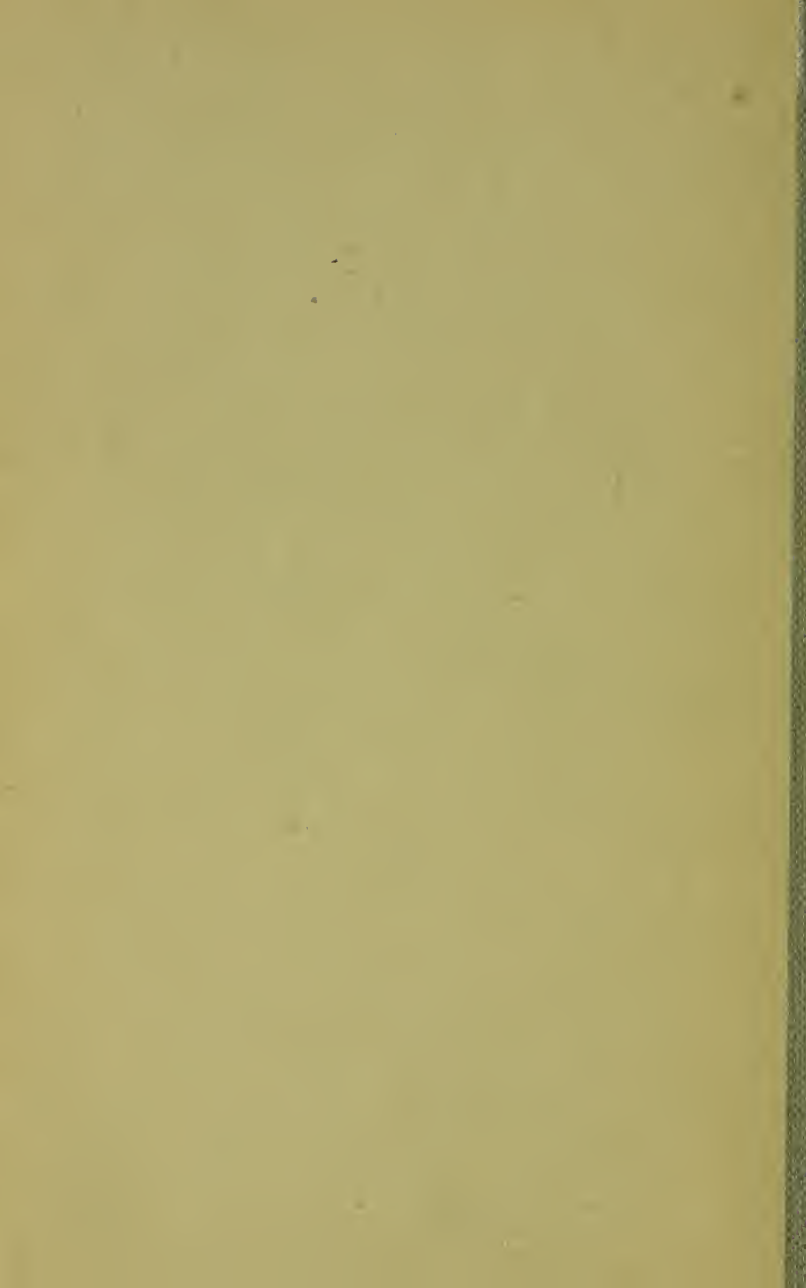


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BY THE

Rev. T. J. CAMPBELL, S. J.

Published at the request of the  
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THE AMERICA PRESS

New York

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# Golden Jubilee of St. John's

Bangor, Me., November 5, 1906





## Golden Jubilee of St. John's

On an occasion like this, when the church, with all the solemn and sublime pageantry of its sacred ritual, summons the throngs of its priests and prelates and people to commemorate in this splendid basilica another triumph of the extension of the kingdom of Christ, it is proper to cast a glance backward so as to better understand the way in which this glory has been achieved.

Unlike to-day, it was a dream, a delusion, a myth that attracted men here three or four hundred years ago. On the present site of Bangor there was thought to be a wonderfully beautiful, though barbaric, city called Norumbega. Even Milton sang of it. Many a traveler ascended the Penobscot in search of it, and one enthusiastic writer, whose account Hakluyt published, told of its houses of crystal with silver colonnades, and its inhabitants all decked out in pearls and gold. It was sought for with an eagerness like that which urged Ponce de Leon and his followers in their quest for the Fountain of Youth, and, as late as 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, reading Hakluyt's story and dreaming only of loading his vessels with silver, carried with him the poet Parmenius to sing its praises. But when Champlain came to Bangor and found only the squalid wigwams of the savages, the myth evaporated, though traces of it still lingered for fifty or sixty years, and the Dutch, and even the famous Captain John Smith, who came to Maine, continued to dream of Norumbega.

