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A TRIP TO ALASKA.

(By Rev. Father A. Lecorre, O.M.I.)

(Continued.)

I will not expatiate much upon the details of our sojourn at Fort Yukon during the winter that we passed there.

In Mr. Mercier we had a true and devoted friend, who treated us with kind attention and gave us all the comfort that he could. We had a room placed at our disposal, and we transformed a part of it into a small chapel. Herein, to our unbounded delight, we could keep the Blessed Sacrament. Only a priest curtain separated us from our Divine Lord. Here in His Real Presence, we studied, prayed and rested. We took our meals at the table of Mr. Mercier, in company with two young Canadians, engaged also in the service of the trading company.

We had very little opportunity of seeing the Indians, for only two or three came at a time, together to trade their furs, and they did not bring their families with them.

The first and most important work under the circumstances, was to study the Loucheux dialect, which was spoken by all the Indians of that district. Without a knowledge of their tongue we could not accomplish much good amongst them; we, therefore, applied ourselves many hours a day, with the help of our two Loucheux boys, to spell out the grammar and dictionary of the Loucheux dialect.

The result of our labors can now be seen in the voluminous publication called the "Polyglot Dictionary of the Dialects of North America." That valuable work has been printed in Paris, France, through the care and at the expense of a young and distinguished scholar of the Capital, a valued friend of our Northern Missions.

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From Fort Yukon to the delta of the river the country in general preserves the same aspect; on the north side, high wooded hills and on the south side, flats intersected with channels, marshes and poplar islands. Very few batters exist to hinder the easy navigation. The width of the river is a mile on an average. In passing amidst the islands, we encountered a floating islet, which probably had been cut off from a point by the breaking up of the ice, and had been carried down the stream. Some little spruce trees still stood upon it, and a quantity of dry wood was scattered upon the ground. We tied our canoe to the islet, and landing upon that moving shore, we made a fire and cooked a meal, while the island and our canoe drifted along and turned at their own fancy.

Having no flag to hoist upon the banks of that new world by which we might take possession of it in the name of our native country, we finally abandoned it to its native rats and mice, which sooner or later must have paid with their lives for that unusual expedition to the Pacific Ocean.

Some ten miles before reaching Fort Muklukeit, we passed the mouth of the Tanannah River, one of the most important tributaries of the Yukon River. There was at that point an Indian lodge, the first one we had seen since our departure from Fort Yukon. The nakedness of the two little boys who played upon the beach showed us plainly the poverty and the immorality of those Indians.

Mr. Francois Mercier, who had been informed of our coming, was waiting at Fort Yukon to welcome us. Of a commanding presence and of a fine height, like his brother, he greeted us with cordiality and with joy. He did the honors of his humble abode with grace and with courtesy. He was shortly to exchange this little place for the mansion at St. Michael, for he had lately been appointed as the chief agent of the San Francisco Fur Trade Co. over Alaska.

"All my hope and all my ambition," said he, is to have our Missionaries with me at St. Michael.

The house was very narrow, and it made me think of the house of the Philosopher Socrates, which could hold only his intimate friends. However, there was room enough for two more beds.

After a week the Riverside Indians, as they are called, began to arrive with their families. We were all most strangers to their dialect, but owing to the kindness of the interpreter at the post, we managed to make known to them the religious object of our journey and to initiate them into the first elements of our Catholic faith. Men, women and children eagerly listened to those divine truths, which for the first time enlightened their souls; and to give us a proof of their confidence and good will, they brought us their little ones to be baptized. That was, indeed, a first success of our apostolic ship; and we gave thanks to our Lord for that first blessing.

We visited the lodges, and everywhere we were welcomed with honor and encouragement for the future. But an unlooked for incident abruptly came across to check for a little while these happy beginnings. The arrival of a number of Rocky Mountain Indians had been signalled. The Riverside Indians were seized with a sudden panic, fancying that the newcomers plotted to murder them and to carry away their wives and their children. Greatly excited by these sudden fears, they set to prepare their arms, to be ready for an attack. The lodges were removed to a good distance, and the women and children were forbidden to show themselves at the post.

Mr. Mercier told us that there had been, the previous summer, a misunderstanding between the two chiefs and that the two camps had consequently broken out into doubtful feelings towards each other.

Meanwhile the canoes of the Mountaineers came into sight far up the river. When they were about 500 yards from the fort they placed their canoes into single file. If I correctly remember it, there were some twenty canoes, and each one contained from four to six men. Mr. Mercier gave orders for hoisting the American flag to the top of the fort, and firing from the hill, in answer to the reports heard from the canoes; thus welcoming the Indians into port. This was in the fashion of the Indian tribes announcing their arrival and of their expectation of a welcome.

