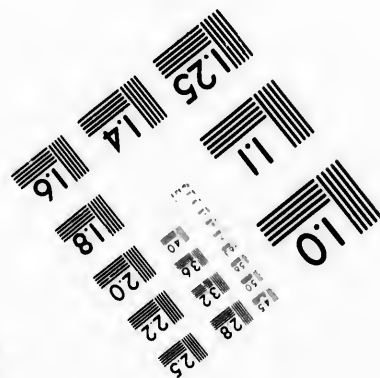
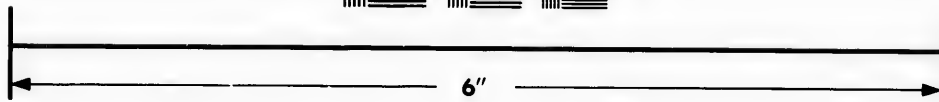
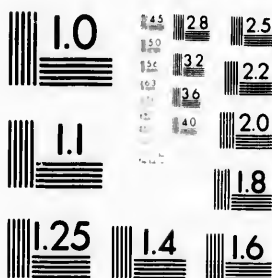


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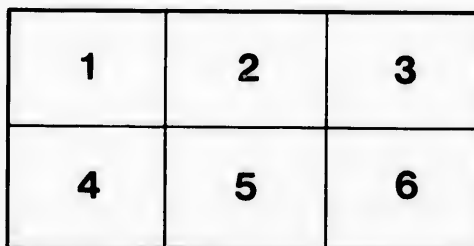
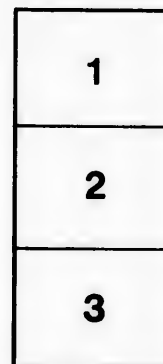
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[From the Wisconsin Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters]

## FIRST FRENCH FOOT-PRINTS BEYOND THE LAKES; OR, WHAT BROUGHT THE FRENCH SO EARLY INTO THE NORTHWEST?

By JAMES D. BUTLER, LL. D.

Copper mines in the north, and burial-barrows everywhere, bespeak prehistoric races in Wisconsin. But in *modern* Wisconsin there was little agricultural settlement before 1836, which we may accordingly reckon its American birth year.

Between these two developments, however, there was a third, a sort of midway station between the mound-builder or the Indian and the Anglo-Saxon — namely, the *French* period. This portion of our annals seems worthy of more attention than it has yet received.

The French were early on Lake Huron, and even in Wisconsin. They were there before the cavaliers in Virginia, the Dutch at Albany, and the Puritans of Boston had pushed inland much more than a day's journey. The Mississippi was mapped before the Ohio. Champlain sailed on Lake Huron in 1615, only seven years after the settlement of Quebec. A monk had arrived there a month or two before Champlain.

On early maps the contrast between French knowledge and English ignorance is at once plain to the eye. On the map drawn by Champlain, in 1632, we see the Lakes which we call Ontario, Huron, Superior and Michigan, while no one of them, nor indeed any river St. Lawrence, is discoverable on Peter Heylin's atlas, the one best known in London twenty years afterward. On the blank, where those inland seas should have figured, we read the words *America Mexicana*, as if Mexico had extended to Hudson's Bay.

But while the English on the Atlantic coast were ignorant of western geography, and before the French in Canada numbered ten thousand, Joliet and Marquette, in 1673, traversed Wisconsin from lake to river. They were long supposed to be among the earliest explorers of Wisconsin. In 1853, however, the Catholic

historian, J. G. Shea, pointed out in a volume of Jesuit *Relations* the following words, written from Quebec to France, in 1640, by Father Le Jeune: "M. Nicollet, who has penetrated into the most distant regions, has assured me that if he had pushed on three days longer down a great river which issues from the second lake of the Hurons (evidently meaning Lake Michigan), he would have found the sea."

The word *Mississippi*, meaning "great water," was ambiguous, and, though really denoting a river, might well be mistaken for a sea, especially by an adventurer who knew the sea to be in that direction, and who believed it by no means remote.

On the strength of this Jesuit testimony, Parkman remarks: "As early as 1639, Nicollet ascended the Green Bay of Lake Michigan and crossed to the waters of the Mississippi." This was within nine years after the founding of Boston, which claims to be of all northern cities the most ancient.

But in the lowest deep a lower deep still opens. According to the latest researches of Benjamin Sulte, Nicollet was in Wisconsin four or five years earlier than 1639. He started west from Canada in 1634, and returned the year following. The best Canadian investigators assure us that he never traveled west again, but, marrying and becoming interpreter at Three Rivers, below Montreal, he remained there or thereabouts thenceforward till his death. All agree that Nicollet visited Wisconsin. If it is proved that he was not here in 1639 or afterward, he must have been here before. There is some reason for holding that Nicollet had penetrated into Wisconsin at a date still earlier than 1634.

Chicago is not known to have been visited by any European before 1673. In the autumn of that year Marquette, returning from his voyage down the Mississippi, was conducted from the Illinois river by Indians to that spot as affording the shortest portage to Lake Michigan. The next year that missionary, on a coasting tour along the lake, after a voyage of forty-one days from Green Bay, reached Chicago,—which was then uninhabited. As sickness disabled him from going further, his Indian oarsman built him a hut, and two French traders who already had a post a few leagues inland, ministered to him till the next spring, when

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he so far recovered as to proceed to St. Joseph. Another Jesuit was also met at Chicago by four score warriors of the Illinois tribe in 1676.

Three years afterward, in 1679, La Salle found no inhabitants there. On his map made the next year he described it as a portage of only a thousand paces, yet thought it in no way suited for communication between the lake and Illinois river, as the latter at low water was for forty leagues not navigable. Within two years after that, however, in 1681, he preferred this route for his own passage. On the sixteenth of December starting from Chicago with canoes on sleds, he arrived at the mouth of the Mississippi in one hundred and seven days,—that is on the sixth of the following April.

The Chicago portage was traversed by Tonty, La Salle's most trusted and trust-worthy lieutenant, June, 1683, and by Durantye in 1685. La Salle's brother detained there in 1688 by a storm, made maple sugar, and in one hundred and ten days after leaving its harbor, had made his way to Montreal.

After eleven years more, St. Cosme found a house of the Jesuits there established, at which, as at a sort of post office, Father Gravier obtained in 1700, letters from Paris. From that point La Salle had written a letter to La Barre, Governor of Canada, in 1683, and in the map by Franquelin, royal hydrographer at Quebec, dated 1684, eighty houses,—meaning wigwams, are set down on the site of Chicago. It was then viewed as a northern out post of La Salle's central castle—the Rock of St. Louis,—that marvellous natural fortress which the French explorer found ready to his hand,—“his wish exactly to his heart's desire,” now called *Starved Rock*, near the confluence of the Big Vermilion with the Illinois river, a few miles west of Ottawa.

All the way down from this era of La Salle the French as rovers, traders, settlers, soldiers and missionaries in our Northwest, are traceable generation after generation. The chain is as unbroken as that of apostolical succession has ever been fancied.

How shall we account for the phenomenon I have now sketched, that the French penetrated so far inland so early and so persistently? My answer to this question is implied in the words Fun, Faith, Fur, False Fancies, Finesse and Feudalism.

Nicollet, it is admitted, was west of Lake Michigan before La Salle was born. What brought him thus early into the heart of the continent?

My answer is that he came for sport; yes, just for the fun of the thing — or the romance and exhilaration of adventure.

Where is the community in which it is not proverbial to this day that worlds of fun lie in camping? What amount of civilization can kill off love for a feast of tabernacles, or relish for camp-meetings? What boy reads Robinson Crusoe without a passion to run away? Hunting, fishing, boating, discovering new lakes and streams, new varieties of woodland and opening, attacking or eluding antagonists — whether men or beasts — fire, frost, flood, famine; "foemen worthy of their steel," for what man that is young, strong and brave, must not these excitements have charms? When will the English give up their Alpine club? In France no man was more of a sportsman than the King, Louis XIV, and in his era especially, French country gentlemen spent most of their time hunting and fishing. Accordingly for the French those pursuits had dignified associations. The first French party that ever wintered on the shore of Lake Erie thus wrote home, more than two centuries ago: "We were in a terrestrial paradise. Fish and beaver abounded. We saw more than a hundred roebucks in a single band, and half as many fawns. Bear's meat was more savory than any pork in France. We dried or buccaned the meat of the nine largest. The grapes were as large and sweet as any at home. We even made wine. No lack of prunes, chestnuts and *lotus* fruit all the autumn. None of us were homesick for Montreal." Far west was the happy hunting ground of Indian fable. There too the French found it in fact.

The late Judge Baird of Green Bay used to describe as the happiest three weeks of his life, the time when, taking his family and friends, with a crew of Indian oarsmen, he voyaged in a bark canoe from our great lake to our great river, along the track of Joliet and Marquette. Every day the ladies gathered flowers as fair as Proserpine plucked in the field of Enna, while the men were never without success as fishers and hunters. They camped, usually early in the afternoon, wherever inclination was attracted by natural beauty or romantic appearance. After feasting on



venison, fish and wild-fowl, they slept beside plashing waters till roused by morning birds. At every turn in the rivers, new scenery opened upon them. Overhanging groves, oak openings, prairies, rapids, Baraboo bluffs, outcrops of rock, ravines, mouths of branches, each was a pleasant surprise. That merry month of May, 1830, recalled to the voyager, in the long lapse from youth to age, no other like itself. How many would give half their lives for such a wild-wood memory!

In the light of such an experience, it is easy to see how Nicollet was drawn on and on into the unknown west. No wonder that, only ten years after Quebec was occupied, we find him, in 1618, wintering half-way from that new-born post to Lake Huron, in the Isle of Allumette. He had no longing for the security of dwellers beneath the guns of Quebec. Amid his perils he despised them, as Caudle-lectured husbands despise those couples who vegetate together for years without a cross word, but in such a stupid style that they never know they are born.

Nicollet was a representative of a *large element* among French Canadians. In 1609, at one of Champlain's first interviews with Indians from the remote interior, a young man of his company had boldly volunteered to join them on their homeward journey, and to winter among them. He remembered Pierre Gambie, a page of Laudonniere in Florida, who being allowed to go freely among the Indians, had become prime favorite with the chief of the island of Edelano, married his daughter, and in his absence reigned in his stead. Champlain's retainer was among the first of a class — up to everything, down to everything — who "followed the Indians in their roamings, grew familiar with their language, allied themselves with their women, became oracles in the camp and leaders on the war-path."

Their fun was as fast and furious as Tam O'Shanter's:

"Kings may be great, but they were glorious,  
O'er all the ills of life victorious."

For them civilization was no longer either cold or hot — but so lukewarm that they spewed it out of their mouths. Something of their feeling burned in their best historian, Francis Parkman,

who exchanged Boston for the Black Hills before one miner had pushed into their fastnesses. His strongest youthful passion was to share in unaltered Indian life, and his loudest cry was: "Savagery, with all thy lacks I love thee still!"

Preference for Indian life has grown up even in *Yankee* captives, and, what is most surprising, in *females*.

A well-known instance was the daughter of Williams — the Massachusetts minister — who refused to be redeemed from captivity in a Canadian tribe. Some will suggest that having been brought up in a parsonage of 'grim and vinegar aspect, she thought nothing could be more repulsive than a Puritan strait-jacket. But many similar instances occurred during Bouquet's expedition west of the Ohio, which was undertaken in order to rescue whites from Indian bondage. Several women, and those not of ministerial families at all, when compelled to return to white settlements, soon made their escape to the woods, preferring wigwams to their native homes. No thrice-driven bed of down was so soft to them as a couch which, as their phrase was, had never been made up since the creation. Many captive *men*, when given up to Bouquet, and bound fast to prevent their escape, sat sullen and scowling that they were forced back into society.

In civilized society there was no sweet savor of romance for

"A wild and wanton herd,  
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts."

No wonder, then, adventurers into the great west, who would rather be scalped at Mackinaw than live in Montreal, became a permanent class. No wonder when La Salle, first of white men, had burst into the heart of Illinois, six of his soldiers deserted, and that as many more of his little band had ran away in the far north. One of these last absconders was encountered by Hennepin in the wilds of Minnesota. Another in that region was a runaway from Hennepin himself. Nothing less than throwing themselves overboard from all social restraints could give scope for that superabundant vitality which philosophers hold is pre-eminently a French characteristic.

The roving class was all the larger, because settled colonists were *vassals*, both in soul and body. In Canada, individuals existed for the government, not the government for individuals.

