

LETTER FROM MGR. DEMERS.

MISSION OF VANCOUVER ISLAND, FOUNDED IN 1846.

IN 1836, the Holy See having given commission to the Archbishop of Quebec, Canada East, to send missionaries to that part of the Pacific coast now comprising the State of Oregon, Washington Territory, Vancouver Island, and British Columbia—ten years before the boundary line was settled between Great Britain and the United States of America—accordingly, in 1838, in order to carry out the intentions of the Holy Father, two French-Canadian priests were selected, and received the mission, as the first Catholic clergymen, to go and bring the good tidings of salvation to that far distant, and till then neglected, portion of the Lord's vineyard. They went overland from Montreal, through rivers and lakes, in back canoes and boats, at times on foot and on horseback. The journey was long and tedious, accompanied by great privations and hardships, and many were the dangers they had to encounter. At last, having left in the month of April, they safely arrived, on the 24th of November, at Fort Vancouver, then the head-quarters and principal depot of the Hudson's Bay Company, on the Columbia River, at the distance of nearly one hundred miles from the Pacific Ocean.

The undertaking was great and arduous, the field was immense, and the amount of work before the missionaries may be better imagined than described; but though unworthy and poor instruments in the hands of Him who, to show forth the might of his arm, chose to procure the salvation of mankind by the ministry, not of angels, but of men, they put their whole trust and confidence in Him, humbly begging His blessing upon a work undertaken for the glory of His name and the honor and triumph of His holy Church. But here, it will be asked, who were those two happy priests to whom such a noble and im-