There was, of course, a real Norumbega, but it was a territory, not a city. Sir Humphrey Gilbert's charter described it as extending from the thirtieth to the sixtieth degree north latitude, so that it took in not only Massachusetts, which seems to preempt the title by its Norumbega Park in Boston,

but even New York. Indeed, it included almost the whole coast from Florida to Labrador. But popular fancy seems to have restricted it to Maine by placing its chief city on the great and beautiful river, the Penobscot, whose name, says one writer, might well describe the entire State. But its limitations and locality do not concern us now. What interests us is: When did Christianity come to Norumbega?

Apart from the shadowy traditions that missionaries from the Island of Saints came out to the Isles of the West, to Hy Brasil, the Wooded Land of which the Irish bards loved to sing, it is beyond doubt that Catholicity (for no other form of Christianity existed) was preached in this part of the world, and perhaps on this very spot, nearly 1000 years ago.

In the Fenway of Boston stands a bronze figure of Lief, the son of Eric, who was sent out here from Greenland to found a Christian colony, though the authorities, in accepting the statue, protested they did not mean to imply by the situation of the monument that it was there he landed. That he came is admitted, but where he went or what he did to convert the natives we cannot say. The colony endured, however, in some way or other, and fifty years after the coming of Lief, Bishop John, of Skalholt, in Iceland, who is said to have been an Irishman, ended his life here in suffering and torture, though that, like so many other things, is questioned; but one fact is beyond doubt, viz., that a century later the Bishop of Gardar in Greenland, "full of missionary zeal, accompanied the ships of his seafaring flock and reached the land known in the Sagas of the North by the name of Vinland," which was part, at least, of the Norumbega of later times. Here the bishop died, but how far to the north or to the south either he or his predecessor carried the cross we are unable to determine, though we know that the venturesome Norsemen were in Labrador, Newfoundland and New England, and perhaps the vestiges of Cath-

olic symbols found among the savages of Ste. Croix in Maine five centuries later might be traced to that source.

But besides this remote preaching of the Gospel, Maine has had other points of contact with Catholicity in more recent years. The Cabots, who were sent out by the Catholic King of England, Henry VII., and who very probably sailed over the Gulf of Maine, were Catholics, of course.

The Catholic Verazzano came here in 1524 and mapped out the coast, and was moreover very probably in the next expedition with Rut, in 1527, when he lost his life among the savages. It is this voyage which is of particular importance to us, as historians tell us that the "Mary of Guilford returned by the coasts of Newfoundland, Cape Breton and Norumbega, entering the ports of those regions, landing and examining the condition of the country," furnishing us thus with the account of the first actual landing of the white man in this part of the world, at least in modern times; and what is of still more absorbing interest to us, telling us that with them was a "canon of St. Paul's in London, a learned man and a mathematician," who had placed his scientific attainments, as well as his priestly office, at the service of the expedition. So that we have the very solid assurance that in 1527, a priest ministered in Maine, offered the Holy Sacrifice and preached the Gospel in the English tongue.

Again, the Portuguese-Spaniard, Esteban Gomez, was here and called the Penobscot the Rio Grande and the Rio Hermoso—the Great and the Beautiful River—and the land around it the land of Gomez. Roberval's daring sailor, Allefonsce, likewise came to Maine, and the Franciscan friar, Thevet, whom some writers seek to discredit, explored and described the country, and told how the French were already settled there; a statement which naturally angers the partisans of England's claims. He, too, must have preached the Gospel to his countrymen. Others might be cited, but this

is enough to show that Catholicity is not an alien power in Maine.

There were Catholics, of course, in the ill-fated ships of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, which in 1583 were engulfed in the waves of the Atlantic off Cape Race; for it was a Catholic expedition to colonize Norumbega. It was planned by two Catholic noblemen, Gerard and Peckham, who proposed to send out 1000 Catholics to the continent of Europe and from thence transport them to America to escape the persecutions then raging in England. "All the papists," a spy reported, "were praying for its success." But Gilbert's disaster and death checked, though it did not completely crush the ardor of those who were promoting the enterprise. Twenty years later the project was revived by Lord Arundell of Wardour, but failed because of the opposition of the famous Jesuit, Father Parsons, who believed its purpose impossible of accomplishment.

