

APOSTROPHE TO THE IROQUOIS.

BY WM. H. C. HOSMER.

Tribes of the Solemn League! from ancient seats
Swept by the white like Autumn leaves away,
Faint are the records of heroic feats,
And few the traces of your former sway;
Loved woodland haunts, deep shadowy, and grey,
No longer wave defiance to the roar
And rush of whirlwinds 'mid their cool retreats;
The wild beast harbors in their depths no more,
And ploughmen turn the globe they darkly clothed
of yore.

Tribes of the Mighty! dwindled to a few,
Dejected, trampled children of despair;
And only like your ancestors in hue,
And the wild beauty of their flowing hair;
With laughter rude inquisitors lay bare
The ghastly secrets of your green old graves,
To moulder, peaceable, in dis-olking air;
Forgetful of past glory, when your braves,
Surrounding nations made poor, weak, depend-
ant slaves.

Where our young heavy Magi-wrinkled seers—
Glad in their dread appareling, who made,
Rude, rocky altars, stained and mossed with years,
And held terrific orgies in the shade?
Where is the phantom of slender blade
That urged the lurching vessel on the stream?
Long council halls with cedar bark orlaid?
Gone, like the shapes that populate a dream,
Or twinkling dew, drunk up by morn's effulgent
beam?

And where those whooping legions, fierce & free,
Who back the tide of French invasion bore,
Defeating war—trained beyond the sea,
And bathing guarded Montreal in gore?
Their day of power is ended, and no more
Ring out their pious louder than the sound
Of booming waters on an iron shore,
While captive hundreds, bleeding, faint, and
bound.

Ye were wild Romans of this Western Land,
When the far parent of our Inland Seas
Beheld your bowmen print his barren strand,
Flushed with a thousand woodland victories;
And heard the war shout on his frosty breeze,
While the red monarchs of the bleak domain
Bowed to your fierce supremacy their knees;
And when the sacred Nepereneans of Maine
Sought Hudson's bay to shut the captive
chain.

Where are your thrilling orators, who caught
Their eloquence from nature, and allied
Wild powers of fancy to the glow of thought,
And grace of gesture to ancestral pride?
Their sylvan voices on the wind have died;
And your last master of the honeyed tone,
Commanding port and gesture dignified,
No longer wails an empire overthrown,
And near his couch of dust blue Erga makes
moan. * Red Jacket.

Literary Department.

OREGON MISSIONS AND TRAVELS OVER THE
ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

By Father P. J. De Smets.

This is the title of a book recently published at New York of a very interesting character. The author is a Jesuit, but has nevertheless shown himself a man of general learning, close observation and excellent powers of description. His attention has been directed to something beyond the business of his "mission"—the mere religious, to which the members of this far famed order are supposed to be so exclusively devoted, as to pay little regard to any thing which cannot be made subservient to the objects of the Propaganda. We have no such horror of Jesuits, in the present day, as to deter us from accepting at the hands of one of that body such valuable and entertaining contributions to our yet limited stock of knowledge respecting the real character and resources of this vast Continent, as are to be found in the eloquent pages of Father Smets.

There is a certain taste very prevalent among us which should be corrected. We are mightily pleased with descriptions of travels, scenes and wonders in "foreign lands" but whenever the *locus in quo* is within a reasonable distance of "home" our interest flags, and the subject is voted a bore.—We have at bottom, however unwilling we may be to confess it, a contemptible opinion of our own country, our abilities and every thing about us. How many hundreds for instance, have spent their lives within a day's journey of Niagara Falls, and yet never beheld that stupendous curiosity of nature? Thousands have crossed the Atlantic to visit this wonder of the new world, while thousands in Canada, not from inability but from mere lack of inclination to see it, could not say but Goldsmith's statement that "Indians in their canoes had ventured down the falls in safety" was reasonable and true! As Canadians we should take a pride in our country,

make ourselves acquainted with its history, topographical as well as political, study its peculiarities and resources and if possible, comprehend its destiny. As inhabitants of the NEW WORLD which the genius of Columbus opened up for us, we should feel an intense curiosity in all that relates to it, especially its varieties of soil, climate, and natural productions. We make these explanations of our views, not so much by way of preface to the following graphic extracts from Father Smets's book upon Oregon, as to account for the preference which we are always disposed to give, and shall give, in the columns of our Journal, to what belongs first to Canada, and next to America.

