

## MARQUETTE.

### How the Great Jesuit Discovered the Mississippi.

On June 17, 1673, Marquette slowly sailing down the Wisconsin river, amidst its vine-clad isles, finally reached the goal of his ambition by gliding into the great river which he called the Conception, as the Spaniards of the South had called it the river of the Holy Ghost, both of which names have yielded to the original Indian appellation of Mississippi. To raise the standard of the cross and to unfurl the banner of Christianity among the tribes that sat in the darkness of death was the noble object that guided Marquette, DeSoto and LaSalle in their discoveries; hence this sketch must confine itself to the religious aspects of those discoveries, leaving it to others to describe the wonderful, the incredible attainment of civilization during the two centuries since its discovery, on both banks of this mighty river that leaves the shores of the beautiful city of Keokuk. The salvation of the Indians and the palm of martyrdom were the two objects sought by Marquette on landing in Canada in 1666. A missionary and a monk like his predecessor, Isaac Jogues of New Amsterdam, now New York, who, mutilated by the Indians, returned to Europe an invalid, but begged of his Superiors to send him back to America to complete his self-sacrifice; he belonged to that class of men who are the representatives of manhood under its most pure and energetic form of manhood intellectual and moral, of manhood in some manner condensed by celibacy protesting against anything vulgar or base, condemning itself to efforts more great, continuous and profound, than are exacted by any worldly career, and by this means making of earth only a stepping stone to heaven, and of life but a long series of victories.

Wonderful accounts of a mighty river had reached the ears of Marquette at his mission of Mackinaw. It was said to be broad, large and deep, and would bare comparison, they said, with St. Lawrence. It emptied, they conjectured, into the sea of Virginia, while others thought it entered the Gulf of Mexico, and others considered its outlet in the Gulf of California. Its banks were inhabited by many friendly tribes, especially the Illinois, Kansas, and the Omahas, and the missionary, cross in hand, burned to convert them. His intelligent mind fully understood the importance of such an undertaking in its relation to the church and the civilized world, and he conceived at once the bold and daring project of a thorough exploration of the great river about which so much mystery, intermingled with dim traditions, still hung. With justice Bancroft writes: "The purpose of discovering the Mississippi, of which the natives had published the magnificence, sprang from Marquette himself." Having secured the protection of the French government, the illustrious Marquette, with Joliet as his associate, five Frenchmen for his companions and two Algonquins for guides, lifted their canoes on their backs, in the beginning of 1673, and set out on his expedition. Says Gilmary Shea: "They looked back a last adieu to the waters that connected them with Quebec and their countrymen. and they knelt on the shore to offer by a new devotion, their undertaking, their honor and their lives to God and the Virgin Mary, and passing along the Menomies, Green Bay and Wisconsin river. on the eleventh day they reached the great river. Joy that could find no utterance in words filled the grateful heart of Marquette. The broad river now lay before them stretching many hundreds of miles to an unknown sea. They passed by the islands covered with cottonwood, where the moose and deer grazed in peace, strange animals were seen traversing the river, and they proceeded to the land of the buffalo in a solitude frightful by the utter absence of man."

Finally on the 25th they discovered footprints of men which led them to three villages, and when almost at the cabin doors they proclaimed their arrival by loud halloos, that brought the motley croud to see the strangers, and in one of them they recognized the dress of the black gown, who had at last found the Illinois tribe he was seeking. After friendly greeting they sailed on and heard the roaring of a mighty cataract: it was the Muddy water, as the Missouri was called the Algonquins, passed the mouth of the Illinois and the present site of St. Louis, as they passed those of Keokuk, Warsaw, Quincy and Hannibal, little suspecting the mighty changes that 200 years would bring about. Having passed the Ohio, the river of Shawnees, and going down below the present site of Vicksburg, they ascertained that the father of waters emptied into the Gulf of Mexico

and hearing of wars in the land of sugar-cane and rice, they returned on their way home by the way of Kaskaskia, where the tribe received the party in triumph and conducted them back to Lake Michigan with the promise that he should visit again the tribe and preach them the religion of prayer.

Thus had the missionary achieved his long projected work, the discovery and exploration of that river which threw open to France and Christianity the richest and most fertile territory in the new world, embracing especially the following states: Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri. Marquette had passed over in his little bark canoe 2,757 miles, and he says himself, "had this voyage cause the salvation of a single soul. I should deem my fatigue well repaid." In the following year he returned, undaunted by sickness, to the hardships of the mission of converting his beloved Illinois. Great was the sight witnessed at Kaskaskia, when having erected a rustic altar, and surrounded by 500 chiefs and more than 1,500 young men besides the women and children, he preached Christ crucified, explained the principal mysteries of the Christian religion, and on the feast of Easter took possession of the land in the name of the risen Christ. His death is chronicled in the year following, when unable to reach Mackinaw, full of faith and with the words, "I know that my redeemer liveth" on his lips, in a bark hut near the mouth of the river called afterwards by his name, he expired, cross in hand, as peacefully as a child.

