

HISTORICAL SKETCHES

—OF THE—

CATHOLIC CHURCH IN OREGON

DURING THE PAST FORTY YEARS. (1838—1878)

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OREGON, BEFORE HIS DEATH, WHICH OCCURRED JUNE 18TH 1883.

SKETCH I.

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THE history of the Catholic Church—even in the most remote regions where its benign influence is felt—possesses great interest not only for those who belong to "the household of the Faith" but, moreover, to everyone interested in the history of civilization and Christianity. Nations have their religious historical aspect as well as those better known and more studied chapters pertaining to secular advancement, yet, whilst historians love to record the triumphs which mark the pathway of the pioneers of the forest, they are very reticent regarding the labor, the trials and the heroism displayed by the pioneers of the Cross. Yet these heroes of heaven-born Faith—armed with no weapon save the sign of man's redemption, and bearing aloft the standard of Christianity—penetrated into the remotest recesses of the earth, guided by the inerring voice of God who calls them to take up their cross and follow Him, until His precepts become known throughout the world even "from the rising of the sun until the going down of the same."

It is our pleasant duty, then, to place before our readers a few glimpses of the toils and trials which the pioneers of the Cross endured in their early struggles to plant the seeds of Christianity in the great Northwest, and in

doing so we feel that every Catholic who peruses these sketches will treasure in his heart a grateful remembrance for those whose names will be inscribed in the niche of immortality so deservedly accorded by faithful Catholics to the apostles of the Cross.

The world has its heroes, but to the missionaries of the everlasting Gospel must be assigned a far higher glory, because they are the heralds of a King whose footstool is the universe! It is in His service that deeds of heroism are performed which make all worldly actions pale into utter insignificance. The reason is obvious: the hero of the world displays his valor for earthly glory alone, whilst the missionary of the Cross is animated by the highest and holiest aspirations that can illumine the soul—the hope of enjoying with God the eternal reward promised to those who scatter the seeds of Faith among the tribes and peoples who are without the knowledge of the true God.

This, then, was the high and ennobling mission in which the pioneers of the Cross in Oregon engaged when they undertook to cross the almost trackless plains which then separated the Atlantic from the Pacific, and, as we follow them through their long and arduous journey, let us not forget to chant a *requiem* over the graves of those who have passed to their reward, whilst we accord to those who are still engaged in God's service that homage so justly accorded to venerable age, holiness of office, and sanctity of life.