The territory of Oregon would seem from the statements of this learned author to be designed as the theatre of more civilized operations than those of the Hudson Bay Company's trappers. Brother Jonathan, who was so determined to have the "whole or none" evidently knew the value of the prize, though he has thought proper to turn his attention to quarters where such prizes could be appropriated at less cost. The following is a description of the "soil and climate of Oregon":—

SOIL AND CLIMATE OF OREGON.

"The immense valleys in Oregon Territory, covered with extensive and fertile prairies, follow the course of the mountains from north to south, and are crossed in directions by rivulets bordered with trees. They easily yield to the plough, and though the first crop is not very abundant, the second is generally sufficient to repay the labor of the tillage. The soil is for the most part fertile, particularly in the south. Every kind of grain is successfully cultivated near Cowlitz, Vancouver, in the Willamette Valley, and farther south. The same may be said of the neighbourhood of Fort Walla Walla, Colville; the mission of St. Mary's; the mission of the Sacred Heart, of St. Ignatius, and St. Francis Borgia, among the Pend-d'Oreilles; of St. Francis Regis, in the valley of Colville; of the Assumption and the Holy Heart of Mary, among the Skalsi. Other districts that are not tillable, afford an excellent pasture for cattle.

As to the climate of Oregon, it is not so severe as might be supposed from its elevated latitude. The snow never falls to a greater depth than three or four inches in the lower portions of the territory, and seldom remains long on the ground. When the snows, after having accumulated on the mountains and their vicinity in consequence of extreme cold, begin to melt, and the heavy rains supervene, the plains around are covered with water, and sometimes considerable damage is caused by the inundation. The rains commence in October, and continue until March with little interruption."

The following passage will give some idea of Father De Smets's animation, and felicity of descriptive powers:—

THE FOREST'S OF OREGON.

"It is more especially in the forest that the grand, the picturesque, the sublime, the beautiful, form the most singular and fantastic combinations. From the loftiest giants of the forest to the humblest shrubs, all excite the spectator's astonishment. The parasites form a characteristic feature of the woodlands. They cling to the tree, climb it to a certain height, and then, letting their tops fall to the earth, again take root—again shoot up—push from branch to branch—from tree to tree, in every direction—until tangled, twisted, and knotted in every possible form, they festoon the whole forest with drapery in which a ground-work of the richest verdure is diversified with garlands of the most varied and many-coloured flowers. In ascending the Columbia we meet, from time to time, with bays of considerable extent, interspersed with handsome little islands, which, thrown, as it were, like groups of flowers and verdure, present a charming spectacle. Here the painter should go to study his art—here would he find the loveliest scenery, the most varied and brilliant colouring. At every step the scene becomes more ravishing; the perspective more noble and majestic. In no other part of the world is nature so great a coquette as here."

The culinary productions of the regions watered by Columbia River, and its tributaries, are thus described:—