Cooped up in the dull exile of petty forts, their prayer was that of the country mouse when entrapped in a city mansion —

"O give me but a hollow tree,  
A crust of bread and liberty."

La Hontan — a young officer fresh from France — thus wrote home from Montreal: "A part of the winter I was hunting with the Algonquins, the rest of it I spent here very disagreeably. One can neither go on a pleasure party, nor play cards, nor visit the ladies, without the curé preaching about it; and masqueraders he excommunicates."

Other writers add that no dances were allowed in which both sexes took part.

Allowing dances to one sex only was about as satisfactory to gay and festive youth as a father confessor's permitting a fair penitent to rouge only one side of her face; or letting out an American lady to walk the Parisian boulevards only on condition that she never goes alone, never wears colors, and never looks into a shop window. Anti-dancing laws — it is needless to add, — were doubly vexatious to a Frenchman, since his feet when he's sleeping seem dreaming a dance.

Fathers who neglected to marry sons till they were twenty, or daughters till they were sixteen, were fined. Bachelors were barred out from the Indian trade, and even branded with marks of infamy.

In Quebec chronicles for 1671 we read that Paul Dupuy, having said that when the English cut off the head of Charles I. they did a good thing, the council declared him guilty of words tending to sedition, and condemned him to be led in his shirt, with a rope about his neck and a torch in his hand, from prison to the castle, there to ask pardon of the king; to be branded on the cheek, set in stocks, laid in irons, etc.

At the same period Louis Gaboury, charged with eating meat in Lent, was sentenced to be tied three hours to a stake, and then

on his knees to ask pardon at the door of the chapel. Swearers, for the sixth offense, had the upper lip cut with a hot iron, and if they still uttered oaths, had the tongue cut out altogether. Two men were shot at Quebec for selling brandy to Indians.

Not a few French immigrants had been *tramps* in the old world, and transportation to the new world gave them no new nature. The Bohemian element was in them as an instinct, and was as sure to come out by natural selection as ducklings hatched by a hen are to take to water. The Saint Lawrence flowed in one direction; the sinful loafers steered in quite another.

Other Canadians had been *convicts* and so would naturally regard all walls as stifling imprisonment. They were not a pious race, but one prayer they never forgot, namely: "From red-tape and ritualism, good Lord, deliver us!"

An order of Indian Knights sprung up—young men who thought nothing so fine as to go tricked out like Indians, and nothing so attractive as Indian life: doing nothing, caring for nothing, following every inclination, and getting out of the way of all correction. This club may have been a natural reaction from a society of matrons and maidens established to promote gossip pure and simple. Meetings were held every Thursday at which each member was bound by a gospel oath to confess—not his own sins, but other people's—that is, all she knew, alike good and bad, regarding her acquaintance.

There is a *physical* reason why those who have learned to live in the open air cannot live in houses. Sleeping under roofs they exchange oxygen for miasma.

The Circassian mountain chief, Shamyl, when a Russian prisoner, was luxuriously housed, but at the end of a week told his keepers he must commit suicide unless they would allow him to lodge *above* the roof instead of under it. So, too, our Texan hero, Sam Houston, when, after open air campaigns, he entered the hall of congress, compared himself to a mouse under an air pump.

"Yes, there is sweetness in the prairie air,  
And life that bloated ease can never hope to share."

During several years of frontier life, I have constantly fallen in with frontier men, who hover in the wilderness beyond the utmost verge of settlement. Villages, or at least ranchmen, follow them but only, as Paddy prays the blessing of the Lord may follow his enemies all the days of their lives—that is, so as never to overtake them at all. Change of base and new departures are as familiar to them as to any politician. The only grain they ever sow is *wild oats*.

The French found more fun in woodcraft than the *English* could. The one could thrive where the other would starve. It is an old saying that a French cook will make more out of the shadow of a chicken than an English one can of its substance. When a French army, near Salamanca, was cut off from supplies for a week by Wellington, he thought it a miracle that they did not surrender. The truth was that they had subsisted all the while on acorns. For more than a week Nicollet's only food was bark, seasoned with bits of the moss which the Canadians named *rock-tripe*. But he was not starved out. The Roman empire spread widely east and west, but never very far north. The fact is strange. To account for it, some say that Roman noses were too long, and so were nipped off by Jack Frost. The French are a snub-nosed race and so could better brave blizzards.

There is a strange *elation* when we discover with how many so-called necessities we can dispense, and while having nothing, yet possess all things which we absolutely need. Detecting new capabilities, whether of daring doing or enduring, we seem to become new beings and of a higher order. We discover new Americas within ourselves.

According to the Greek sage, he is nearest the Gods who has fewest wants. In proportion, then, as we become self-sufficing, we approximate to the Gods. Not without exultation did the adventurer learn to make all things of bark—not only baskets, dishes, boats and beds, but houses and food. Every *tree*, when he perceived its bark to be rougher and thicker on the north side,—became for him a compass-plant. In his whole manner of life “the forester gained,” says Parkman, “a self-sustaining energy, as well as powers of action and perception before unthought of,—

a subtlety of sense more akin to the instinct of brutes than to human reason. He could approach like a fox, attack like a lion, vanish like a bird."

The Homeric and earliest ideal of an adventurer, single-handed, into unknown regions, was Ulysses. It is true he goes grumbling all through the *Odyssey*,—but for all that he is happier to the very core than he could be with Circe or Calypso in any castle of Indolence. He thrives under evil, and at every new stage of his wanderings has new greatness thrust upon him. More than this: According to Dante, who met him in the *Inferno*, he soon tired of the Ithacan home he had sought so earnestly, and quitted it for enterprises more distant and perilous than ever.

Many of the early French pushed westward in pilgrimages longer and more varied than that of the most wide-wandering Greek. Their motto was:

"No pent-up citadel contracts our powers,  
But the whole boundless continent is ours."

They pushed into the heart of the continent faster and farther, thanks to matchless highways,—I mean rivers and lakes,—styled by their wisest contemporary, Pascal, "roads which march and carry us whithersoever we wish to go." Thanks also to bark canoes, they flew as on the wings of eagles into the recesses of the west. When wishing to traverse Indian routes they had sense enough to avail themselves of Indian *boats*, doing in Rome as Romans do. For nine dollars worth of goods the voyageurs bought a bark twenty feet by two that would last six years. It would carry four men and more than their weight in baggage, yet was not too heavy for *one* man to carry across the portage between river and river, or round rapids which no boat could climb. Hennepin's bark weighed only fifty pounds. At night or in rains it was a better shelter than a tent. Thus the boatman was as independent as a soldier would be who could carry on his shoulders not only his horse and baggage, but also his barracks. Previous to the year 1673, no boat of *wood* had ever ascended above Montreal. The bark canoe of Judge Baird, of which I have spoken, was on a larger scale—about thirty feet long and five broad. It carried thirteen people and all their needments with ease.

Year after year La Salle risked life and lost fortune laboring to build a forty ton vessel for descending the Mississippi. After heart-breaking failures he trusted himself to a native canoe, and thanks to this new departure, easily gained the goal of his ambition. Had he found the great river hedged up by Niagaras — as was reported by natives — his progress would not have been stopped. He could have carried his boat till his boat could carry him.

A man who riding for the first time in a cab and asked where he was going answered, "To Glory!" spoke out the exultation which thrilled every French adventurer with his face set toward the western unknown, his hands skilled in paddling a bark canoe and himself encumbered with no more baggage than the shipwrecked rascal who said he had lost everything except his character.

Throughout the orient the name of *doctor* is a sesame open. When Moslems overhear a traveler addressed as doctor they unbar for him even their harems, no matter how often he tells them that it is only in law or divinity or farriery, that he is a doctor.

Among savages everywhere every civilized man passes in spite of himself for a physician. Relying on this reputation the early French ventured into the infinite west. Nor was their quackery less successful than that of an English monarch touching for the king's evil when

"Strangely visited people  
All swollen and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,  
The mere despair of surgery, he cures."

When Hennepin was a captive among the Sioux, whose blood had before been drawn only by the sucking mouths of medicine men, he bled their asthmatics, he treated other patients with a confection of hyacinth (a sort of squills) and desperate cases with *orvietum*, a theriac compounded of three score and four drugs. The more ingredients the more certain, as men thought, the cure, as the more bullets in a volley the more surely some of them will hit. A decade earlier, Periot having dosed a surfeited glutton with the same theriac, had succeeded as well as the druggist, who, when *vox populi* was prescribed, gave *nux vomica*. The next

night Perrot was waked by chiefs who came for more theriac. His supply was so small that he only allowed them to hold their noses over the vial. The odor, however, proved a panacea. They beat their breasts and declared that it had made them immortal. For this sanitary smell they insisted on paying Perrot ten beaver-skins. They believed, what no doctor has been able to beat into Christian patients, that no medicine could do any good if it was not paid for.

These patients were Miamis. The Sauks, on the other hand, thought no medicine efficacious unless it was bestowed without money and without price. One of their tribe who had been badly scalded, declared himself cured the moment he was presented with a gratuitous plug of tobacco.

Relish for the romantic was a considerable element even in *missionary* zeal. Thus Hennepin admits that a passion for travel and a burning desire to visit strange lands had no small part in his own inclination for missions.

Again, many early bush-rangers belonged to that class who would rather reign in hell than serve in heaven. La Salle fell in with one tribe in mourning for the death of a chief, and he said: "Dry your tears! I will raise him from the dead. Whatever he was to wife, children or tribe, that I will be, feeding them and fighting for them. He is dead no longer." Thereupon he was hailed as chief.

Still others dashed among distant cannibals, in hopes, like Brigham Young among Mormons, to become Gods on earth. It paid for all privations to hear cringing Calibans cry out: "We pray thee be our God! We'll fish for thee; we'll kiss thy foot."

Saint Castine, who had nothing saintly but the name, roaming with Indians not far from the seaport in Maine which keeps his name in memory, gained such a supremacy that his aboriginal associates deemed him the prince of the power of the air.

In 1683, Perrot having built a fort near the outlet of Lake Pepin, paid a visit to the Sioux up the great river. He was placed by them on their car of state, which was a buffalo robe. He was thus lifted on high by a score of warriors, not like Sancho Panza tossed in a blanket, but borne as reverentially as the Pope



on his *sedes gestatoria*, or portable throne, into the house of council. There, holding a bowl of brandy which the Indians thought to be water, he set it on fire. He thus made them believe that he could at will burn up their lakes and rivers. A score of years before,—certainly as early as 1665,—he had become a potentate among Pottawatomies near Green Bay. Perrot was worshipped with clouds of incense from a hundred calumets, because he brought iron,—especially in the shape of guns and tomahawks. The further west he went the more unheard of his iron and powder, and the more they proved him a God.

One mode of reverence was to break off branches of trees and sweep the path his feet were about to tread. But the divine honors paid to Perrot were not always delightful. The Iowas, whom he pronounces the greatest weepers in the world, wept most effusively at his coming. Their welcome, he tells us, was bathing his face with their tears—"the effusions of their eyes, and alas! of their mouths and noses too!"

Other French adventurers threw up *rockets*, and thus record the sensation: "When the Indians saw the fireworks in the air and the stars fall from heaven, the women and children began to fly, and the most courageous of the men to cry for mercy and implore us very earnestly to stop the play of that wonderful medicine. Had there been any accidental explosion of chemicals so that one of the braves was blown up, he would have deemed it all a part of the show, and as soon as he caught breath would have exclaimed: 'What next? What in the world will these magicians do next?'"

The simplest French conveniences were sublime in aboriginal eyes. The Mascoutins, when Perrot appeared among them, knew no mode of producing fire except by rubbing two sticks together. Such friction was ineffectual whenever the sticks were at all wet, and they were often too damp to kindle—an Irishman would say—till one had made a fire and dried them. Naturally, Perrot's tinder-box was venerated as an angel from heaven. No wonder that a hundred dozen of these Promethean fire-bringers are set down in the outfit of La Salle. One of an antique pattern, lately discovered in an Illinois cave, was shown me in

Ottawa. Possibly it is one of the twelve hundred imported by La Salle. Had lucifers been known to the French, starting camp-fires in a twinkling, they must have converted every Indian into a fire-worshipper and conquered the continent.

The Indians wished that their children should grow up bald, aside from scalp locks. Their style of hair-cutting had been to burn childish scalps with red hot stones. Hennepin's razor, though none of the keenest, was clearly a better depilatory, and so was hailed as a miracle of mercy.