After they had landed and put ashore their canoes, the Mountaineers cut willow branches, and leaving their guns alongside of their canoes, they advanced in good order towards the post. Holding in their hands the branches, as a sign of peace, they sang one of their national songs; abrupt, inarticulate sounds, but of a thrilling, impressive nature, well tuned and in harmony.

The Riverside Indians, gathered on the hill, as usual, to welcome the newcomers. Advancing alone, and leaving his companions in the rear, the chief of the Mountaineers shook hands in silence, first with us and then with the Riverside chief. His example was immediately followed by all his companions, and then there ensued such a silent conflict of shaking hands that it seemed endless. I could not help saying to myself that as the matter turned out, the only danger now to be feared was that of the possibility of dislocated wrists for the Mountaineers Indian in shaking hands and arms strikes out with the force of a blacksmith wielding a hammer.

Some hours thus passed away in this amiable feeling. The packs of furs were taken to the store and Mr. Mercier was so much occupied with his trade that he forgot his meal hours. His Lordship and myself busied ourselves in getting acquainted

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Book Notices.

THE DOCTRINE OF MODERNISM AND ITS REFUTATION.—By J. Goureyz, D.D., Ph.D., Utr. Jur. D. Philadelphia, 1229 Arch St., John J. McVey, 1908. Pp. 132. Cloth, 75 cents, net; by mail, 80 cts.

Ever since the publication of the Papal Letter on Modernism there has been constant questioning on all sides about the real meaning of the propositions it condemned and even now, notwithstanding the widespread interest the subject has aroused, it would appear that there are very few indeed who have any adequate understanding of the questions at issue. So true is this, that it has been a comparatively easy matter for the untiring and skillful defenders of the fundamental fallacies now grouped into a system under the name of Modernism, to belound the discussion of their errors, whilst cleverly dressing them up in a fashion to attract the unsuspecting reader. Realizing this, Dr. Goureyz has prepared a lucid statement of the case of Modernism, both for and against. It is the first American book of the kind, and as such is bound to be welcomed.

The author takes the teachings of Modernism as a unified system or theory, and lays bare its general and underlying principles, showing how their roots are imbedded in Positivism. The book is divided into six chapters, each of them treating of one of the chief features of the Modernist theory. Thus we have separate chapters devoted to each of the following headings: "Limits of Human Knowledge according to the Doctrine of Modernism"; "Origin of Religion according to Modernism"; "Relations between Science and Faith: Grace, The Sacraments"; "The Church and Dogma"; "Church and State." The method followed is to give, first, a clear and impartial statement of the Modernist position, and then a demonstration of its utter inconsistency. The arguments are drawn, not from theology, but from reason and the sciences. In this way the author goes out to meet the Modernists on their own field and with their own weapons, by a series of arguments that are as interesting as they are convincing. They are original likewise, and make their appeal to all Christians, irrespective of creed or shade of belief, since they show that the doctrine of Modernism is the offspring of rationalism and the enemy of all revealed religion.

The book is one which treats a most important subject in a popular way, and commends itself as timely as well as instructive and interesting.

DONAHOE'S MAGAZINE FOR MAY
"The Centenary of Balfe," by the Rev. Hugh F. Blunt, in the May number of Donahoe's Magazine, will be read by all music lovers. Father Blunt gives a most interesting account of the composer's early struggles and of the production of his numerous operas, including the still popular "Bohemian Girl." There is a facsimile of Balfe's list of his works, and there are many illustrations to add to the attractiveness of the paper.

Two pleasant travel sketches, "Here and There in Paris," by Robert M. Sillard, and "Touring in Ireland," by James Morgan, have a special timeliness.

"The Third Republic," is the period of French history covered by the Rev. Francis A. Cunningham, in this installment of his series of papers on "The Struggle for Religious Liberty in France."

There are some excellent short stories, including "The Open Door," by Clara Mulholland; "The Amethyst Cross," by Charlotte Callahan; "The Baptism of Blood," by M. S. Conwell; "A Song of a Southern Summer," by Jerome Harte; and a "Happy Misfortune," by Nora Tynan O'Mahoney.

Susan L. Emery contributes a poem "St. Julia," and Amadeus, O.S.F., opens the number with a tribute to "May." Other poems are "A Kempis," by J. Frederic Welty; "After the Ascension," by J. Gertrude Menard; "Twillight," by Francis J. Conell; "The Hills of Home," by Magdalen Rock; and "A Reverie," by John J. McDonough.

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Dr. J. C. Brockville, Brockville, Ont.

With the new arrivals. They were big, strapping fellows, who by their size and their countenances reminded us of our Mountaineer Indians of the Mackenzie River.