"These lakes and morasses, formed in the spring, are filled with fish; they remain there enclosed as in natural reservoirs, for the use of the inhabitants. The fish swarm in such abundance that the Indians have no other labour than to take them from the water and prepare them for the boiler. Such an exist-

ence is, ever, precarious; the savages, who are provided nature, are obliged to go on in quest of roots, grain, berries, &c.; such as the thorny bush which bears sweet, pleasant blackberry; rose mountain cherry, cornier or vice berries, various sorts of gooseberries and currants, excellent flavour; raspberries, The hawthorn, the wappato (*sagittifolia*), a venishing, bulbous root; the butter root, an appellation sufficiently denoting its peculiarity, is, however, very healthy; it is in light, dry, sandy soil, as also the onion biscuit root. The former are of a thin cylindrical form; the latter, though farinaceous and insipid, is a substitute for bread; it makes a small white radish; the warty potato, oval and greenish, is prepared like our ordinary potato, but greatly inferior to it; small onion; the sweet onion which bears lovely flower resembling the clip. Strawberries are common and delicious. To catalogue I could add a number of detestable fruits and roots which serve as nutriment to the Indians, but at which a civilized man would revolt and nauseate. I cannot pass over in silence the canna root, and peculiar manner in which it is prepared; it is abundant, and, I may say, is the queen of this clime. It is a tall, white, vine-like, when removed from the earth, but becomes black and sweet when prepared for food. The women arm themselves with long-poked sticks, to go in search of the canna. After having procured certain quantity of these roots, by dint of long and painful war, they make an excavation in the earth 12 to 15 inches deep and of proportional meter, to contain the roots. They cover the bottom with close cemented pavement which they make by means of a stick. After having carefully withdrawn all the roots, they cover the sides with grass or weedy; then place a layer of canna, another of wet hay, a third with bark overlaid with mould, whereon is kept a glowing fire for six, sixty, and sometimes seventy hours. The canna thus acquires a consistency equal to that of the yuca. It is sometimes made into loaves of various dimensions. It is excellent, especially when boiled with meat; if kept dry, it can be preserved for a long time."

We conclude our extracts with the following description of

SCENERY AT THE SOURCE OF COLUMBIA RIVER.

"Head of the Columbia, 9th September, 1845.—The 4th of September, towards noon, I found myself at the source of the Columbia. I contemplated with admiration those rugged and gigantic mountains where the Great River escapes—majestic, but impetuous at its source, and in its vagrant course it is undoubtedly the most dangerous river on the western side of the American hemisphere. Two small lakes from four to six miles in length formed by a number of springs and streams, are the reservoirs of its first waters.

"I pitched my tent on the banks of the first lake that brings in its feeble tribute, which we behold rushing with impetuosity over the inaccessible rocks that present themselves on the left. What sublime rocks! How varied in shape and figure! The fantastic in every form, the attractive, the ludicrous, and the sublime, present themselves simultaneously to the view; and by borrowing ever so little the aid of the imagination, we behold rising before our astonished eyes, castles of hy-gie chivalry, with their many embattled towers—fortresses, surrounded by their walls and bulwarks—palaces with their domes, and, in fine, cathedrals with their lofty spires."

"On arriving at the two lakes, I saw them covered with swarms of aquatic birds—coots, ducks, water-fowl, cormorants, bustards, cranes, and swans; whilst beneath the tranquil water lay shoals of salmon in a state of exhaustion. At the entrance of the second lake, in a rather shallow and narrow place, I saw them pass in great numbers, cut and mutilated, after their long watery pilgrimage among the rapids, cataracts, valleys, and falls; they continue this uninterrupted procession during weeks and months."

"Perhaps I shall scarcely be believed when I affirm that the salmon fish are quarrelsome. I witnessed with surprise the sharp and venomous bites they mutually inflicted. These two lakes form an immense tomb, for they there die in such numbers as frequently to infect the whole surrounding atmosphere."

"In the absence of man, the grey and black bear, the wolf, the eagle, the vulture, assemble in crowds, at this season of the year. They fish their prey on the banks of the river, and at the entrance of the lakes;—claws, teeth, and bills serving them instead of hooks and darts. From thence, when the snow begins to fall, the bears, plump and fat, resume the road back to their dens in the thick forest, and hollows of rocks, there to pass the four and wintry months in complete indolence, with no other pastime or occupation, than that of sucking their four paws."

lence, with no other pastime or occupation, than that of sucking their four paws."