Nicollet met in council four thousand Wisconsin warriors, who feasted on six score of beaver. He appeared before them in a many-colored robe of state, adorned with flowers and birds. Approaching with a pistol in each hand, he fired both at once. The natives hence named him "thunder-bearer." Such a spectacular display was in keeping with the policy which marked the old French regime in two worlds, and which for centuries proved equally sovereign in both. The apotheosis of Nicollet would have been complete if he could have carried a Colt revolver — the thunderbolt of Jove in the thimble of Minerva, omnipotent as ever, yet so small that Cupid would steal it, as no longer too heavy for him to lift or too hot for him to handle.

Of all Europeans the French only gained the *affections* of natives. From the beginning they fraternized with them as the British never could.

They never sold Indian captives for slaves on southern plantations as the English did. Through hatred of New Englanders fifty families of Indians there flying west became retainers of La Salle, and some of them were his most trusty oarsmen and braves in discovering the Mississippi. Four score years, said La Salle, have we had Indian allies. Never has one of them proved false to France. We can safely trust them with arms. From first to last the Illinois tribes were faithful to the French. When the French, after their loss of Illinois, went west of the Mississippi in 1763, the Indians followed them. Each tribe loved the French with an affection so ardent as to be jealous, and strove to keep them all to itself, resenting their dealing with any other tribe as a sort of adulterous infidelity. For a score of years Nicholas

Perrot won golden opinions among the Ou'agamies. After his departure they declared in council with the governor of Canada, that their fathers having gone they had no more any breath, or soul.

The French captivated the Indians and the Indians captivated them. For them, then, there was a fullness of fun — yes paradise where John Bull would have felt himself in such a purgatory that he could not fare worse by going farther.

One Englishman who had been forced to make trial of savage life, when asked how he liked it, answered: "The more I see Indians, the better I love dogs." But amid the same horrors a Frenchman enjoyed himself so well that he declares he was ready to burn his cook books! What could Frenchman do more?

In no long time most northwestern tribes were tinctured with French blood. Perrot treats of French among fugitive Sauteurs on the south shore of Lake Superior as early as 1661. The first permanent settler in Wisconsin, Charles Langlade, was a French half-breed. So was was the first squatter at Madison — (long before the Peck family), St. Cyr, the only saint we could ever boast. In 1816, when the United States forces took possession of Wisconsin, the natives being assembled for treaties, said: "Pray do not disturb our French *brothers*."

Adventurers among western aborigines in time became fur-traders or interpreters and factors for such traders, as well as missionaries or other officials both military and civil. But their *first* impulse to plunge into the depth of the wilderness, and to abide there, was because they liked it. To their imaginations forest-life was as charming as the grand tour of Europe a generation ago to ours, or as is girdling the terraqueous globe at the present day, or as roughing it on the Yellowstone to General Sherman, or on the great divide to Lord Dufferin, or rounding the world on horseback to Sir George Simpson, or Beltrami's solitary scamper to the sources of the Mississippi, or the three years cruise of the Challenger to Lord Campbell, whose Log Letters skimming off the cream of all climes and finding no drop sour, cry out in every line, "O what Fun!" It was much more than all this, and can only be compared to the wild dedication of him-

self to unpathed waters, undreamed shores and sands and miseries enough by Stanley, in quest of Livingston, or the sources of the Nile and Congo.

Seekers of pleasure in the pathless woods followed Nicollet into *Wisconsin*, as well as elsewhere in the Mississippi Valley. Their race endured, and it still endures. Some survivals of it were met with in the first decade of our century far up the Missouri, by Lewis and Clark, and by Pike at the sources of the Mississippi. Within the last ten years, the British Major Butler, with whom I traveled down the Red River of the North in 1872, encountered them on his pilgrimages throughout the great lone land and the wild north land to the shores of the Pacific.

Enamoured of wild sports, the French more than two centuries ago rushed from Lower Canada into the borders of the Upper Lakes. They came the sooner thanks to unrivaled facilities for boating, hunting and fishing,—to an appetite for open air which grows by what it feeds on,—to their feeling at home in wigwams, to their passion to break loose from law martial and monkish, and to enjoy unbounded license, as well as to the pre eminence which knowledge gave them among barbarians. To the love of fun, then, and the full feast of it fresh as the woods and waters that inspired it,—with which he could fill himself in western wilds, we in *Wisconsin* owe the explorations of Nicollet and others of like temper, and so our most ancient historic land marks. One of the first French foundations here was laid in fun: Fun then was *fundamental*.

But if fun led the way to exploring the far West, *faith* also was there, and not least in *Wisconsin*, a French foundation.

Faith followed hard after fun, and sometimes outstripped it. The friar, Le Caron, was on Lake Huron before Nicollet had penetrated half way there. Nicollet lingered in the Isle of Allumette, several hundred miles short of Lake Huron, till 1620. But, five years earlier, mass had been already said on that lake by the Franciscan with sandaled feet and girt with his knotted cord. The monk's passage had been paid by the governor, but he worked his own passage and that bare-footed, since shoes would injure the bark canoe. He thus wrote to his superior: "It would be hard

to tell you how tired I was with paddling all day among the Indians, wading the rapids a hundred times and more, through mud and over sharp stones that cut my feet, carrying the canoe and luggage through the woods to avoid cataracts, and half starved the while, for we had nothing to eat but porridge, of water and pounded maize, of which they gave me a very small allowance." Through the winter of 1615 in a hermitage a thousand miles west of Quebec which was itself an ultima Thule,— this friar was making catechisms or struggling with the difficulties of the Huron tongue, or expounding the faith in broken Indian, and by way of object lesson showing "four great likenesses of the Madonna suspended on a cord."

As early as 1614, when the French first ascended the Ottawa, they planted crosses of white cedar on its shores and islands. In 1625 the Jesuit Brebeuf began a three years' sojourn on Huron waters. Onward from 1634 a permanent mission was maintained there for fifteen years until the Hurons were scattered to the four winds. Missionaries followed them in their dispersion. In summer plying the paddle all day or toiling through pathless thickets, bending under a canoe or portable chapel heavy as a peddler's pack, veritable colporters, while famine, snow storms, cold, treacherous ice of the lake, smoke and filth were the luxuries of their winter wanderings. We underrate the arduousness of mission journeys until we consider how greatly storms, cold and famine retarded them. Allouet's voyage from Mackinaw to Green Bay consumed thirty-one days. Marquette was ten days more on his passage from Green Bay to Chicago.

Yet, in 1642, Madame de la Peltrie,— a tender and delicate woman,— reared in Parisian refinements, was seized at Quebec with a longing to visit the Hurons, and to preach in person at that most arduous station. In 1641, the year before one house was built in Montreal, Fathers Jogues and Raymbault were distributing rosaries at the mouth of Lake Superior. Previous to 1640 they had become acquainted with Wisconsin Winnebagoes. The earliest Iroquois baptism was in 1669, but thirty years before, scores of Hurons had been baptized hundreds of leagues further west.

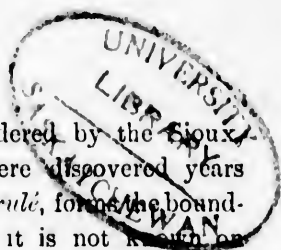
The first clear trace of a priest in *Wisconsin* was in 1660. In that year Father Menard, paddling along the south shore of Lake Superior for many a weary week, near its western extremity, reached La Pointe — one of the most northern peninsulas in the region which is now Wisconsin.

"He evangelized the natives who flocked together there." Such are the words of the old chronicler. The meaning is, not that the Jesuit dispensed the whole gospel to the Indians, nor yet all that he could give, but only so much of it, such a homœopathic dose — as they would receive.

Early travelers into the Orient when they there met certain albinos thought them the posterity of blacks converted by St. Thomas and whitened by baptism. It seemed doubtful, however, whether such a skin-bleaching was a real improvement. In like manner, may it be questioned whether the western missionaries who had chosen St. Thomas for their patron were any more successful than he.

However we may speculate on this matter, we must feel that Menard's motives were the best. Sometimes he had no altar but his paddles supported by crotched sticks and covered with his sail. Moreover, he dared not celebrate mass in the presence of those he had there baptized, because it was beyond his power to convince them that that sacrament was not a juggling trick to secure for the priest slaves in the life beyond life. Father Allouez was less scrupulous. He boasts as of some great thing that he had taught one Wisconsin tribe to make the sign of the cross and to daub its figure on their shields. When one of these converts had married three sisters at once and was censured for it by La Salle, his defense was: "I was made a Christian against my will by Father Allouez." In 1672 this father was welcomed by Mascoutins whose head-center seems to have been not far from Portage City.

With Father Menard, in 1660, were three lay-helpers, whom he next year dispatched southward into Wisconsin to certain Hurons who had sought an asylum at the mouth of Green Bay. Having labored nine years for those Hurons in their old home, he soon followed his fugitive converts, but perished in the wilderness of the



Black river. It is believed that he was murdered by the Sioux for among them his breviary and robe were discovered years afterward. That stream, now called *Bois Brulé*, forms the boundary between Wisconsin and Michigan, and it is not known on which *side* of it Menard lost his life. Both states may, therefore, with equal plausibility, glory in him as their *own* protomartyr. Wading through the sodden snow, under the bare and dripping forests, drenched with rains, braving every variety of unknown horror, faint, yet pursuing to the last, well may we, people of both states, count him worthy of double honor! Doubtless his last regret was that he had not a whole life to lay down for the salvation of each state.

Four years after, in 1665, Father Allouez succeeded Menard at La Pointe, and carried on his work. Very likely, as in the early days of Montreal, his only altar lamp was a vial full of fire flies. When he returned to Quebec for reënforcements, he remained there only two nights before starting back again with volunteer co-workers. La Pointe was then a four months' voyage from Quebec. He was saying mass at Green Bay to six hundred Indians and eight French traders in 1669, and the next year exhibited a picture of the last judgment, at Neenah, on Lake Winnebago. A silver monstrance, the case in which the sacramental wafer is held up for veneration, presented to the chapel of Allouez by the French governor, Nicolas Perrot, and bearing the date of 1686, was dug up, in 1802, at De Pere near the head of Green Bay, and is now treasured in the ambry of the cathedral there. In 1671, a chart (34×38 centimeters) was drawn, entitled *Lake Tracy* or *Superior*, with the dependencies of the Mission of the Holy Spirit [that is *La Pointe*]. It is still extant in Parisian archives, at the depot of marine charts. Two years later in the Jesuit relation of 1673, a map of their missions on the Lake of the Illinois [that is Michigan] was published.

In the same year the first white men, one of them a missionary, of whose journey a contemporary record remains, crossed Wisconsin from east to west. These adventurers were Joliet and Marquette—a noble brace of brothers. Equals in enthusiasm, the faith of Marquette, the Jesuit, rivaled the rage for discovery

in Joliet, the officer. These explorers were cultivated men, and experienced observers. For five years Marquette had been a western pioneer, partly in Wisconsin, and Joliet, while voyaging on Lake Superior some time before, had also probably trod Wisconsin soil. From Indian reports they had drawn a map of the region they purposed to penetrate, and kept it at hand as they rowed up Fox river, threaded the marshy maze at the grand divide and carrying place — now Portage City — and among herds of elk and deer, floated down the Wisconsin to the great river. Reaching this grand goal on the seventeenth of June, they glided with the current of the Mississippi for a month, and probably to the latitude of Memphis, which, according to their belief, was no more than two degrees north of the Mexican Gulf.

On the return voyage Joliet wintered at Green Bay, where he had found many good Christians the spring before. The next season, when he was about to land at Montreal, his boat capsized and he was only rescued himself after being four hours in the water. His journal was lost — a sad loss for Wisconsin, which was thus bereaved of the wayside notes of the earliest traveler throughout its whole breadth — a record which who would willingly let drown?

After all who knows but Joliet's loss may have turned out for our *gain*? and will still? Who shall count the investigators that, mourning for *Joliet's* misfortune, have thus, or shall, become doubly zealous to gather up and commit to the custody of our Historical Society — or of the art preservative of all arts — every fragment of our annals, letting nothing — no fraction — be lost?