Of course, all of these historical findings are to a certain extent vague and unsatisfactory, but in the summer of 1612, over on the beach of the Grand Manan, at what is now known as Whitehead Island, there might have been seen a pale face in the garb of a savage, kneeling at the feet of a priest, and making his confession. He was a Frenchman who had fled from the settlement of Acadia and was living among the Indians. The Jesuit missionary Biard had gone in pursuit of him, and when the unhappy man was reconciled to God, an altar was built on the shore, and, amid a group of bedizened soldiers and painted savages, Mass was celebrated, at which the restored fugitive made his Easter Communion. This is the first explicit record we have of the celebration of the Divine mysteries on the borders of the present State of Maine.

A few days afterward the same great missionary stood at an altar in front of a little stockade on the St. John's River. It was early morning and the occupants of the fort,

as well as the men from the ship, knelt together on the strand to assist at Holy Mass. In spite of this solemn beginning, the day almost ended in bloodshed. From there the travelers sailed along the coast and entered the Kennebec, where Father Biard came ashore and celebrated the Holy Mysteries, but was near being murdered at the altar by the Indians. The site of this interesting event it has been impossible to determine.

This voyage of the priest seems like a prelude to what happened in the following year, when Fathers Biard, Massé and Quentin abandoned the colony of Acadia, and established the Mission of Saint Sauveur at Bar Harbor. "In that place," says the Protestant Bancroft, "the Indians regarded Father Biard as a messenger of heaven. They gathered around the cross, which was erected in the center of the village, and under the summer sun when Mass was offered and the Office sung the Roman religion appropriated the soil of Maine."

But, alas! the settlement was not long-lived. The pirate Argall of Virginia entered the harbor with a man-of-war, laid the village in ashes and carried away two of the priests to hang them in Virginia. Providence intervened, however, and they were not hanged, but were driven by the tempests across the wide Atlantic, and after many sufferings, and incidentally twice saving their enemies from the gallows, reached their native land; one of them returning, however, to labor and to die in the wilds of America; and it is worthy of note that on the banks of the St. Lawrence, near Quebec, there stands a monument to the memory of Enemond Massé, one of the priests who first came ashore at Bar Harbor in 1613.

It was at this time that the disputes about the limits of Acadia began. Its extent was so vast and so vague, stretching as it did even below what is now New York, and going west from Nova Scotia to the Kennebec, that ceaseless wars

ensued between the claimants. The territory between the Penobscot and the Kennebec, especially, became the dark and bloody ground where French and English fought for more than a century; the English winning at last, when Wolfe and Montcalm met in death on the Plains of Abraham, only to lose the territory of Maine twenty years later in the American Revolution.

During the period which immediately followed the destruction of the Jesuit mission at Bar Harbor, devoted Capuchin monks exposed their lives for the salvation of the red men's souls; but the work was desultory, hampered by quarrels among the French, and was not crowned with any measure of success until its first organizers returned in 1688.

But before that, in 1646, at the same time that Isaac Jogues was sent by his superiors to meet a bloody death among the Iroquois of the Mohawk, Gabriel Druillettes came to the Abenakis in Maine. Not from the Indians, however, but from the nearby English was danger to be apprehended. Druillettes, however, went down as a messenger of peace to the Puritans of Massachusetts, who had put a price upon the head of every priest, and especially every Jesuit, who should enter their borders. But the diplomatic character with which he was invested served to protect him, while his eloquence, learning and virtue quite captivated those bitter enemies of the faith. The principal men among them, notably John Eliot, even manifested affection for him, entertained him in their houses and treated him with the greatest respect. The ministers discussed religion with him, the council listened to his proposals, and, though his political mission failed, he returned in safety to his Indians, and we hear of him later, far out on the Great Lakes, and there, a thousand and more miles away, he spent his last days in leading those savage tribes in the ways of salvation, thus giving to Maine another link with the Catholicity of the

country at large—one of the first great apostles of the East preaching the Gospel in the then farthest West.

But the most impressive and the most majestic figure that appears in those days is that of the hero who may be one day the patron saint of Maine, Father Sebastian Rasle, who, by his thirty-five years of apostolate among the Indians, ending by a bloody death at the foot of his mission cross, did more than any one else to sow the seeds of faith in this most northern State of the Union.

In spite of himself and merely because he was a priest he was the storm center of the struggle between the French and English. He was calumniated and maligned, tracked like a wild beast, a price was put upon his head, and he was finally slain for no other reason than that he kept his Indians in that faith which was dearer to him and to them than life, and which they, true to his memory, in spite of persecutions and poverty, have never relinquished.

