

PERROT'S PRESENT:

MADE TO THE ST. FRANCIS XAVIER MISSION AT GREEN BAY IN 1686—THE FIRST FRENCH FOOT-PRINT NOW TRACEABLE IN WISCONSIN—A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SOLEIL.



SIXTEEN hundred and eighty-one is the date of the oldest tombstone at Plymouth on the hill above the rock where the Pilgrim Fathers landed. Wisconsin has a relic as old wanting five years, attesting the presence of European settlers within her borders. It is a memorial as indubitably genuine as the Massachusetts gravestone, and more wonderful for many reasons.

This curiosity, by a strange good fortune, stands before me as I write. It is a silver ornament 15 inches high and elaborately wrought. A standard nine inches high supports a radiated circlet closed with glass on both sides and surmounted with a cross. This glass case accessible by a wicket, was intended to contain the sacramental wafer when exhibited for popular veneration. The sacred utensil is called a *soleil*, as resembling in shape the solar orb, and also a *monstrance* and an *ostensorium*, because used to demonstrate or ostentate the holy host.

The antiquity of the relic before me is beyond doubt or cavil. Around the rim of its oval base I read the following inscription, in letters every one of which, though rude, is perfectly legible:

+ CE SOLEIL A ESTE DONNE PAR MR. NICOLAS PERROT A LA MISSION DE ST. FRANCOIS XAVIER EN LA BAYE DES PLANTS. + 1686.
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That is in English: "This *solar* was presented by Mr. Nicolas Perrot to the mission of Saint Francois Xavier at Green Bay, in the year 1686."