### Why are Not More Converts Made to the Catholic Church?

The question does not necessarily imply that the number of converts is small. On the contrary, the aggregate, including foreign as well as domestic, is very considerable, and the character of a very large proportion of them adds greatly to the weight of their influence. In England and Germany especially, considerable inroads are being made upon the ranks of the aristocracy both of wealth and intellect. In this country the missions which are being multiplied are invariably attended by a number of converts, generally in proportion to the size and importance of the place where the mission is given. Still, to any one who contemplates the condition of the "religious world" in this country, and who notes the fact that the church is pretty well established throughout the length and breadth of this land, and that abundant facilities are afforded for any and every one who desires to become acquainted with the Church, her doctrines, her discipline and her worship, and, in general, her claims to the faith and obedience of the people; considering, too, that, as we believe, we not only have the truth but that the claims of the Church are such that no one who approaches the subject with candor and a sincere and honest desire to know the truth can fail to be convinced, and that large numbers of our Protestant friends are being loosed from their old Puritan moorings, and are casting about for a surer refuge, a more safe harbor, from the wild sea of skepticism upon which they are being launched; we say, considering all this, it certainly must strike us as very strange that comparatively so few converts are made, and the inquiry, Why is it so? may well occupy our most serious thoughts and earnest investigation.

The work of conversion implies two things. First, knowledge; and, second, an impulse of grace. The mass of the people are not only ignorant of the claims of the Catholic Church, but they are prejudiced against it. The prejudice has come to them by inheritance from the great rebellion of the sixteenth century, and they have drunk it in with their mother's milk. This, of course, predisposes them to refuse to investigate the claims of the Church, and to reject or refuse to entertain them when presented, and it is surprising what a powerful obstacle prejudice offers to the plainest and most convincing presentation of the truth. In addition to this we must not overlook the natural repugnance of the human heart to the humbling doctrines and restraining influences of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as inculcated and practically applied by the Church. Nothing so stares even the honest inquirer in the face and constitutes such a terrible bugbear—for all experience proves that it is only a bugbear—as the Confessional. It matters not that the Confessional is one of the greatest boons God ever gave to man; that it is just what we all, in our ignorance and blindness, most need, and what the soul laden with the burden of sin most naturally longs for; the idea of going on one's knees to a man though he be the priest of God, and exposing the sins and weaknesses of one's past life, though of all things in the world the process is most healing, most purifying, and most consol-

ing, cannot but be, to the majority who have never tried it, repugnant in the extreme.

After all, it is much easier to convince the judgement than to change the heart. It is when the soul wakes up to the realities of eternity and begins to ask in all earnestness, "What shall I do to be saved?" that it is ready to receive and appreciate the beauty of the Catholic system. Confession then ceases to be repugnant, and is welcomed as indeed a merciful plank after shipwreck. No doubt one reason why so many Catholics are lukewarm in the work of converting Protestants to the faith is their experience of the extreme difficulty of inducing them to follow their convictions. We presume nearly every intelligent Catholic must have had more or less experience of the hesitancy, the vacillation, the practical inconsistencies, the fast-and-loose game which a great many Protestants play in reference to the Church. There are at this moment thousands of Protestants, and unfortunately they are the more thoughtful, moral, and well-disposed class, who have lost faith in the religion in which they have been educated, and have become convinced of the superiority of the Catholic system to all other so-called systems of Christianity, and yet they have not the moral courage to follow up their convictions and declare themselves Catholics. We were not long since informed by a certain priest who was, one evening, surprised in the confessional by a visit from an evidently intelligent and cultivated lady who told him frankly that she was a Protestant but she had become dissatisfied with the religion in which she had been educated and was longing for something better and more reliable, and, somehow, she had a strong attraction for the Catholic Church, and she had taken a sudden resolution to come to him, in this manner, for advice. He, of course, assured her of his willingness to undertake her instruction, hoped that she realized fully the importance of the step she was about to take, and if she was really in earnest and prepared to enter upon the investigation with a determination to persevere and to courageously follow out her convictions he should be pleased to see her at his study, when he would be only too glad to render her all the aid in his power. Whether, like the rich young man in the Gospel, she went away sad and sorrowful, the priest never knew, for she never came to him again. This is by no means an exceptional case, for we believe there are very few priests, who have not had similar experience. No doubt there is more or less romance connected with such cases, but the very fact of their being willing to take such a step shows not only that they are dissatisfied with their religious status but that they have a more or less strong and well defined conviction that the Catholic Church is the true home of the soul and they have a mysterious longing to enter its portals. Alas for the weakness of pure human nature! these longing souls have come to the birth and are not able to bring forth. Grace woe, but they fail fully to correspond, and so, after a few feeble, ineffectual attempts they fall away, and finally either lose all interest in the subject or become actively hostile to the Catholic Church, which they hate with all the more virulence the more enlightened they have become and the nearer they have approached to her sacred portals. What is the lesson for Catholics? Labor more earnestly and take more interest in the conversion of our Protestant friends, and, above all, pray for them. Let infidels and agnostics scoff as they please, Catholics believe that God hears prayer, and that it is his will especially that we should pray for the conversion of those outside the Church that they may be induced to return to the Shepherd and Bishop of their Souls and to the loving bosom of the Holy and venerable Mother from whom they have so long wondered.—The Catholic Review.

### A Disgusted Soldier.

An Irishman serving in the United States army in Texas, and belonging to the Infantry, was in the habit of standing with his toes inward, to remedy which theseergerant continually addressed him while on parade with: "Stick out your toes, Patrick." It took Patrick years to acquire the habit of sticking his toes out. Just about the time he succeeded he was transferred to the cavalry, where his habit of sticking out his toes interfered much with his usefulness as a horseman. The serjeant was continually calling to him; "Stick in those toes Patrick," much to his disgust, and he exclaimed with emphasis, "Devil take such a sarvice." For five years it was nothing but 'stick out your toes, Patrick,' and now it is 'stick in your toes Patrick.' There is no plazin' the blackguards.—Texas Siftings

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