

The Church in Canada.

Under this heading will be collected and preserved all obtainable data bearing upon the history and growth of the Church in Canada. Contributions are invited from those having in their possession any material that might properly come for publication in this department

A MARTYR OF LAKE SUPERIOR.

In the list of the New York missionaries of two hundred years ago we find one whose life is of more than usual interest. It is a touching addition to our American martyrology, for it is next to certain his death was that of a true martyr. He had long been a martyr in desire, and his death in utter abandonment, about the feast of our Lady's Assumption, may well hallow the August pages of the *Pilgrim*, which has for one of its chief objects to keep fresh and green the memories of the American servants of the Queen of Martyrs.

Father Rene Menard was born in the year 1604, and held honoured positions as a priest of the Society of Jesus in France before he came out on the American mission. He arrived in Quebec in July, 1640, and for a time exercised the office of confessor of the Ursuline nuns, whose venerable convent still groups together so many holy memories of that heroic time. Afterwards he went on the distant Huron mission, and took up the field which Father Jogues had attempted among the Indians toward Lake Superior. Here the missionaries heard of the great river Mississippi, which one of Father Menard's successors—Father Marquette—was to discover and explore later. After a few years the Huron mission was destroyed and several of the missionaries met with cruel and lingering deaths for the faith of Christ.

Father Menard, their fellow missionary and apostle, devoured with a zeal like their own, was of frail make; but his heart was so strong that none had taken more work upon himself. The saintly Bishop Laval spoke of him as a living saint, and the missionaries called him the "Fruitful Father." From the Huron country he was sent on the difficult mission at Onondaga, now the thriving city of Syracuse and a Bishop's see. When this too failed for a time, he returned to the French colony in Canada. But it was only until he could be sent on the difficult western mission once again, where he should have no comfort or consolation left him but God alone. He used to say, "When most bereft of human consolation, God takes possession of the heart, and convinces it how far His holy grace surpasses all consolation to be found in creatures."

We can best understand the plain simple heroism of his death by a few extracts from the letter which announces it to the other missionaries.

According to his wishes, and even according to a prophecy he had made, he imitated in his death the abandonment of St. Francis Xavier, whose zeal he had always perfectly imitated during his life. . . . This is the little we have been able to learn about it from a letter come from Montreal, dated the 26th of July, 1663.

Yesterday our good God brought us thirty-five canoes from the Ottawa country, in which seven of the nine Frenchmen who had gone away returned. The other two—Father Rene Menard and his faithful companion named John Guerin—have gone over to the other side, finding themselves sooner than their companions in the port of the common fatherland. The Father died two years ago, and John about ten months since.

The letter goes on to narrate how the good missionary, after long and desperate efforts to reach the few Catholic Indians who had fled from their enemies farther than any of the whites had yet been, still persevered in his heroic purpose.

They represented to the Father how little chance there was that an old man, decayed and feeble and without provisions, as he was, should succeed in such a journey. All this did not affright him; he had but one answer for his good children.

"God calls me. I must go, even if it costs me my life. St. Francis Xavier, who seemed to be so necessary to the world for the conversion of souls, died in the midst of his efforts at the very door of China, and shall I, who am worth nothing, through fear of dying on the way, refuse to obey the voice of my God Who calls me to the assistance of the poor Christians and converts that have been so long deprived of their pastors?"

So he took his resolution to go to seek these wandering sheep. A few Hurons who were trading with the Ottawas offered to be his guides. He was happy to have met them, and gave them his little packages, and made choice of one of the Frenchmen who was a gunsmith to accompany him. For his whole provision he took a bag of dried sturgeon and a little smoked meat, which he had been saving up for a long time in view of this journey. The last farewell, which he bade to the Frenchmen left behind, was in these prophetic terms:

"Farewell, my dear children. I give you the last farewell for this world, for you will see me no more! I pray God's good ness to unite us in heaven!"

On the 13th of June he was on the road, nine months after his coming to Ottawa country. But his poor Hurons, lightly laden as they were, soon lost courage, as their strength gave out for lack of food. They abandoned the Father, telling him they would go on in haste to their village to give notice to the chiefs that he was on his way, and to have them send some strong young men to come and help him.

The Father looked for the promised aid, and remained beside a lake for about fifteen days. But his provisions failed him, and he resolved to set out with his companion in a little canoe which they had found in the brushwood. They started off with their packages.

At last, towards the 10th of August, the poor Father while following his companion was lost, mistaking certain woods and rocks for others. It was at the end of a very difficult portage round a waterfall. His companion looked behind to see if he was not coming. He sought for him, shouted, and fired five shots from his rifle in order to signal to him the right way, but in vain. Then he took the resolution to hurry on to the Huron village, which he thought must be near, so as to hire men at any price to go and look after the Father. But unhappily he got lost also, and went further than the village without knowing it.

Thus the Father was abandoned, though still in the hands of God's Providence, which doubtless gave him the courage to suffer with constancy this privation of all things in his extremity. Stretched out on the ground or perhaps on some rock, he remained exposed to the stings of the mosquitos—little tyrants of which the number is frightful in those parts—and he suffered this cruel torment during the time he survived. Hunger and wretchedness put an end to him, and drove out of his body that blessed soul to enter into the joy of so many labors undergone for the conversion of the savages.

As to his body, the Frenchman who accompanied him did his best to have the Indians look after it, but without success. The time and day of his death cannot be known exactly. His companion thinks it was about the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, for he says the Father had with him a piece of smoked meat, about as long and wide as the hand, which would keep him up for two or three days. Some time afterwards a savage found the sack of the Father; but he would not own to having found his body, for fear of being accused of having killed him. Perhaps this is the truth, since these barbarians have no difficulty in slaughtering a man when they find him alone in the woods, in hope of getting booty. In fact, there was seen in one of the cabins the remainder of his chapel furniture.

The zeal of this Father was rooted in the love of God with which his heart was burning. It put in his mouth these words which he often addressed to his companions:

"We do many things and enough, but we do not enough from the love of God."

This was his motto, and the lesson of his life.—*The Little Pilgrim*.

Young Lord Leveson, Lord Granville's eldest son, still sticks to the half-crown he swallowed among other delicacies at Christmas time while engaged in an amateur conjuring performance. Every one will be glad to know that the popular son of the genial leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords is not a penny, much less half-a-crown, the worse for the adventure. He indeed seems to thrive upon the current coin of the realm, and was never better in health. "He has gained eleven pounds," said Lord Granville to a youthful colleague on the front bench, who was enquiring after Lord Leveson's health. "Ah," said the witty peer, "that makes £11 2s.6d."—*London Weekly Register*.