

valley and the adjacent country, had acquired, as this narrative will show, long before the missionaries arrived among them, a somewhat clearer and more distinct knowledge of the faith. This was imparted to them by some Christian Iroquois who had wandered to their land and whom the Flathead nation had adopted into their tribe.

IN THE FALL OF 1839

their arrived in St. Louis a deputation of Indians who had come all the way through, from the western slope of the Rocky Mountains, a distance of some three thousand miles. They were Flatheads. This famous nation, between the years 1830 and 1839, sent out three successive expeditions in search of a « Black-robe. » Of the braves sent forth on the first and second expeditions, some, falling in with other tribes, were killed ; others perished on their arduous journey, of sickness, hunger and hardships, and only one or two survived to carry home to their tribe the sad tale of death and disappointment.

Undaunted by former failures and disasters, a third deputation set out from the Bitter Root valley in the spring of 1839, and safely reached St. Louis in the fall of the same year. On hearing the object of their mission, Mgr. Rosati, then Bishop of St. Louis, referred the brave fellows to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, to whom the Bishops of the United States, assembled in the council of Baltimore, in 1835, had consigned the Indian missions of the country.

FATHER P. J. DE SMET, S. J.

was the one appointed to meet the wishes and earnest prayers of these good people. He left St. Louis in the spring of 1840, and in July, after a long and tedious