accumulate hoards of money, and with this mad striving for temporal goods came luxury, pomp and show. To counteract this, God raised up the lover and apostle of holy poverty, one to whom wealth and all that wealth could buy, were but the dross they really are. His friars went forth preaching poverty, disengagement, mortification, to men who thought only of schemes and speculations for building up colossal fortunes.

It may well be in the divine designs to have hemmed in the territory of this republic in the early days by bands of these self-sacrificing heralds of poverty. The wild greed prevails even more here than it did in Italy in the days of John Bernardon. Every trade, every department is full of speculation, scheming, wild, mad, and dishonest. In the whirlpool men suddenly become immensely rich, and no luxury can be too great for them to gather around. The world is taxed to adorn their houses and persons, to spread the table with costly wines and viands that only a Lucullus could command. And yet so fickle is fortune's wheel that every one can point to millionaires of the past, who are now humbly seeking some petty employment, or who seek in death a refuge from despair, or who perhaps look through prison bars on the wild world dance on the edge of the precipice in which they too so lately joined with song and revel, blind and blinded to the danger, to the insecurity of the ground on which they stood.

Saint Francis is, above all, the saint whose life we Americans should study, and if the labors of friar and sister now, and the intercession of those who in former days trod with indifferent sandalled feet our gold-laden soil, and bedewed it with their blood, shed in testimony of the faith—if these have not lost their power, we cannot look for any more powerful to recall us all to the true Christian standard of disengagement from undue affection to the world that is passing away.
