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## THE JESUIT RELATIONS.

IN these days of cablegrams, telegrams and shorthand the idea of perusing sixty octavo volumes of three hundred pages each, devoted to the sayings and doings of a few members of a religious society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in one quarter of the globe, seems at first sight rather overpowering. Yet Mr. Reuben Gold Thwaites, the secretary of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, evidently expected us to read all these volumes when he sent his agent to solicit our subscription to "*The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the French Canadian Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791.*" We undertook the task when we subscribed, and now we can say we have read eight of the series with interest, with pleasure and we trust with profit.\*

Parkman tells us that "few passages of history are more striking than those which record the efforts of the earlier French Jesuits to convert the Indians—they are of dramatic and philosophic interest. The *Relations* appeal equally to the spirit of religion and the spirit of romantic adventure." Bancroft says, "The history of Jesuit missions is connected with the origin of every celebrated town in the annals of French America. Not a cape was turned, not a river entered, but a Jesuit led the way." (A little inexact is the latter statement.) Kip writes, "There is no page of our country's history more touching and romantic than that which records the labours and sufferings of the Jesuit

\*This paper was written November, 1897.