Throughout the last third of the seventeenth century and in all generations since, priests of the Catholic faith may be traced in or near Wisconsin. There Allouez labored for a quarter of a century onward from 1665. In 1677 Frontenac speaks of the Green Bay mission as no new thing. All tribes near that Bay are mentioned in the missionary report for 1658. In 1680 and for seven years thereafter, Enjalran was stationed there. He had been preceded there by Fathers Andre and Albanel, and within a decade was followed by Nouvel, and three others whose names



are preserved. As early as 1671 their headquarters were Mackinaw, but they were constantly making excursions and establishing out-stations in the parts beyond. In 1721 Father Chardon had already labored among the Sacs about Green Bay till he had given them up as beyond hope, and was studying Winnebago in order to preach to the tribe of that name. Other missionaries are mentioned at later periods, and the town of De Pere, meaning *Fathers*, is said to derive its name from the fact that two Jesuits suffered martyrdom there in 1765. In the interior of Wisconsin there were also stations among the Kickapoos and Menomones.

Downward from the expedition of Joliet and Marquette, Wisconsin was the favorite thoroughfare of missionaries as well as others bound for the southwest. Such way-farers shunned the east shore of Lake Michigan as infested by the Iroquois. If they could buy permission of the Foxes they glided down the Wisconsin river as the shortest and easiest route. Those who failed to win Indian favor paddled along the Wisconsin shore of Lake Michigan.

It is a natural question, " *What brought* the Catholic fathers to the farthest west at so early a day, while Protestant missionaries, though abroad in New England before one European dwelt in Montreal, had not penetrated half-way to the Hudson river?"

It might have been predicted from the out-set by a philosophical historian, that French missionaries would out-do all others among our aborigines. They had already showed themselves pre-eminent elsewhere. The French originated the crusades, and from first to last they were the chief crusaders. It was natural for them, changing tactics with the times, to be as zealous against the infidels of the occident as they had approved themselves against those of the orient, and as persistent with litany and mass as they had been with lance and mace. The presence and persistence of Jesuits on our upper lakes and beyond them, more than two centuries ago, is accounted for by one single word — yes, by one syllable, namely *Faith* — their peculiar faith.

The views I now present of Jesuit missions are of course those of a non-Catholic. They must be or they could not be my own, and no one would wish me either to dissimulate my own opinions

or to simulate those of others. My information, however, all comes from Catholic witnesses. No others existed then and there.

My account of the French missionaries must be the more one-sided because my present purpose will not let me expatiate upon their tact, patience and heroic endurance amid all vexations, culminating in martyrdom. In temptations which we cannot bear to read of, their virtues found a fit emblem in that light from heaven which they came to bring,—sunbeams which, descending to the lowest depths of earth, and however reflected and refracted in abodes of pollution, remain unsullied and continue sunbeams still.

The Jesuits are the Pope's standing army (Loyola's own name for them was a battalion), and the title of their head is general. At the beck of superiors subordinates plunged into the vast unknown of our continent with the unquestioning alacrity of regular troops.

Not theirs to question why,  
Not theirs to make reply;  
Theirs but to do, or die.

They knew no west or east, no north or south.

But in addition to his vow of obedience, each missionary was impelled by a faith which inspired him with tenfold more zeal and intrepidity. That faith was this: that he bestowed a clear title to heaven on all whom he baptized, unless they lived to commit mortal sins afterward. Hence when one had sprinkled a couple of dying children he writes in his diary: "Two little Indians changed to-day into two angels, by one drop of water. O, my rapture as I saw them expire two hours after baptism." No matter though the sprinkling was effected by pious *fraud*, when Jesuits unable otherwise to approach sick infants, pretended to administer a medicine of sweetened water, but spilled some drops of it on their heated brows, while whispering sacramental words with motionless lips. The little ones were sent to paradise by these waters none the less surely because secretly. Seeing that death quickly followed baptism, Indians soon inferred that it was occasioned by those priestly drops. They were hence prone to scalp a Father if they detected him administering the sacred rite.

We hear with a shock of *burning* prisoners *alive*. But the fathers had little to say against the custom. On the other hand, such an execution seemed to them a means of conversion akin to a Spanish *auto da fe*, and equally efficacious. One of the missionaries wrote home as follows:

"An Iroquois was to be burned some way off. What consolation is it to set forth in the hottest summer to deliver this victim from hell. The father approaches, and instructs him even in the midst of his torments. Forthwith the faith finds a place in his heart. He adores as the author of his life Him whose name he had never heard till the hour of his own death. He receives baptism, and in his place of torture cries: "I am about to die but I go to dwell in heaven." How history repeats itself! In 1877 the last words of Henry Norfolk on the scaffold in Annapolis were: "I am here to hang for the murder of my wife, but I thank God I am going to glory!"

Again, the record is: On the day of the visitation of the Holy Virgin, the chief Aontarisati was taken prisoner by our Indians, instructed by our fathers, baptized, burnt, and ascended to heaven, all on the same day. I doubt not that he thanked the Virgin for his misfortune and the blessing that followed. Happy thought!

Another missionary writes: "We have very rarely indeed seen the burning of an Iroquois without feeling sure that he was on the path to Paradise, and we never knew one of them to be on that path without seeing him burnt." Happy thought.

The conclusion of the whole matter then is: "The only way to save Indians is to burn them," or as they now say in Texas: "Scalp them first, and then preach to them."

Powerful motives then hurried the Jesuits wherever an infant was death-struck, or a captive in torture.

Various *secular* influences speeded the missionaries on their western way.

First, the spirit of religion was reinforced by that passion for romantic adventure which we have just been surveying. Then, according to Father Biard, the French *king*, the most dissolute of men, initiated the Jesuit project. Preachers who were over-zealous he liked to ship off, and so transfer their soul-stinging ser-

mons to the other side of the Atlantic. He thus parried thrusts which might have hit his conscience more effectually, and yet more covertly, than the German duke can whose cathedral pew is hedged about with sliding windows, so that, when he pleases, he can shut out unpalatable doctrines. Again, the French monarch was as liberal in land-grants to Canadian priests as our congress has been to railroads.

Many of his courtiers too, whose idea of Lent was a month when they hired their servants to fast for them, paid roundly for sending so much gospel to the heathen as to leave very little of it for themselves. Others too who would not give a sou of their own money importuned their neighbors till they forced them to contribute, as the fox while sparing his own fur tore skin off the bear's back to make a plaster for the sick lion. Such beggary they thought was a means of grace.

While in lower Canada the Jesuits were to some extent subject to the secular arm, and occasionally were forced to beg the governor's pardon. The powers that were said to them: "Show us the way to heaven, but we will show you yours on the earth." When a Jesuit in a Quebec pulpit declared the King had exceeded his powers by licensing the trade in brandy in spite of the bishop's interdict, the governor, Frontenac, threatened to put him in a place where he would learn to hold his peace.

The same magistrate sent another priest — brother of the author of *Telemachus* — to France for trial owing to some disrespect, and wrote to the king: "The ecclesiastics want to join to their spiritual authority an absolute power over things temporal. They aim to establish an inquisition worse than that of Spain."

Amid this conflict of authorities the government was glad to transport the missionaries, and they were equally glad to be transported deep into the wilderness; for there all power in heaven and on earth, temporal and spiritual alike, and each doubling the other, was theirs, theirs alone, without rival. Every whisper against them was admitted to be "injurious to the glory of God." They held it better to reign monarchs of all they surveyed among Menomonies than to hold divided empire in Montreal.

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ferred no more from governmental jealousies. On the other hand trade-policy and military power leaned on missions as their main support. Missions were to explore the Mississippi, missions were to win over savage hordes at once to the faith and to France. At a momentous crisis, in 1685, the Jesuit, Engelran, at Mackinaw adroitly kept the lake tribes from defection. The Marquis Du Quesne used to say that Father Picquet was worth ten regiments. One tribe was taught by the Fathers that Christ was a Frenchman murdered by the English, and that the way to gain his favor was to revenge his death. No wonder a chief called out, "O, that I and my braves had caught those English crucifiers. We would have taken off all their scalps."

In those times, when the question arose which we are still vainly essaying to answer, "How was America peopled? how came the Aborigines here?" it was a common saying of theologians that the devil had led the Indians hither that they might be out of the way of the gospel. Accordingly, whoever penetrated into the utmost corner of the West was sure that he beyond all others was storming the donjon keep of Satan.

This Jesuit storming party, full of hope and misnamed forlorn, roved at will without passports, while others, if they lacked such credentials, were put to death.

Their first acquaintance with mosquitoes is thus recorded: "The woods were full of a species of flies similar to the gnats which in France are called cousins (that is, I suppose, 'poor relations'). They are so importunate that one always has a multitude around him watching for a chance to light on his face or on some part of his body where the covering is so thin that their stings can easily pierce it. As soon as they light they draw out blood and substitute for it venom, which excites a strange uneasiness and a tumor of two or three hours' duration." When they first saw a fire-fly they must have thought like Paddy that a mosquito had taken a lantern in order to find his victims in the dark.

In sending their underlings into the heart of New France, Jesuit superiors were assured they could there repeat those miracles of conversion and reconstruction which their order had lately wrought in South America.

In Paraguay they had built up a model state. The natives became tolerant of their culture and compliant to their bidding in every particular. They rose and sought their beds, were married and given in marriage, weaned their children, removed from place to place, raised stock or grain, fixed prices, and used their gains at the dictation of spiritual guides. They were docile, but undeveloped, or developed only in some single prescribed direction. They were literally sheep, submissive when fleeced and even flayed and slaughtered at the pleasure of their shepherds. But their development was arrested. At their best they never became men, but remained children of larger growth, or rather became weaker in mind as they grew stronger in muscle. The purpose was to build up a second Paraguay in North America. An experiment, tried in Lower Canada, had failed. Its want of success was attributed to the roving habits of the tribes and the impossibility of persuading them to renounce nomadic life. It was tried again, with more sanguine hopes, on Lake Huron, for the tribes there were fixed through the year in one abode. When the Hurons had been overpowered by foes and driven into Wisconsin, the experiment was repeated there.

The westward exodus of Hurons into Wisconsin began as early as 1650. Onward from that time the French became known there, and that most favorably, as a race superhuman in arms, in arts and in benevolence. Such must have been the report concerning them which fell from the lips of fugitive converts. It roused the braves on the farthest shores of the farthest lakes to set sail in quest of the admirable strangers.

Missionaries were the more encouraged to venture far west; thanks to *invitations* from the aborigines. As early as 1611, the first fleet of Hurons that descended the St. Lawrence to meet Champlain said to him, "Come to our country, teach us the true faith." In 1633 it is chronicled that Hurons vied with each other for the honor of carrying missionaries home with them in their boats of bark. The volume of Jesuit *Relations* for 1640, states that fathers, invited by Algonquins on Lake Superior, were on the point of pushing forward even to that most western sea.

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pany near Chicago, cried out: "We love those gray robes. They go barefoot as we do; they care nothing for beaver; they have no arms to kill us; they fondle our infants; they have given up everything to abide with us. So we learn from our people who have been to carry fur to French villages."

Station<sup>s</sup> far inland and dissevered from their base on the sea-board, were also preferred as being undisturbed by the influx and influence of non-missionary and anti-missionary whites,—godless sailors who swarmed on the rock of Quebec,—and above all from the heretical psalmody of Huguenots which could not there be silenced.

Aside from the moral advantages of a mission in the heart of the land, the fathers and their employes, whether paid or volunteering without pay, were most numerous and useful when remote from other whites, because they were able to push trade in fur, free from competitors. The lay brothers together with brandy sold scapularies or belts of the Virgin which were of such sovereign virtue that nobody who wore one at his death could possibly sink to perdition. The missionaries, according to Governor Frontenac, wished to keep out of sight the trade which they always carried on in the woods. They also claimed that their profits never exceeded five hundred per cent. Parkman wrote his *Jesuits* more than a decade ago. He was then doubtful whether those missionaries engaged in fur trading. But the letters of Frontenac, often written in cipher for secrecy (lately discovered by P. Margry and published by our congress), leave us no doubt on this point. In 1674 he wrote Colbert that when he urged the Black Robes to labor near white settlements, they answered that their coming into America was to indoctrinate savages—or rather to draw in beaver. He accuses them of dealing in peltries. In 1682 La Salle wrote that the Green Bay Jesuits held the real key of the eastor country, while their blacksmith brother and his two helpers converted more iron into fur than all the fathers could turn pagans into proselytes.

A further narrative by La Salle regarding Jesuit tactics, reads as follows: "A savage named Kiskirinaro, that is to say, Wild Ox, of the Mascoutin tribe, a considerable war chief among his people,

says that in a little river to which he wished to lead me, he had picked up a quantity of white metal, a portion of which he brought to Father Allouez, a Jesuit, and that brother Giles, a goldsmith who resides at Green Bay ("the bay of the Puans"), having wrought it, made the sun-shaped article [soleil] in which they put the holy bread. He meant the ostensory which this same brother has there made. He says that Father Allouez gave him a good deal of merchandise by way of recompense, and told him to keep the matter secret because [the metal] was a manitou — this is to say a great spirit who was not yet developed."