A distinguished professor in his own land, where honor awaited him in the domain of letters, he came as a missionary to this country in 1689. The day of his arrival was October 13th, almost coinciding with what was intended to be the date of this celebration. Eager to learn their language as rapidly as possible, and at any cost, he buried himself in the squalid wigwams of the Canadian Indians, and the next year found him out where Druillettes had been before him, in the wilds of Illinois, and after four years of toil and sacrifice and danger there, coming back to complete his immolation of twenty-seven years of heroic labor in Maine by a martyr's death.

Two thousand miles of wilderness, where every step meant the peril of death by starvation, exposure to wild beasts and wilder men, seemed the merest trifles for those men of gigantic spiritual stature who were our first apostles. Equal to it, perhaps, in another way in its apostolic self-sacrifice was the task which he assumed of remaining a life

time hidden away in the repulsiveness and degradation of Indian encampments, where for a man of his sensitive nature every instant brought its loathsome and disgusting trial.

Norridgewalk, or Norridgewok, was his settlement. It was the cradle of Maine's Catholicity. Around him he gathered a Christian people, and, aided by his friends in distant France, and by his own exceptional skill at all kinds of handicraft, he adorned his little chapel, which he used to boast was as beautiful as any church in the old world, with its rich vestments, his throng of Indian altar boys in the sanctuary in cassock and surplice, his congregation chanting the Mass and flocking to the church every day in the week at the sound of the bell that swung in his rustic tower. There, on the roads that led from the village were chapels to Our Lady and the Archangel St. Michael, where the Indian braves knelt to pray when they went out to war or the hunt. He had made his people devout and practical Catholics. Whittier describes the place in *Mog Megone*:

On the brow of a hill which slopes to meet  
The flowing river, and bathe its feet,  
'Mid the bare-washed and drooping grass  
And the creeping vine as the waters pass—  
A rude, unshapely chapel stands,  
Built in that wild by unskilful hands;  
Yet the traveler knows it is a place of prayer,  
For the holy sign of the cross is there;  
And should he chance at that place to be,  
Of a Sabbath morn, or some hallowed day,  
When prayers are made and masses said,  
Some for the living and some for the dead,  
Well might that traveler start to see  
The tall, dark forms that take their way  
From the birch canoe on the river-shore



And the forest path to the chapel door,  
And marvel to mark the naked knees  
And the dusky foreheads bending there ;  
And stretching his long, thin arms over these  
In blessing and in prayer,  
Like a shrouded spectre, pale and tall,  
In his coarse white vesture—Father Rasle.

The picture is incorrect to some extent, but it illustrates how the great missionary has left his impress on the literature of New England.

He restrained his Indians from war and instructed them in all the arts of peace, taught them to build their houses and to cultivate their fields; and made not a few of the children familiar with the rudiments of learning. So thoroughly did he imbue them with love of their faith that through all the years of persecution, and in spite of many worldly inducements to apostatize, these wonderful Indians remained, with few exceptions, unalterably attached to their religion. It was here that in the moments he could snatch from the incessant labors of his mission he composed the great Abenaki dictionary, which is one of the precious literary treasures of Harvard University to-day.

Naturally and necessarily his desire to preserve the faith of his neophytes prompted him to keep them away from the Protestant English and attached to the Catholic French. As he himself was French, any other course would have been treachery to his fellow countrymen. But race feeling was only secondary, and he could have eliminated it if the faith of those confided to him were secured. Far deeper than their hatred of the French was the loathing of those early English colonists for Catholicity and Catholic priests. It was sufficient for a priest, and especially a Jesuit, to be on their territory to be doomed to death. They made no secret of it. He must be removed at any cost, and they effected their pur-

pose in a way that unhappily stamped them with everlasting ignominy.

Expedition after expedition was sent out to capture him, and finally, in 1724, 200 men moved against Norridgewok. To bar the way against the invaders and protect his helpless people, for the warriors were away, the aged priest advanced toward the enemy and, as he stood beneath the village cross, was riddled with bullets, his body frightfully mangled and outraged, his skull crushed and his white scalp torn from his head and carried in triumph to Boston. That hideous trophy of the reeking scalp of a venerable priest nearly seventy years of age must have caused a shudder when it was exhibited as a proof that Father Rasle was dead and no longer to be feared. The Sacred Host was desecrated, the holy vessels defiled, the altar and chapel reduced to ashes and the whole village left a heap of ruins. The precious manuscript which had cost so many years of labor and all his writings had already been stolen.