They told us that their journey from the rocky Mountain camps had taken them two months. They had had a long, difficult way across land and lakes before they had reached the shore of Tanannah River. Our missionaries of Lauri's River (Mackenzie district) were known to them; and from their description of some of the priests we could easily recognize Father Grouard, at present Bishop and Vicar Apostolic of Athabaska and Peace River. To prove to us that they had had intercourse with our Fathers, they blessed themselves with the sign of the Cross. Oh, what a delightful joy that simple sign of the cross brought to us; to see it made so far away from our missions and by strange Indians. It was like a holy bond between us; the very token of Catholic brotherhood. From that moment we became the best of friends. As we could not perfectly understand their dialect, and as they had learned their prayers in the Chippewyan tongue, we spoke with them in that language.

But the hostile rumors which had preceded their arrival were not hushed; indeed, far from it. Towards evening the Riverside Indians withdrew to their lodges in a very sly manner, and the Mountaineers, taking their guns out of their canoes, went to the bushes. An ominous silence seemed to hover in the air; and Mr. Mercier, fearing that no good would come of it, sought means for defusing the post in case of an attack at night—but the night slipped over in silence, and on the following morning the two chiefs again met in the courtyard of the station in order to put an end to any mutual misunderstanding.

The chief of the mountaineers spoke first and reproached the other chief with having seemed doubtful as to his peaceful intentions, "which," he said, "they had plainly shown upon their arrival." "Besides," added he, "should there have been in the past any misunderstanding between us, the actual presence amongst us of the 'Great Chief of Prayer' (the Bishop) is sufficient for making peace. We are all brothers, since we all have the same Father, Who is in Heaven."

The reply of the Riverside chief was likewise of good meaning. "We had never," said he, "any intention of harming you, but were only desirous to defend ourselves should there be need of it. Henceforth we shall be friends and prove to the Ministers of God, who have just arrived here, that they are welcomed to our tribe." Bishop Sicut, to whom the interpreter at once translated in English these speeches, thanked the Indians for their hopeful resolutions and laid stress upon those words of one of the chiefs, that is upon our all having the same Heavenly Father.

To close the meeting the two chiefs again shook hands and it was agreed that in the evening they should all join in a dance. Among the Indians, indeed, the dance is the most cordial token of friendship; Christian modesty has never to suffer in seeing these dances; they are, in fact, very quaint and novel.

From that time forward our intercourse with these Indians was most easy and we made use of the good feeling to instruct them and to teach them their prayers; besides I was most busy with my pencil taking words and phrases of the strange dialects for our dictionary. Meanwhile Mr. Mercier informed me that he was about to send one of his men to Fort Noloto with a message. This fort was 180 miles down the river. As his boat would not start to St. Michael before a few weeks' time, and as it would not stop on the way, I proposed to avail myself of the chance of visiting the Indian camps or villages, which could be met with along the river. By doing so, I could prepare the way for our future apostleship. My scheme greatly pleased Bishop Sicut as well as Mr. Mercier, and I embarked in my canoe. It was a "kaiak," that is an Eskimo's canoe, made of seal-skin and covered up except at the extremities and in the center where there are three circular openings into which the paddles are fitted. I occupied the stem; my companion poked himself into the space at the stern and the luggage was placed in the center and was covered, so that not a drop of water could wet the inside of the canoe.

Bishop Sicut and Mr. Mercier were to join us later at Noloto and although we should continue our journey to St. Michael, we found several Indian lodges along the river and I baptized quite a number of little children. Far from being opposed to baptism, their parents themselves brought their little ones to me. Why was this? It was because the Russians, who had long occupied the trading posts from St. Michael to Andreowsky on the Yukon River, had formerly, either by their own efforts or by those of their "Papas," instilled into the minds of the Indians the necessity of baptism for their children. The Papas, however, never went far on the river, nor did they ever baptize any Indian child nor any adult. Mr. Francois Mercier told us that the last of them who sojourned at St. Michael, once tried to baptize some Eskimos, all grown persons, who had never been taught a word of religion. The Papa was in a canoe and was crossing a bay. He invited the Eskimos to throw themselves into the water and to come close to him. They willing did as he bid them. "When I come to the sacred formula," said he, "I will make a sign to you and you will then plunge your heads into the sea." It is a question whether or not the interpreter, who was a joker, determined to play a trick upon the Russian Papa (Pope) by misinterpreting his words to the Eskimos. It is certain, however, that the whole proceeding was

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NY KNEW.

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trange. Betty thought could have made a usual that year, while been so surprisingly ny said that everyone their tongue we could not accomplish much good amongst them we, therefore, applied ourselves many hours a day, with the help of our two Loucheux boys, to spell out the grammar and dictionary of the Loucheux dialect.

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