Nor were the most distant fathers altogether at the mercy of savages. A seminary for Huron boys at Quebec was projected in the outset, and was begun in 1636, two years before the building of Harvard College. One reason for founding this educational institution was that the Indian children in this Do-the-Boys Hall, would be hostages for the safety of missionaries, however distant in the interior.

It is a merciful ordination of Providence that the tragic suggests the *comic*, and all miseries have a ludicrous side.

The crew of Captain Nares in quest of the North Pole would have died of hypo in a darkness which outlasted a hundred times the space that measures day and night to us, had they not dipped deep in comic theatricals. Nor in the worse than Arctic gloom around them would the Jesuits have fared better, had not their eyes now and then rested on a silver lining of their sable cloud. Burdens, otherwise too heavy, they threw off by sportive notes in their diaries. Thus they must have felt a grim pleasure in writing down skunks as *infants of the devil*. Father Allouez relates that while publishing the gospel in the midst of Wisconsin he found himself in a sort of monkey France. Certain of the sequestered natives having carried beaver to Montreal had there beheld military pomp. Wishing to pay the missionary fitting honors, they stuck feathers in their hair, and organized the naked braves into a militia company who gravely mimicked every evolution of the governor's guard. The Jesuit discoursed to them of heaven and hell, but the unseasonable parody of French parade did not cease for an instant. The Black Robe could not



keep his countenance, but his guard of honor did keep theirs. Every savage executed every punctilio of his part with more than Spanish gravity.

When an Indian had been so scalded as to lose the skin of his face, a Jesuit writes: "It would have been very well if he had lost his old heart with his old hide."

Another Huron, finding no missionary assurance that there was tobacco in heaven, declared he would never go there. The reflection chronicled by the Father is: "Unhappy infidel! all his time spent in smoke and his eternity in fire."

Robes and ritual inspired a divine awe. This was sometimes betrayed in odd ways. No Black Robe's risibles could remain unmoved when he overheard converts who feared to address a missionary, but asked the most solemn questions of his dog.

Again, certain Christian Indians having caught a warrior of a heathen tribe, named Wolf, the Jesuits let them burn him, having first instructed and baptized him. Then with a pun on his name they recorded it as a marvel indeed, that a Wolf was at one stroke changed into a lamb; and through the baptism of fire entered at once into that fold which he came to ravage.

Priestly humor was sometimes *unconscious*. Thus Hennepin remarks that no sooner had he declared a fraction of the heroic virtues of "the most high, puissant, most invincible" (Almighty? no! but) King of France, to savages" than they at once "received the gospel and revered the cross."

Again when he had set forth certain mysteries the Indians told him some of their fables. But these, he told them, were false. Their answer was, we believed your lies; had you been as polite as we were, you would have believed ours." Again, the question whether the quid of a tobacco chewer, taken in the morning before mass, broke his fast, was discussed pro and con by casuists. To them it seemed a question altogether serious, however ludicrous on all sides it appears to us.

Again, when they noticed that a certain *beardless* priest was a special favorite with natives, they sent to France for pictures of Christ painted without a beard.

After some analogous scrutiny of Indian tastes they wrote in

their next order for paintings, "one view of celestial rapture is enough, but you cannot send too many scenes of infernal torments."

Again, "if three four or five devils were painted torturing a soul with different punishments, one applying fire, another serpents, another tearing him with pincers, another holding him fast with a chain, this would have a good effect, especially if everything were made distinct, and misery, rage and desperation appeared plainly in the victim's face."

Within fifteen years after Jesuits began work in earnest among Hurons, that tribe was either annihilated or expelled by the Iroquois. But for that catastrophe the faith of the Jesuit might have been to this day more dominant in Upper Canada than it is in Lower.

Some tincture of it has survived everything in all Indian dispersions. One of the first English adventurers to Maine was greeted by the natives with a pantomime of bows and flourishes which in his judgment could have been learned of nobody but a Frenchman. The aborigines in general were inoculated with French faith and French fashions so that they took about as much of one as of the other,—and not much of either. Disciples who ran wild in the woods retained some prayers and chants learned by rote. The divine vision which roused Pontiac and his compatriots to war, was a woman arrayed in white. Had they not been taught concerning the Virgin Mary, it could hardly have taken this form. In 1877, a white man who had been caught by a Rocky Mountain tribe chained to his wagon-wheel and half burnt, when he made the sign of the cross was snatched out of the fire. The hunting camps of tribes in Manitoba are to-day called Missions.

Missionaries, then, burning to propagate their faith, more than two centuries ago penetrated into our Northwest, some of them into Wisconsin. They there discovered tribes having fixed abodes, over whom their knowledge and tact gave them power, so that they molded them as clay in the hand of a potter, where their influence was unchecked by white intruders, and where they could so trade as to make their enterprise self-supporting.

The *third* stepping-stone of the French into the northwest, and thus into Wisconsin, was *fur*.

The fur trade would have drawn them thither, even if fun and faith had not paved their way. Indeed, that trade began to attract them to American shores before either fun or faith had worked at all in that direction.

After all, *fish* was the *first* magnet which drew Frenchmen across the Atlantic. According to a manuscript in the library at Versailles, when Cabot (before Columbus had landed on continental America) discovered Newfoundland, he heard the word *baccalaos* there in use for "cod-fish." But "*baccalaos*" is the Breton-French word for that fish. It is possible then that Bretons, next to the Norse, were the true discoverers of America — pre-Columbian and pre-Cabotian.

However this may be, fish, indispensable for fasts and not unwelcome at feasts, were sought by Bretons off Newfoundland, a century before Quebec was founded. In 1578, there were one hundred and fifty French vessels there.

But peltries, already scarce in Europe, filled the land in that quarter no less than fish the sea, and were hunted as early. Before the close of the sixteenth century, forty convicts, left on a Nova Scotia island, had accumulated a quantity of valuable furs.

But, what is far more surprising, Menendez relates that fifty-five years before the landing from the *May Flower* — in 1565 — buffalo skins had been brought by Indians down the Potomac, and thence along shore in canoes to the French about the St. Lawrence at the rate of three thousand a year.

But not content with coast traffic, and with a view to escape the rivalry and hostility of Dutch and English, as well as in quest of *fresh* fur fields, traders pushed inland. Before the year 1600 they had a post at Tadoussac, at the mouth of the Saguenay, and in 1603 established themselves at Quebec.

To this emporium Indian flotillas, year by year larger and larger, and from districts more and more remote, resorted. They came laden with furs, and drawn thither by what they counted miracles of beauty and ingenuity, which, bartered on the coast by the first comers, had glided up the St. Lawrence and all its tributaries, and even to the great lakes, where beaver were most and best.

They were further attracted by the presents and invitations of Champlain, who, in 1615, within seven years after the first tree was felled at Quebec, had held councils on Lake Huron, and bidden the natives to bring down their furs. Western Indians were still more stimulated to traffic by adventurers, who, as we have seen, had in 1609 begun to be domesticated among the aborigines and to share their hunts. Wrapped in furs, striding on snow shoes with bodies half bent, through the gray forests and frozen pine swamps, among black trunks and dark ravines, these young Frenchmen, though they meant not so, were commercial travelers, and they fulfilled their mission as shrewdly as those who now sally from Chicago. Those Chicago emissaries are dextrous dealers, yet very possibly might learn some *new* tricks of trade could they recover the lost arts of their forerunners whose palace cars were bark canoes, and their commercial hotels wigwams. Drummers from the lake metropolis now encounter men of their own stamp from St. Louis. So did the early French agents conflict even in Illinois and Michigan with those who had been dispatched from the Hudson. In order to get beyond New York competitors, the French hurried still further *west* than they otherwise would have ventured.

Again, these roving and fraternizing Frenchmen did not long go among the aborigines empty-handed, or even selling by samples. They took with them into the heart of the land those goods — light and cheap — for which the Indian demand was the greatest.

At sight of an iron hatchet, says Perrot, Wisconsin tribes raised their eyes blessing heaven for sending them a race able to furnish so powerful a deliverer from all their woes. Every bar of iron was in their eyes a divinity. But *brandy* was from first to last the one thing needful in a trader's outfit. It was indeed contraband according to the dignitaries of both church and state. Yet then as now it had free course on some underground railroad. It was more easily *carried* because, before exposed for sale, it was *watered* as profusely as the stock of our railroads. Each gallon of proof liquor swelled to six. The lowest *price* for brandy was a chopine for a beaver skin. How much a French chopine

amounted to you cannot easily learn from books. French and English measures were incommensurable. But what I long sought in vain, I have learned from the casual remark of an ancient fur-trader, that a chopine was so small a quantity as would not make an Indian drunk more than *once*. An Indian is quite unlike an *Irishman*. But in one thing they agree. Neither is consciously guilty of a bull when he says: "Give me the superfluities of life and I will give up the necessities. Traders too scrupulous to sell liquor to an Indian, would still exact a beaver of him for a single four pound loaf of bread.

French commercial men bore a *charmed* life. The fiercest savages spared both them and their goods, lest no more of that desirable class should come among their tribes. They had too much *wit* to kill the geese who were their only hope of golden eggs. La Salle's testimony is: (M. 2,284) "The savages take better care of us French than of their own children. From us only can they get guns and goods." Hennepin relates that he would have been scalped by his Indian captors had they not judged that his death would hinder others of his countrymen from bringing them iron.

French traders soon brought with them more merchandise than they could transport overland. They were thus led to establish trading *posts* on navigable streams and at carrying-places. We naturally think such commercial stations would be set up first along the *St. Lawrence* and *Lake Ontario*, those natural highways to and from the west. They were *not*. Those waters were watched by the *Iroquois*; fiercest in fight of all Indians, foes of France, allies of Holland and England. Accordingly the thoroughfare of western Indians to Quebec and of French traders to the upper lakes, was by the *Ottawa*, a river which, lying farther north, was comparatively safe from Iroquois ambuscades, which were with reason more dreaded than cold, famine, storm and cataract.

Hence it came to pass that the French while they still knew nothing of Lake Erie and Niagara, were familiar with Lake Superior. Two of their traders had penetrated into that inland sea in 1658.

Even after the French were at peace with the Indians on the

south of the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario, they were no match on those waters for Dutch and English rivals in fur trading. The latter could afford to pay four times as much for furs as the French could. Nine pence was the export duty on a beaver at New York; in Quebec it was six times as much. In New York fur-trade was free. At Quebec seven hundred crowns were charged for permission to send a single boat up the Ottawa. Good reason then had the French to seek furs so far northwest that they could escape European competitors.

The result was that they had reached Lake Huron in 1615, and soon hurried on to Michigan, while they had no port on the nearer lake, Ontario, till two generations afterward in 1673, when they threw up Fort Frontenac at its outlet, where Kingston now stands. Its builder, Frontenac, intended it merely as a base of operations for fur trade so far west that he would be independent of the governor of Montreal. Seven years afterward in 1679, La Salle, having launched the first sloop ever built on Lake Erie, voyaged in her through St. Clair, Huron and Michigan to the mouth of Green Bay.

His vessel was there freighted with rich furs, but as she was lost on her first passage eastward, La Salle's experiment did not recommend the lower lakes. On the contrary it tended to make the upper, or Ottawa route, more popular than ever.

The doors into Wisconsin were two,—La Pointe and Green Bay, and these two were about equal favorites. The first missionary arrived at La Pointe in 1660. Fur traders came *with* him. Nine years after, in 1669, when Father Allouez reached Green Bay to found a mission, fur traders were on the ground, and had become so domineering in that end of the world, that the missionary was brought by the Indians from Lake Superior as a protector.

Nicholas Perrot, who in 1633 built a fort near the mouth of the Chippewa river, though on the west bank of the Mississippi, had entered Green Bay eighteen or twenty years earlier. He wrote a volume,—not for publication—but for the information of the Canadian government. In this work which was first printed less than twenty years ago, in 1864, he describes a score of journeys in

all parts of Wisconsin, all of them having something to do with fur. How fully even in his lifetime the region between Lake Michigan and the great river had become known to the French, is plain from the early geographical *names* being largely French.

Le Sueur, who passed up the Mississippi in the year 1700, mentions between the Wisconsin and the St. Croix, six rivers with French names, all apparently of long standing. These rivers were Aux Canots, Cachee, Aux Ailes, Des Raisins, Pasquilenette and Bon Secours. In other parts of Wisconsin not a few French names run back as far as these on its western border.