With a sad heart the Indians, after the departure of the English, buried the mangled body of the priest beneath the spot where he used to stand at the altar.

From that out the Catholicity of Maine depended upon the poor hunted Abenakis, and we should recall to their eternal honor that, although English trading houses now supplanted the French missions, yet more than fifty years after the murder of Father Rasle, when General Washington sent an envoy to the tribe to induce them to fight against their old English foes, they consented under one condition, viz., that a Catholic priest should be sent to them to enable them to practice their religion.

It is equally gratifying to be able to record that the request was complied with, and, what is most amazing, the Court of Massachusetts declared its satisfaction with the religious instincts of the Indians, and promised to provide a priest. What a change from the persecution of a few

years before! French chaplains from the fleet of Rochambeau put themselves immediately in communication with these abandoned but faithful Indians, but unhappily could not remain permanently among them.

Another fifty years rolled by, Bishop Carroll and his successors doing what they could for these wandering children of the forests, many of whom, however, lapsed into their original savagery for want of priests, and some even of Father Rasle's Norridgewoks yielding to the ministers who were sent among them, while the faith was making only a fitful progress among the white population. Slowly, very slowly, it went on, and at the end of those fifty years Catholicity in Maine was helpless, suspected and despised. Nevertheless, even then a bishop was sent to complete the work begun so long before; but that evoked another storm. For coincidentally with this nomination of a bishop in Maine and of others elsewhere the long pent up bigotry of Know-Nothingism leaped into a conflagration over a large part of the country. In Maine, children were driven from the schools and threatened with imprisonment for not equivalently denying their faith. The squalid little chapels, erected at the cost of untold sacrifices, were plundered or blown up or burned. Dastardly acts, which in our days would be inconceivable, were perpetrated, but humanity forgot itself in the outrage committed against a man whose name is everywhere held in benediction, the saintly, the beloved Father Bapst.

I knew him well, both in the full vigor of his beautiful manhood and afterward, when age and suffering, and possibly the consequences of the barbarous treatment of which he had been the victim in his early days, had shaken the faculties of his mind, without, however, weakening in the least the affection of his tender and loving heart; and I have never known any one better fitted to win souls to God than that singularly handsome, attractive and holy man, whose

countenance, lighted up with its perpetual sunshine, beamed a welcome on all who approached him. The wonder of it is why, if hatred of his sacred character inflamed the fury of his barbarous persecutors to frenzy, admiration for his winning and charming personality did not restrain their fury.

The night of October 14, 1854, is a dark one in the annals of Maine, when a mad but legalized mob of miscreants in a town we shall not name, for it has long since atoned for the deed by years of shame and reproach—Bangor particularly condemning it—dragged the man of God from his concealment, and, amid howls of execration, coupled with indecencies of word and deed, stripped him naked, drenched him with tar from head to foot, carried him on a rail to the woods outside the town, and it is even said bound him to a tree, and, heaping brushwood around him, prepared to burn him alive, or, as others say, to hang him—a crime which was mercifully averted, and, we trust, never intended—and then making him run the gauntlet just as the savages did with their victims, and leaving him crippled and mangled and almost dead, bade him depart or lose his life as a penalty of refusal.

On that night of horror, however, dawned a glorious morning, when, to the amazement of friend and foe, Father Bapst, vested in his priestly robes, but with the marks of the outrage still visible upon him, was seen at the altar of his humble church, dragging himself in agony through the rites of the Holy Sacrifice, not to defy his enemies, but to let his flock fulfil their obligation of public worship, and to restrain them from any untoward act of vengeance. He succeeded, though the little sanctuary where he stood that Sunday morning was soon after a heap of ashes.

It is this man who particularly belongs to you; a hero whose spirit was the same as that which throbbed in the heart of his martyred brother in religion, Father Sebastian Rasle, who, 130 years before, fell at the foot of his mission

cross. Well may you rejoice in your association with him; and fittingly are the shreds of the garments that were torn from his body on that wild night of October, fifty-two years ago, when he faced unflinchingly a horrible death by fire, placed, still smeared with tar, in the cornerstone of this sacred edifice, which is his monument and his glory.

Since then the Church has prospered. Ten years afterward, in spite of the conflagration that swept over the city of Portland, Maine could count its twenty-nine priests, its forty-five churches and its four Indian missions; and to-day, irrespective of the extensive territory of New Hampshire, which ecclesiastically once belonged to it, and where Catholicity is energetic and progressive, there are 120 priests, more than that number of churches and a growing Catholic population already over 100,000. Such is the history of the Church of Maine, laid in the blood of martyrs and destined, if it be true to its traditions, to do great things for humanity and God.