"If we may credit the Indians, each paw occupies the bear for one moon (a month), and the task accomplished, he turns on the other side, and begins to suck the second, and so on with the rest."

"I will here mention, *en passant*, all the hunters and Indians remark, that it is a very uncommon incident for a female bear to be killed when with young, and, notwithstanding, they are killed in all seasons of the year. Where they go—what becomes of them during the period they carry their young—is a problem yet to be solved by our mountain hunters."

"When emigration, accompanied by industry, the arts and sciences, shall have penetrated into the numberless valleys of the Rocky Mountains, the source of the Columbia will prove a very important point.—The climate is delightful; the extremes of heat and cold are seldom known. The snow disappears as fast as it falls; the laborious hand which tills these valleys, will be repaid a hundred fold. Innumerable herds could graze throughout the year in these meadows, where the sources and streams, nurture a perpetual freshness and abundance. The bullocks and deer of the mountains are generally studded with inexhaustible forests, in which the larch tree, pine of different species, cedar and cypress abound."

"In the plain between the two lakes, near beautiful springs, whose waters have reunited and formed a massive rock of soft sandy stone, which has the appearance of an immense congealed and petrified cascade. Their waters are soft and pellucid; and of the same temperature as the milk just drawn from the cow. The description given by Chandler of the famous fountain of Pambock Kalesi, on the ancient Hieropolis of Asia Minor, in the valley of Meander, and of which M. de Brun makes mention, might be literally applied to the warm springs at the source of the Columbia. The prospect unfolded to our view was so wonderful, that an attempt to give a faint idea of it, would savor of romance, without going beyond the limits of fact."

"The first lake of the Columbia is two miles and a half distant from the River des Ares-a-plats, and receives a portion of its waters during the great spring freshet. They are separated by a bottom land. The advantages Nature seems to have bestowed on the source of the Columbia, will render its geographical position very important at some future day. The magic hand of civilized man would transform it into a terrestrial paradise."

We will yet add one more quotation, every-way characteristic:—

"The Canadian! Into what part of the desert has he not penetrated? The monarch who rules at the source of the Columbia is an emigrant from St. Martin, in the district of Montreal, who had resided for 26 years in this desert. The skins of the rein and moose deer are the materials of which his portable palace is composed; and to use his own expression, he *EMBARCS* on horseback wherever he pleases. Here, no one disputes his right, and Polk and Peel, who are now contending for the possession of his dominions, are as unknown to our cariboeer, as the two greatest powers of the moon. His sceptre is a beaver trap—his law a carbine—the one on his back, the other on his arm, he reviews his numerous furry subjects—the beaver, otter, muskrat, marten, fox, bear, wolf, sheep, and white goat of the mountains, black-tailed roe-buck, as well as its red-tailed relative the stag, the rein and moose deer; some of which respect his sceptre—others submit to his law. He exacts and receives from them the tribute of *flesh and skin*. Encircled by so much grandeur, undisturbed proprietor of all sky-ward palaces, the strongholds, the very last refuge which Nature has reared to preserve liberty alive in the earth—solitary lord of these majestic mountains, that elevate their icy summits even to the clouds.—Morigeau (our Canadian) does not forget his duty as a Christian. Each day, morning and evening, he may be seen devoutly reciting his prayers, amidst his little family."

"Many years had Morigeau ardently desired to see a priest; and when he learned I was about to visit the source of the Columbia, he repaired thither in all haste to procure for his wife and children the signal grace of baptism. The feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, this favour was conferred on them, and also on the children of three Indian families, who accompany him in his migrations. This was a solemn day for the desert! The august sacrifice of Mass was offered; Morigeau devoutly approached the Holy Table; at the foot of the humble altar he received the nuptial benediction; and the mother, surrounded by her children and six little Indians, was regenerated in the holy waters of baptism. In memory of so many benefits, a large cross was erected in the plain, which, from that time, is called the *Plain of the Nativity*."