In 1654 Father Le Mercier at the outlet of Lake Superior wrote that about Green Bay, nine days' journey distant, there were Algonquins, and that if thirty French were sent there they would not only gain many souls to God but would receive pecuniary profit, because the finest peltries came from those quarters. The next year fifty canoes of these Indians visited Quebec, and thirty Frenchmen returned with them. Among Ottawas between Green Bay and Lake Superior French traders are mentioned in 1659. In 1665 Perrot was buying beaver of Outagamies in or near the Wisconsin county in the name of which they still live, and in the following year the second flotilla of Pottawatomies had reached Montreal.

French fur-factors penetrated the further into western fastnesses, because by this means they practically enjoyed *free trade*. Making bark canoes far inland they evaded the crushing imposts on all canoes allowed to pass up. While mother-states were all at war, they plied friendly commerce with Dutch and English middle-men as well as their Indian confederates. Thus their beaver were either exported through New York, dodging the French tax, or they were bartered there for blankets cheaper and better than were to be had in Canada.

As a rule the French governor and intendant were at swords' points with each other. Each would charge the other with a heinous offense—carrying furs to the English province. The truth is that each of them was determined to be the *only* sinner in that line. Each thus resembled the usurer who was delighted with a sermon against usury, paid for *printing* it and said to the

preacher, "Make *more* such discourses! Stop everybody from taking high interest — except me. Then I can monopolize the whole business." As his recompense for risks and outlays in western discovery, La Salle asked nothing but the exclusive right to sell the skins of buffaloes.

Royal monopolies of fur-trading, lavished in Paris on court favorites or on corporations as the Hundred Associates, *crippled* that traffic near the *coast*. But they drove the bulk of that business into the *heart* of the continent, where it fell into the hands of traders so distant, shrewd and self-sufficing that it could not be crippled. Over a region vaster than any European kingdom, the bush-rangers carried on the fur-trade after their own pleasure, and laughed at royal restrictions on their dealings.

In 1681 Hennepin, at Mackinaw, met with forty-two Canadians who had come thither to trade in furs, defiant of the orders of their viceroy. These foresters were not without a sort of *conscience*, for they all begged the Jesuit to give them the cord of St. Francis, which was believed to make their salvation sure if they died wearing it as a girdle, and they all gained their request. Hennepin was then journeying eastward from Green Bay, where he had been entertained by the same class of contraband traffickers. There similar adventurers — La Salle informs us — had a permanent post in 1677, and that bay had even been visited by a brace of voyagers more than twenty years before, in 1654. Before La Salle began his explorations in 1679, his employes were familiar with far western tribes. One of them, Accault, had spent two winters and a summer in Wisconsin. Before 1680, *Duluth*, with a score of followers, was trading as far inland as the city which now bears his name. He proclaimed that he feared no authority and would force the government to grant him amnesty. (M. 2, 251.) The sloop which La Salle in 1679 had dispatched to Niagara before he started from Green Bay for Illinois, according to his conviction was scuttled by her crew, who plundered her and struck into the northwestern wilderness, meaning to join hands with Duluth. (M. 2, 327.) Years afterward La Salle heard of a French captive on the upper Mississippi whom he identified as his pilot, and learned that hand-grenades, which could only have come



from the missing vessel, had been taken by savages from that captive.

In order to buy cheaper of Indian trappers, wandering fur hunters would report *pestilence* as prevailing in Montreal, and thus frighten savages from paddling down the river. Such far-factors were outlawed on the upper lakes, and they could not dam up their outlets, but they intercepted many a flotilla anxiously expected from above in Montreal. Thus masters of the situation, they resembled those cunning Athenians who Aristophanes tells us were suspended in a sort of balloon, stopping incense as it rose from Jove's altars, and letting no savor of it reach Olympian nostrils, but keeping all for themselves.

On a long march every thing not totally indispensable is dropped. Hence the fur western dealer carried no scales or steel yards. But he was himself a better weighing machine, for himself at least, than any witty invention of Fairbanks with all Howe's improvements superadded. So the saying was about Du'luth: "Duluth, an honest man, bought all by weight, and made the ignorant savages believe that his right foot exactly weighed a pound. By this for many years he bought their furs, and died in quiet like an honest dealer."

In selling to Indians, however, the pound was no doubt quite a different weight. In the journal of a missionary at the outlet of Lake Superior I find that in 1670 a beaver was there valued at either four ounces of powder, or one fathom of tobacco, or the same length of blue serge or six knives.

Wood-ranging fur men seemed an evanescent race. Nevertheless they outlasted French empire in America. In latter times when English and Yankee fur-companies were organized in Montreal and New York they were unable to dispense with the French operatives, "to the manner born." Generation after generation they retained them as practical men fittest for all works relating to fur. In all governmental departments the higher functionaries, when first elected (and too often to the very end of their career), need to be taught official routine. Hence officials of lower grade who have learned to run the machine, are retained without regard to political revolutions. These factotums are sig-

nificantly called "dry-nurses." Such dry-nurses for English and American fur kings were discovered in French underlings.

Fun and faith both gave a new impulse to the fur trade. With it they formed a three fold cord which drew the French from end to end of the Mississippi, as well as to the farthest fountains of the St. Lawrence, and even further. La Salle deserves deathless fame, and will have it, because he was first to follow the Mississippi down to the gulf. But his grand object was to secure an outlet for fur that was not half the year frozen up, and the other half infested by English rivals, Iroquois ambushes, and worse than all, Canadian farmers of the royal revenue. Duluth, whose name we have seen revived and bestowed on a mushroom metropolis, "the zenith city of the unsalted sea," two centuries ago had penetrated beyond the farthest corner of our innermost and uppermost lake. His mission was to intrigue and foil the English on Hudson Bay. Ere long a French fort rose on the Saskatchewan, two thousand miles, as men traveled, from the seaboard. This station came up under the auspices of the French Company of the Northwest, incorporated in 1676, in antagonism to the Hudson Bay Company, which came into existence six years earlier. It long bore sovereign sway over a wide savage domain.

The natives preferred the manufactures of the English, but the manners of the French. Like all savages, they were swayed by impulse more than by interest. They would give more for one plug of tobacco brought to their wigwams than they could buy twenty for in Albany or Hudson Bay. Hence they traded with the French, and became their tools. One result was that in 1684, and again three years after, Nicolas Perrot, the supreme fur trader and Indian negotiator of his time, persuaded five hundred Indians from Wisconsin and near it to paddle their canoes all the way to Niagara in order to fight for the French.

In 1724, Bourgmont was already exploring the Upper Missouri. But on this line of Western research Verendrye outstripped all others. Pushing on step by step for ten years, he discovered the Rocky Mountains in 1743 on New Year's day, sixty-one years before our Lewis and Clarke. The point of his discovery was just above where the Yellowstone joins the Missouri. That re-

gion was so full of fur that the governor's share in the profits of a trading company soon amounted to 300,000 francs.

Those who, from mere love of fun, explored unknown woods and waters, learned strange tongues and ceased to be strangers among strange tribes, and unawares acquired all the requisites for successful commerce in beaver. Missions also, though founded in faith, by faith and for faith, furnished as good a base for the enterprises of furriers as if they had owed their origin to the spirit of mercantile speculation.

There is no danger of overrating the pervasiveness of French fur dealings in the Northwest centuries ago. We may well believe no cove, no navigable stream was unplowed by their boats of bark; no tribe, no council unvisited.

The demand for fur in France was stimulated by royal decrees. In 1670 one of them prohibited the manufacture of demi-castors, a sort of hats that were only half made of beaver. Soon afterward a prohibitory duty was laid in France on all furs not from French colonies.

Statistics are stupefying, and there is some wit in the quip, "A fig for your *duties*!" After all a few figures are necessary if we would understand how speedily and how grandly the trade in skins was developed, or how long and how widely fur was king as truly as cotton or corn has become so in our times.

In 1610, ten years before the landing of the forefathers at Plymouth, the boats of fur traders were at the outlet of Lake Champlain. Three years after forty canoes came down to Montreal bringing fur. In 1690 their number was 165; three years after, it rose to two hundred. For a decade before 1649, the Huron beaver harvest was valued at half a million francs a year. Fifty francs would then feed a man for a twelvemonth, and one hundred and fifty would pay a soldier. In 1674, the skins imported into Rochelle were 311,315. The governor of Montreal, whose salary was a thousand crowns, soon cleared fifty thousand by illicit fur dealing.

As early as 1670 there is mention of a fur fleet embarking at Green Bay for Montreal. Even before this, as we have seen, adventurers to Wisconsin waters and its interior, paid the charges

of exploration by an incidental trade in fur. Just afterward, the first Indians whom Marquette met on the Mississippi, were wearing French cloth. During the winter of 1674-5, when that missionary lay sick at Chicago, two traders were already encamped in the vicinity.

For more than a hundred years, the Northwestern beaver trade flowed on with a colossal and all-pervading stream. In 1791, the skins collected there for Montreal merchant's amounted to more than half a million (565,000). A few years after John Jacob Astor, "sagacious of his quarry from afar," engaged in this traffic with hundreds of boats, thousands of men and millions of capital.

Green Bay was his point of departure, as Mackinaw had been that of the French for many generations. But his employes pushed through the continent to the western ocean. Most of his fortune came from fur, and it would have been twice as large, but for the war of 1812. But even Astor's fur agents of all classes were largely descendants of French voyageurs who had taken up their abode in the Northwest ages before.

Falsehood and false fancies were also among the forces which first hurried the French far west.

It is through no longing for alliterative initials that I add false fancies and falsehood as a fourth force to fun, faith and fur. At that period all travelers, if not Munchausens themselves, believed Munchausen stories, and when people are willing to be deceived, they are deceived. Demand for lies never lacks supply.

One Frenchman in Florida, when he saw a squaw so wrinkled that there was no room for one furrow more, believed the report that she had outlived five generations. Another, near Newfoundland, landed on an isle of demons not without wings, horns and tails. A third, when certain Canadian chiefs told him of a race who had but one leg and lived without food, took them to France for repeating their story to the king. These were sons of men who had been credulous to Venetian merchants, who, selling spices for their weight in gold, advertised them as no product of the vulgar earth, but plucked from branches thrown down from the battlements of Elen by compassionate cherubim. The age of faith was not yet over. As recently as the last year of the seven-

teenth century a company formed in France to work a mine of green earth reported to exist at the sources of the Mississippi, sent a party of thirty miners up that river. Their voyage up stream lasted ten months.

Among the earliest volunteers from the retainers of Champlain to ascend the Ottawa with savages, who had descended from a country no white man had ever trod, was Vignan, in 1610. On his return next season, he declared that he had pushed on to a salt sea, seen the wreck of an English ship, and heard of Cathay and Zipango,—so China and Japan were then called—as not far away.

The spark fell in gunpowder. Champlain heard not only what he wished to believe, but what all men of his time and a century after held for certain, that a short Northwest passage to the East Indies existed, and would at once double the wealth of any nation which could appropriate it by right of discovery. His own fleet had been equipped in 1608, not merely to colonize Acadia, but “to penetrate inland even to the Occidental sea and arrive some day at China.”

He believed that in 1609 a vessel, clearing from Acapulco,—a Mexican port on the Pacific, lost its reckoning in a storm, but after two months found itself in Ireland,—and that the King of Spain had ordered the journal of the pilot to be burned so as to keep foreigners from knowing the course followed, but which was supposed to be north of Canada. The map of Verrazano, then still an authority, in addition to the Isthmus of Panama showed another no less narrow near the latitude of New York with the Pacific beyond it on the West.

More than three score years afterward, La Salle sought that East Indian route by way of the Mississippi. His estate just above Montreal was, and is still, called or nick-named, *La Chine*, that is China, because he started from there bound for the Empire of Celestials. Years after he had stood at the mouth of the Mississippi, he spoke of that river as separated from the China sea only by the breadth of the provinces of Culiacan, and was confident of meeting not far from the mouth of the Missouri, with rivers which flowed into the ocean he sought.

England shared in the delusion that the Pacific was near the Atlantic. Hence a barge was sent over to John Smith in Virginia with orders to row it up the Potomac, carry it over the mountains, and launch it on some stream that flowed into the South sea, which was afterward made the western boundary of Connecticut.