That this destiny is being accomplished we have only to lift our eyes to see. The land is covered with multiplied and splendid assurances of the growth of Catholicity, and conspicuous among them is the magnificent temple which is erected on the very spot where once the mythical city dazzled the imagination of the world with the riches it was supposed to contain; or, better still, it is in the spiritual center of the land whence for many years there poured out upon the wandering tribes greater riches than the fabulous Norumbega could ever afford. It towers above the world to-day, the first object to meet the eye of the traveler who ascends the beautiful river, a monument to the heroism of those who planted the faith in Maine; a tribute to the present generation's love of God and truth; and a command to those who come after to make the future worthy of the present and past.

Well may you rejoice in what you have accomplished. To

have contributed ever so little to such a work is a reason for congratulation, but to have set yourselves deliberately to a task which implied so many years of privation and suffering and sacrifice; to have continued undaunted when financial ruin strewed the ground with wrecks; and not to have been unduly elated when prosperity teemed with its abundance; to have persevered in your labors out of love for God and your religion until you saw it in all its complete and perfect beauty, entitles you to all the joy that your hearts can feel, but whose fulness you will not adequately attain until you stand in that other temple, of which this is but the portal.

There is, of course, one above all others who deserves the happiness which to-day bestows; the one who for two and thirty years has been the soul of your work; who has borne most of its burden; who had to face every difficulty, avoid every disaster and prevent every defeat; who every moment of the night and day during all these years felt the crushing weight of financial worries, while at the same time meeting the awful spiritual responsibilities of his office in guarding the flock which the Divine Shepherd had entrusted to his care, and for whose salvation he has to answer. How well he has done that none know better than you. That you should be better and happier is what he sought, and that, besides the glory given to the Almighty God, is the chief factor in his joy to-day. He rejoices because he has continued the work of his glorious predecessors.

For throughout those thirty-two years, as well as through these three centuries of heroic endeavor, runs one purpose. Enunciated when the first settlers called their colony at Bar Harbor Saint Sauveur, it penetrated the forests; it was echoed in the mountains and valleys and along the mighty rivers and lakes; it was repeated in the squalid wigwams and at the council fires; it was uttered when Father Rasle fell in his blood at the foot of the Savior's cross; it was the message of Father Bapst when he awaited death, bound to

the trees in the forest; it was reiterated in every act and utterance of every missionary who appealed either to savagery or civilization during all that period of distress and trial; and its replication is heard from every stone of this sacred edifice which we are consecrating to-day. Here it culminates, and from the cross that glitters on its summit to the lamp that glimmers before its altar; from the holy images and emblems on its walls and windows, to the tribunals where the penitent kneels for pardon, and the altar rail where divine life is imparted, one fact is ever before us—that it is Jesus Christ who alone is the Savior, for He alone is the Light, the Way and the Life. He alone can teach us who we are; He alone can reveal to us our glorious destiny; He alone can flash upon our souls splendid and inspiring visions of the land beyond; He alone can trace the law for us to follow and exact its fulfilment; He alone can give us the sacramental grace that is needed to achieve the victory against the foes who assail us; He alone can save the individual, the family and the State, for He alone has made them.

In a word, all the memories of the gloomy and terrible, but triumphant past unite to-day with happiness, and peace, and sunlight, and the glory which the present and the future seem to promise, declaring that for us individually as men, and collectively as a nation, salvation can come only from that Christianity which, just as it lifted the savage who once roamed these hills out of his degradation, so it alone can prevent the world from sinking into it again. It is Christianity which has created and fostered and developed our present civilization, of which we are so proud, but whose origin we are exposed to forget. We must bear in mind that if Christianity perishes, civilization must likewise die.

This teaching of Christ and His divinity and of His power to save is especially needed here. *Dirigo*—I direct, I guide—is the motto of Maine. It is the expression of an

ideal that is noble and inspiring, but at the same time almost proud and presumptuous in its intent, for it implies an absolute knowledge of what is right, and a fearless determination to defend it. Upon Maine, therefore, it is especially incumbent to make the true and genuine principles of Christianity penetrate the lives of its people, sanctify its households, and inspire the framing and enforcement of its laws.

This is especially necessary in these days when once fervent Christian churches are being disrupted, when churches are empty, when the Holy Book is reviled or tossed aside, even by those who profess to be ministers of the Gospel, when Christian morality is not only trampled upon, but almost unknown, and when mighty armies have to be employed to keep even the semblance of peace.

To help to achieve that end is the work especially of Catholics, not merely in building edifices, whether magnificent like this one, or humble like so many others, wherein God is worshipped and divine truth taught, but above all by the spiritual upbuilding of upright and holy lives, which will be more beautiful even than this glorious temple; for it, after all, is only an instrument to that end. This will make you true and ardent co-operators with Christ in establishing and increasing the peace and happiness and greatness of your country, while accomplishing at the same time your own salvation. You will thus create on the banks of the Penobscot a spiritual city, which will make the gold and silver of the ancient myth seem only faint symbols of the spiritual riches which many a traveler will come from afar to seek, and from which he will not turn away in disappointment, but will find in abundance beyond even his heart's desire all that the practice of true Catholic Christianity is expected to produce.



Laying of the Corner-stone of the  
Church of Our Holy Redeemer

Bar Harbor, August 11, 1907



## Laying of the Corner-stone of the Church of Our Holy Redeemer

High above the rocky fortress of Quebec towers the colossal statue of one of the greatest heroes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Samuel de Champlain. He was a daring navigator, whose caravels in the closing days of the sixteenth century had ploughed the unknown Southern seas, and who, even then, urged the piercing of the Isthmus of Panama. He was a dauntless explorer, who had taken up the work of the great Cartier, whom he resembled in many ways, especially in his holy ambition to extend the Kingdom of God by his discoveries. He led the way through the pathless forests of North America, leaving his name and his glory upon the lakes and rivers and territories. He was a valiant warrior who had faced death on many a field of the Old World and the New, and had fought both savage and civilized foes; a singularly sagacious ruler who had guided with consummate prudence the helpless and deserted colony which he had planted on the St. Lawrence, and he is regarded by the empire which grew out of the foundations of Quebec with the same veneration that was accorded him by his devoted followers, who starved with him amid the ice and snows of the early days, who stood by him when he was driven out of his defenceless fortress and returned with him to continue the work he had so heroically inaugurated.

Properly is his memory glorified in the city which nature has made a citadel, and to which his moral sublimity has given incomparably stronger defences in the memory of his virtues. For over and above all his claims to admiration and respect, this soldier, sailor and ruler was at all times and in all circumstances, amid the uproar, confusion and temptations which his honors, obligations and occupations forced upon him, not only an unusual but an extraordinarily

devout and fervent Catholic, the ideal of many another heroic and holy cavalier, whom France sent out to the New World in those days. He was a modern Crusader, with all the fervor of those of olden times. His life in the world resembled that of a cenobite in his cloister, and his influence and example were so powerful that he dared to draw up rules of conduct for his rough sailors on the high seas, which read like the regulations of a monastery. His motto was that the salvation of a single soul was better than the building of an empire, and when dying he bequeathed all his earthly possessions for the honor of the mother of the Holy Redeemer. His figure dominates the mighty river St. Lawrence, which bears out to the ocean of the world his record of heroism and holiness, and his gaze is directed to the vast territory over which Canada has extended its sway.

But what has he to do with Bar Harbor? He has much to do with it. He was its discoverer. He had come out as the lieutenant of his Huguenot friend, Du Gast, to found the colony of Acadia, whose Catholic and Calvinistic composition he had condemned as impossible, not because he was a bigot, but because he was a statesman, and whose geographical position he pointed out would infallibly make it an easy prey to its English enemies. He had foreseen the disaster of the settlement of St. Croix, which realized its name in becoming the necropolis of the unhappy sailors; he had chafed under the dangerous and ruinous delays of his irresolute and inexperienced commander whom he was unable to influence, but meantime he had explored all the islands and capes and bays and rivers of Maine, and has left invaluable records of the results of his observations. He had gone as far as Cape Cod or Malebarre, as he called it; he had ascended the rivers and explored the forests and mountains; and after all that was accomplished, he began, alone and unaided, his titanic struggle of a quarter of a century, for the establishment of his colony on the St. Lawrence.

We do not know if he actually landed at Bar Harbor, but as he gazed at the island from the sea and saw its bare peaks, rising desolate and drear from the solitude that reigned beneath, he gave it the name, which it still retains, of *l'Isle aux Monts Déserts*; and that fact is commemorated by the monument erected on the shore by a number of distinguished men who, though aliens to his race and religion, did not permit their prejudices to obscure their admiration for his greatness; and hence they have fixed for all time on the rock-ribbed coast of Maine, and at the very place in which we are assembled, the name of this illustrious Catholic hero.