The truth is that French and English alike had a short cut to China on the brain. No sooner then had Champlain heard the story of Vignan than he hastened up the Ottawa with a crew of enthusiasts. Thirty five carrying-places and an infinity of hardships seemed nothing to him. When half way to Lake Huron — at the Isle of Allumette, — he detected the imposition which Vignan had practiced upon him. Champlain was more magnanimous than certain prospectors lately led into the Black Hills by a guide who promised them diggings that would yield thirty cents a pan, and finding him a liar straightway strung him up on the nearest tree. Champlain was more disappointed than the prospectors — yet he forgave the impostor.

The next year, 1615, taking a fresh start, he reached the head of the Ottawa, crossed to Lake Huron, — held councils with divers nations on that inland sea, hearing of still other seas beyond — and saying to one and all: "Bring furs down to Quebec and show me the way to China." Plainly he thought one request as easy to grant as the other.

The name of the first Wisconsin tribe with which the French became acquainted, and that before 1640, namely, *Winnabagoes*, was understood by them to signify *Saltwater* men, and western saltwater they associated only with the Pacific. Nicolet, the first white man on the Wisconsin (?), having voyaged down that river within some five and thirty leagues of the Mississippi, believed himself within three days march of the great sea of the west.

The Indians were always notorious for reporting whatever they perceived that whites desired to hear. They thus hoaxed them all alike. Spaniards they tickled with stories of gold, New England Puritans by legends concerning the Great Spirit, and so they amused the French, who came with a passion for China, with accounts of a Celestial empire.

At that era various nations were rivals in searching for new routes to China,—the English through Hudson Bay, the Dutch north of Lapland, and the French by way of the Great Lakes. They had all been denied access to the East Indies either by the Cape of Good Hope or of Horn,—which Spain and Portugal respectively blockaded, treating as privateers all who tried to pass. But their hopes were sanguine of finding another road thither, as the Italians when at the fall of Constantinople cut off from their mediæval thoroughfare eastward from the Levant, had set their faces westward and discovered America. The spirit of the age, “the grandeur of which,” Froude pronounces “among the most sublime phenomena which the earth has witnessed,” felt that only a corner of the veil had been lifted. All past findings just gave enough to wake the taste for more.

Champlain was the more thoroughly persuaded that the Pacific was near Lake Huron because he had himself beheld Pacific surges at Panama, the longitude of which is not so far west as that lake by a dozen degrees. His sight strengthened his faith, which was never weak. Quartz pebbles picked up on the river bank at Quebec he thought diamonds, and gave the rock above the name it bears to this day — Cape Diamond.

On Joliet's return from down the Mississippi, Frontenac's first feeling was regret that that river had not borne the explorer to the Pacific and to Japan. His next emotion was hope that the Missouri — still anonymous, but called by Joliet a northwest branch entering the Mississippi in latitude 38 degrees — could be ascended to a lake with an outlet into the Vermilion Sea — his name for the Gulf of California. Seven years later, in 1680, Duluth, near the head waters of the Mississippi, heard of Hennepin as a captive among the Sioux. He sought him out, procured his release and escorted him to Green Bay. But for this call to a mission of mercy, “my design was,” says he, “to push on to the sea on the northwest, believed to be the Vermilion Sea, from which a war party had come among the Sioux. Some of its salt they gave to three Frenchmen that I had sent out as a scout, and they brought it to me. According to their report it was no more than twenty days' march to a great lake the water of which was

not fit to drink, and which I had no doubt I could reach without difficulty."

But all varieties of Frenchmen in America — the fur-hunter, the votary of fun and frolic and the apostle of faith — whatever their primary impulses, each man was inspired to dive further into the west, by a lurking but fixed idea that he was himself the predestinated Columbus of the grand discovery — that portal through which men should bring the glory and honor of the nations to and from farthest India — that world's highway which lay hid from princes and plebeians till in the fullness of time California opened wide her Golden Gate on golden hinges turning.

Only those of us who remember when California burst on the world like a sun-burst, or lightning shining from the west unto the east, as El Dorado no longer fabulous, can understand the fever and frenzy which burned in every man who set his foot toward the western unknown; his assurance that he was to be the revelator, not of an ignis fatuus or desert Nile fountain, but of greater marvels than are dreamed of in all the Arabian Nights — a fairyland where urchins play at cherry-pit with diamonds, where country wenches thread rubies instead of rowan berries for necklaces, where the pantiles are pure gold and the paving stones virgin silver. For such merchandise who, though no pilot, would not adventure to the farthest shore washed by the farthest sea?

"The blood more stirs to rouse a lion than to start a hare." Accordingly the illusions, that sheening far celestial seemed to be, of the China-seeker, the missionary and the fun-lover, yes, of the fur-dealer, roused them to efforts and crowned them with successes they could never have made had they seen things as they really were.

Celestial visions flitting always a little ahead of western wanderers were an analogue of Sydney Smith's piteous Tantalus. This was a bag of oats hung on the pole of his carriage. It rattled before the noses of his horses, but was about a foot beyond their reach. In both cases, also, the stimulating influence was very similar.

Another French foundation was laid in the far west by political *finesse* and *feudalism*.



The apostles of faith were also political intriguers. They knew that nothing but the supremacy of France could afford a basis for permanence in their missions. Accordingly, of themselves they worked for French domination as for self-preservation, and they were often formally appointed ambassadors.

Moreover, they sometimes established a sort of theocratic feudalism, or oriental patriarchate, in which they were themselves lords paramount.

According to Parkman, "it behooved them to require obedience from those whom they imagined God had confided to their guidance. Their consciences then acted in perfect accordance with the love of power innate in the human breast.

"These allied forces mingle with a perplexing subtlety. Pride disguised even from itself walks in the likeness of love and duty, and a thousand times on the pages of history we find hell beguiling the virtues of heaven to do its work. The instinct of domination is a weed that grows rank in the shadow of the temple." (Jesuits, p. 159.)

Always and everywhere Jesuits have been charged with usurping political sway. In 1667, the Canadian Intendant, Talon, addressed a remonstrance to Colbert, the French premier, complaining that the Jesuits "grasped at temporalities, encroaching even on that police which concerned magistrates alone." This complaint related to intermeddling on the St. Lawrence. But on the Upper Lakes and beyond them, there could not be too much Jesuit domination to please French statesmen.

But another class of political agents were very early abroad in the west. Nicoler, whom I have mentioned as in Wisconsin in 1634, and probably the first white man ever there, had been dispatched to Green Bay as a peace maker between the tribes of that vicinity and the Hurons.

Soon after the year 1650 the Iroquois had vanquished all the tribes east of Lake Michigan. They expelled them from their old homes, and drove most of them beyond that lake, some of them even beyond the Mississippi. In this flight the Ottawas descending the Wisconsin, and pushing up the Mississippi some dozen leagues, entered the Little Iowa and sought an asylum on

its upper waters. For those tribes who lingered in Wisconsin there was no hope of fighting the Iroquois fire-arms without fire-arms, and no hope of fire-arms except from the French. The governors of New France, to whom the Iroquois were sworn enemies,—at once saw the policy of lifting up these fugitives, uniting them in amity to each other, and to the tribes where they had fled for refuge, supplying them with kettles, tobacco, but above all with guns and powder,—in a word by every means stealing their hearts. For this end they dispatched into Wisconsin and further a species of envoys of which Nicolas Perrot was a good representative.

This Indian commissioner had been prepared for his functions by much western experience. He was first in Jesuit employ as a lay-brother, and then became an adventurer in quest of fun and fur where no white man's foot had trod. No doubt he was in make half Indian, and when present at a war dance would lead it, like Frontenac at three score and ten, whooping like the rest, or rather outwhooping them all. The Indians named him "Pop-corn," perhaps because when heated he seemed to them to grow ten times bigger, like the dwarf who declared that though his avoirdupois in the scale was ordinarily only one hundred and twenty pounds, whenever he got mad he weighed a ton.

His official career in Wisconsin began at latest in 1665. After making friendship with the Pottawatomies at Green Bay, he pushed up Fox River and into a lake of which it is an outlet. There he held a council with the Outagamies. After this fashion he went on for five years,—at home with tribe after tribe—at home in the customs and dialects of all the enormous angle between the upper Mississippi and the upper lakes. He brought many nations into a confederation with each other and against the Iroquois. His fame, like Solomon's, brought visitors into Green Bay from the uttermost parts of the earth,—some who spoke of trading with Mexican Spaniards and others who described white men far north in a house which walked on the water—meaning the English on Hudson bay. (2 178 La Potherie.) How he was borne aloft on a buffalo robe, revered for fashioning iron as squaws did dough in a kneading trough, and feared as holding in his hands thunder and lightning, we have seen already.

In 1671 he was interpreter for a dozen nations whose delegates largely through his persuasions then gathered at Mackinaw and acknowledged the sovereignty of France. His influence over them was seen in 1684, and again three years after, when, as I have before stated, he induced five hundred warriors from Wisconsin, and near it, to paddle their canoes many a hundred miles in order as allies of the French to fight against the Iroquois. According to Indian ideas his greatest exploit was delivering from torture and death a captive whom the savages had resolved to burn. No common miracle was it to make Indians forego the ecstasy of beholding and gloating on an enemy in agony. The French then aimed to make the western chiefs do homage to their king as a suzerain, and fight shoulder to shoulder in his battles.

But many adventurers from France also sought to become themselves a sort of feudal barons. To this end they secured patents of nobility with land-grants, termed seigniories. Some of these bordered on the St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain. But these eastern estates just gave enough to wake the taste for more. At the outlet of Lake Ontario La Salle possessed a domain stretching five leagues along the shore, besides others almost boundless on Lake Michigan, and whatever in other unknown regions he could conquer. As Col. Colt invented a patent revolver, so La Salle expected to hold as a patent-right the realm he had revealed. He was sanguine that his principality would be more attractive to immigrants than Canada. It was prairie which needed no clearing,—it was more fertile, of milder climate and more varied products, many of them—as salt, grapes and hemp—unknown in Canada. Not a few similar land-claims based on governmental grants were set up by French occupants when the United States assumed jurisdiction over Wisconsin. The Norman race which centuries before had feudalized all Europe, now meant to master the Mississippi Valley. French wanderers were not unfrequently elected chiefs of tribes. Perrot was so honored among nine different nations. French officers also came with a retinue of their own countrymen, whom they ruled by martial law, being sometimes judge, jury and executioners all at once. This one-man power, where no law was known but his will, was

the secret of many a success. It inspired a salutary fear where the common law of England and even the civil law of continental Europe would only have provoked contempt.

At Frontenac La Salle wrought wonders. The natives were compliant to his will like clay in the hands of a potter. At his bidding they settled near his fort, cleared land, tilled it, worked on the fortifications and on houses, sent their children to school. According to Parkman, "seignior by royal grant of water-front for five leagues,—feudal lord of the forests around,—commander of a garrison raised and paid by himself,—founder of the mission,—patron of the church,—he reigned the autocrat of his lonely empire." Nor was he altogether destitute of feudal trappings,—for, according to his chaplain, Hennepin, on state occasions he wore a scarlet mantle laced with gold.

On the Illinois river his success was still more marvelous. The colony he there extemporized was reckoned in 1684 to contain 4,000 Indian warriors or 20 000 souls, like the peasantry of the middle-ages, clustered around his rock fort, "Starved Rock," perched high as an eagle's nest. The region around he had begun to parcel out among his followers.

Fee'ing equal to the grandest enterprises, he had longed for liberty to beard the Spaniard in Northern Mexico. Having been granted that liberty, had he not been betrayed on his way back to the Mississippi, he would have made Starved Rock the strategic base of active operations against Mexicans. All the region between that post, styled St. Louis, and the South Sea, was subjected to him by his French commission.

Judging by such an experiment, and before the failures in this direction which followed hard after, it was not unreasonable to hope for founding feudal baronies far west with French retainers as henchmen of each dignitary, and a crowd of aboriginal vassals beneath all the whites; but supporting all by fur and farming in time of peace, and not less by filling the ranks in time of war. There still exists an early map of New France with a fort in every seigniory.

Enterprising Frenchmen, who aspired to the independence of a mediæval nobleman, must needs go west in order to find what

they sought. No populous native tribes still survived east of Lake Huron. The French were hemmed in by the English and Iroquois on the south, while short days and long winters repelled them from the north. On the other hand, everything allured them westward — natural highways, mild climate, fertile soil, prairies that needed no clearing, buffaloes fancied ready to yield wool and draw the plow, friendly Indians, and — more than all — elbow room, safe from Canadian dietators. The founders of Montreal had been brow-beaten in Quebec. The vice-governor at Montreal was not very subordinate to the royal functionary at Quebec, but more so than the officials upon Ontario and further were to his own jurisdiction. They were their own masters.

In addition to this, French intrigues in the far west were multiplied and intensified by pecuniary interest. Nothing but political supremacy in that distant realm could assure prosperity in that fur-trade where lay their sole hope of money-making.

As soon as they had secured sway in any tribe they first said, "Bring all your fur to our factors!" This point gained, their second demand was, "Make your neighbors do likewise, peaceably if you can, but forcibly if you must." Thus it came to pass that many a brave was butchered to procure beaver for French whose policy was that of *Æsop's monkey* :

"That cunning old pug everybody remembers,  
Who, when he saw chestnuts a roasting in embers,  
To spare his own bacon, took pussy's two foots,  
And out of the ashes he hustled his nuts."

Considerations such as these show how powerfully the finesse of political schemers and the ambitions of feudalism roused the French to penetrate into the utmost corner of the west.

The English also, as adventurers, traders, or both, tried to push into the farthest western wilds. But the French outstripped them, arrested their factors and explorers and treated them as outlaws. The motto of the French was :

"It shall go hard,  
But we will delve one yard below their mines  
And blow them at the moon."

The French foundations in the Northwest proved failures. When French officers gazed at the charge of the six hundred at Balaklava, they cried out: "This is admirable, but it is not war." So French foundations in the Northwest were wonderful beyond all wonder, but they did not constitute a state, one whole body fitly framed together, which vital in every part cannot but by annihilating, die.

The first foundation was Fun. Fun taken in homeopathic doses is good, but it is by no means substantial food for a life-time much less for a nation's life. At all events it either finds or makes frivolous those to whom it is all in all,—labor and not merely luxury,—business as well as recreation. If all the year were playing holidays, to sport would be as tedious as to work. Savage life, however fascinating at a distance as to the novelist Cooper, or the sentimentalist Rousseau, loses romance when viewed close at hand as by Parkman domiciliated among Dakotahs—indeed by the sober second thought of any one capable of appreciating civilization and aspiring to progress.

The result was that French fun-lovers, either like Nicolet turned from their sportive sallies to dwell among their own people as well as educative and elevating institutions, or on the other hand, they sunk to the low level of the aborigines around them, perhaps degraded them still lower by the vices of civilization. The backwoods maxim proved true; that it is the hardest thing in the world to make a white man out of an Indian, while it is very easy to make an Indian out of a white man.

The apostles of *faith* also failed in the far west. Their want of success was due in part to the extermination by war and plague of tribes among whom they ministered, in part to inability to reclaim other tribes from nomadic habits, and in part to the nature of their teachings. Their exhibition of Christianity was rather spectacular than intellectual, more emotional than practical. Among their maxims I find these: "It is God's will that whoever is born a subject should not reason but obey." "Teaching girls to read is robbing them of time." They taught singing but not reading. No newspaper appeared in New France till after the British conquest. At an Indian college which had flourished

for a generation Frontenac, relates that no student could speak French. In spite of all pains pupils proved Calibans on whom nurture would never stick. Of one that was taken to France at a tender age, baptized, and learned French well, I read that when brought back to Canada as an interpreter, he became as rude a barbarian as any one and held fast his barbarism to the end.

If the Jesuits had had free course on our Upper Lakes, the result would have been nations submissive but not self-sufficing, peaceable but unable to defend themselves — having the *personnel* of men but the puerility of children. They had an ordinance to hasten the *physical* weaning of Indian children — but their mental weaning they would never permit.

Frontenac's report to the home government was: "The Jesuits will not civilize the Indians because they wish to keep them in perpetual wardship. Their missions are hence mockeries." They censured La Salle because at his fort he had some fifty Indian children taught to read and write.

Compared with the sturdy Puritan, the self-reliant Yankee, the products of Jesuit training would seem those legendary monkeys who were intended to be men, but whose creation being begun on Saturday afternoon, was interrupted by the coming on of the Sabbath, so that they were sent into this breathing world scarce half made up. Their development remains arrested still. Well is it said: "A man to BE a man must feel that he holds his fate in his own hands."

However Jesuits might have succeeded, in blowing up a bubble, bright and polished as glass and iridescent with rainbow hues, it must have burst at the first rude shock from without, as did the insubstantial pageant which they conjured up in Paraguay.

A heretic would say that their system had not truth enough in it to make a lasting lie. Hence it was, "The perfume and suppliance of a minute."

The *fur-trader* rejoiced in a longer success than either the votary of fun or the apostle of faith. But *his* occupation too was gone at length. Fur-bearing animals vanished even sooner than the forests that sheltered them.

Fish began to be taken in Canadian waters before the first furs

were trapped on Canadian shores. The fish continue now as multitudinous as ever, while the fur is no more found. Five and a half millions have we recently paid for the right to fish in Canadian waters.

Crops springing out of the bosom of the earth are exhaustless like a living spring. Beasts wandering over its surface, or living in its dens, pass away, like desert streams in summer, and what is worse, are never renewed as those streams are.

Beaver Dam as the name of a city in Wisconsin may always endure, but the cunning handiwork of the beaver, chief favorite among fur-bearers, is to day scarcely discoverable in all the State. The beaver's gone beyond redemption, gone with a galloping consumption. Not all the quacks with all their gumption, will ever mend him.

The chief Yankee staple was fish; that of the French was fur. The contrast between the races was palpable. Accordingly the natives named the Yankees *Kinshon*, which signifies "fish," and the French *Onontio*, that is, "Big Mountain." The latter name may have been suggested by Gallic pomposity. But after labors manifold the mountain brought forth a mouse, and the fish swallowed him.

The victims lured on by falsehood or false fancies in pursuit of a short cut to the farthest East, were no less heart breakingly disappointed than the men of fun, fur and faith.

Their chase in the West of an ever-fleeing East, reminds me of De Soto chasing the phantom of a rejuvenating fountain. Both long roved in a fool's paradise, but at length wasted sinewy vigor, like thirst-parched pilgrims, running after the mirage when the sultry mist frowns o'er the desert with a show of waters mocking men's distress.

But after all both achieved great discoveries, like alchemists, not of what they sought, but of whatever was to be found. De Soto discovered the lower Mississippi, and French visionaries the upper, its head-waters, the Yellow Stone and the Rocky Mountain backbone of the continent. They were the first who ever burst into our inmost shrines.

But their aims were *low*. At its best their ideal was not to



*found nations* circled by all that exalts and embellishes civilized life. It was merely to discover a thoroughfare to the Pacific and the Indies ready made to their hands. This ideal was never realized, and under the old regime of the French it never could be.

To make such a pathway, or rather more than royal highway was a beau ideal reserved for the Anglo-Saxon of our times, and his ideal was straightway actualized,—the firstlings of his heart became the firstlings of his hand. Some of us cannot worship the heroes of our trans-continental roads. Even we, however, must admit that but for their iron will we should even now rejoice in no iron ways.

Indians and French — path-finders like Fremont — were a vapor that appeared for a little time — at most an Indian summer.

Yankees brushing them away, working mines of lead and lumber, and then extracting agricultural wealth yet more perennial and wide-spread, have built on firmer foundations, and are efflorescing in a higher style of culture throughout all departments of life.

The French who occupied the Northwest either as missionaries among Indians, and those bound by vow to celibacy, or who adopted Indian ways of life, naturally proved a race no less ephemeral than the natives themselves. They vanished all the sooner because they entered that region in small numbers. Indeed French immigrants were nowhere numerous in America.

But had one single feature of French policy been different, the change in American history would have been great beyond calculation. Huguenots, the only class of Frenchmen ready to leave *France*, were not permitted to enter New France. Had they been welcome there, legions of them would have penetrated its wilds as far as any fanatical Jesuit or jolly rover. They would have outnumbered the English Americans, being driven abroad by worse persecutions at home. They would have furnished material for such agricultural and manufacturing centers on the Upper Lakes as La Salle vainly strove to found in Illinois.

In the next place, most of those French refugees who enriched Switzerland, Holland, Germany, England, and divers British colonies, especially those on the Atlantic coast, with new arts or old

ones plied with new skill, would have betaken themselves to Canada. There no strange language nor strange institutions repelled them. They never willingly expatriated themselves, and in New France they would have seemed still at home. It has not been enough noticed that New France was at first founded by French Protestants, and that the early adventurers thither were of the same faith, as well as that outfitters being Calvinists would not admit Jesuits into their ships. Next, the two religions for a time there held divided empire. When a priest and a minister there died on the same day, they were laid in the same grave. "Let us see," it was said, "whether they who have always lived at war will now lie in peace." The first petition of Jesuits that "reformed religionists," so-called, should be forbidden to inhabit Canada dates from 1621. Rejected at that time by the French king it was granted six years afterwards.

Had such been the French foundations in our Northwest, they might still have stood strong there. The Canadians, while scarcely a tithe of the English, held their own for a century. What if they had surpassed them in numbers, as much as they did in unity, military spirit, and friendship for the aborigines?

In all likelihood France and England would to-day hold divided empire throughout the territory embraced by the United States. The settlers,—each race afraid of the other,—would both have clung to their mother countries, and sought protection under their wings. During the Napoleonic wars, instead of being developed by the carrying-trade of Europe,—by a market there for all our products, and by dedication to the arts of peace, we colonists should have been all the while belligerents,—and that between two fires, pierced by invasions from the west, while our coast was ravaged and our ports bombarded.

Not a few in this audience are of Huguenot descent. Their ancestors in all colonial wars must have fought against those British provinces for which in fact they fought.

Even if the colonies,—English and French,—had one or both of them become independent, each race would have forced the other to maintain a standing army of European proportions, to build a Chinese wall, or line of forts—"the labor of an age in

piled stones," — from the Upper Lakes to the Gulf. Border collisions would daily occur. Wars must have been frequent and chronic.

Again, had the French centuries ago burst into the Northwest by thousands instead of by scores, they would have planted their mediæval institutions too deeply to be rooted out. Lords of broad domains would have monopolized the land. Under them would have been vassals uneducated save to drudgery or death dealing, not one in a thousand of them rising above the low level of that inglorious throng in which they were born. The Texan question of a witness, "Do you write your name like a monk, or make your mark like a gentleman?" would have been common all the way from the tropic to the pole.

The masses would have remained clannish retainers of hereditary chiefs. Each seigniory would have been a section cut out of France with all the pre-revolutionary enormities carried over ocean and continent like the angel-borne holy house of Loretto, and set down in the Mississippi Valley with all its imperfections on its head.

Even that earthquake revolution which toppled to the earth the feudal fabrics of France, would not have extended into the heart of this continent. It was, in fact, powerless even on the lower St. Lawrence, so far as not reinforced by British thunder.

On the whole, had Huguenots been tolerated from the first in New France, a million of them would have migrated there, and its population would have been no less numerous or puissant than that of British America. All the European colonies in America would probably still be subject to their parent states.

At all events they would have so balanced each other, and their mutual relations would have been so antagonistic, that the rise, progress and world-wide influence of those institutions and that form of society which are distinctively American, would have been impossible. America would have been Europeanized. There is no room in the universe for both Christ and Belial. So there was no room in these United States for both freedom and feudalism.

Well then may we thank God for the intolerance of Louis

XIV, or rather for the passing-pleasing tongue of Madam Maintenon, which kept that *Grand Monarque* her unconscious servitor. Though he meant not so, neither did her heart think so, their policy was suicidal. They were pioneers clearing the ground for the undisturbed establishment and expansion of a system—political, religious, educational, social,—which was ordained by God, and utilized by man, for revolutionizing not only America, but France and Europe. May that system of ours pervade the world, endure forever, and prove a survival of the fittest!

In our northwest French and Indians have stamped their names forever on many natural features,—lakes, rivers, mountains, and on hamlets which have, or will, become cities. But, while names are French and Indian,—as Chicago and St. Louis,—all else,—all distinguishing characteristics bespeak the Anglo-Saxons. They came out from Great Britain in order to build on a broader basis a Britain yet greater, continental and cosmopolitan, gathering together in one those whom Babel scattered abroad. Hence it has come to pass, that in the world's wide mouth, we to-day are called, not New French, nor yet New English, nor by the name of any Europeans whatever, but *Americans*, now and forever Americans. That cognomen is already all our own, and this fact I hail as an omen that the continent also in all its length as well as breadth will be ours ere long;

“THE UNITY AND MARRIED CALM OF STATES.”