There is another reason why the spirit of Samuel Champlain presides here to-day.

Possibly inspired by the thought of Columbus, who called the land on which he first set foot in the Western World San Salvador, Champlain dreamed of erecting somewhere on the eastern coast of America a splendid basilica in honor of the Holy Savior. He never realized that ambition, but it must have delighted his heart when his friends called the new settlement which they established at the foot of Mount Desert, Saint Sauveur; and doubtless he grieved with them over its early destruction. But had he been able to penetrate the future he would have been consoled to know that the name Saint Sauveur would be forever identified with the place, and that in the course of time there would arise in the fairest part of the island a basilica under the title of Holy Redeemer.

It was to revive these memories of the past that this holy name was chosen, and as there is thus a genesis from that rude chapel on the beach to the magnificent church that stands on the noblest highway of Bar Harbor, it may not be out of place to avail ourselves of the present occasion to recite the history of that initial effort to establish the faith

in this part of the country. It is a thrilling chapter in the Catholicity of Maine.

The colony of Acadia on the other side of the bay had been foredoomed to failure. It was more than half Huguenot in its inception, and even the Catholic colonists had a Calvinistic bias in their mentality and way of life. At last, after many a weary struggle and defeat in bettering the condition of both the red men and the white, it was determined to find a more propitious place where the faith might be professed and practiced without molestation. For that reason Maine was chosen; and in 1613 the Jesuits Biard, Massé and Quentin, with a shipload of colonists, landed at Bar Harbor.

Unhappily the moment was unpropitious. All that summer of 1613 the famous freebooter, Samuel Argall of Virginia, had been roaming those seas and seeking for plunder to satisfy the ragged and ravenous crew of sixty adventurers who lolled over their cannon and scanned the horizon for prey. The merest accident in the lifting of the fog revealed to them the existence of the new colony. They saw the unsuspecting farmers laying out their fields and constructing their cabins. It was a rich prize that had dropped unexpectedly into their hands and, although peace reigned between France and England, it mattered little to these buccaneers, and with flags flying and cannons booming and trumpets demanding surrender, they swooped down on the terror-stricken settlers. The contest was one-sided and short. The French flag was hauled down; the inhabitants were made prisoners; some were set adrift in open boats; others taken aboard the English vessel; and, laden with booty, Argall set sail in triumph for Virginia. It was the end of the French and Catholic occupation of Bar Harbor, effected by as shameless a bit of piracy as even those riotous times could furnish. The mission disappeared, but not, however, its memories, for the character of the men who made

that first attempt at placing the cross of Christ in this place cannot be forgotten by the Catholics of Maine.

Among the missionaries of Saint Sauveur who are identified with this place is the humble lay brother Du Thet. His was the first Christian blood to be shed in these parts. Slain in the brief battle in the harbor, his body reposes somewhere on the shore.

Another was the glorious Enemond Massé, one of the most illustrious of America's early apostles. He was flung into an open boat with the Commandant La Saussaye to drift without chart or compass or provisions on the stormy Atlantic, and with the almost absolute certainty of death by drowning or starvation. Happily they were picked up by some fishermen off the shore and carried in safety to distant France. La Saussaye never returned to regain his lost glory, but twelve years after the great disaster Massé stood on the deck of the frail vessel by the side of the future martyr Brébeuf and came with him to labor among the savages. Driven out a second time, he re-entered Quebec with Champlain in 1633 and, until the age of seventy-two, labored unceasingly amid hardship and danger and suffering to advance the cause of Christianity and civilization. He was no ordinary saint. Though employed in the luxurious court of Henry IV. his only bed was a board, he never ascended the altar to celebrate Mass unless a hair shirt tortured his flesh; he scourged himself daily with cruel disciplines, fasted like an anchorite, and while among his Indians lived with them in their filthy wigwams, suffering all their privations and not infrequently warding off starvation by the roots he could dig up in the forest. He died worn out by his labors and sufferings and was buried on the shores of the St. Lawrence near Quebec, where a grateful and admiring people erected a monument in his honor which tells the traveler that beneath it rest the sacred remains of one of that first illustrious cohort which faced martyrdom in every hideous

shape to bring the savage tribes of this part of the country to the faith of Jesus Christ. Massé did not shed his blood, though he would have heard with joy the summons to do so. He is Maine's gift to Canada's Christianity.

The adventures of the two other Jesuits form one of the romances of American history. They were carried off to be hanged in Virginia. "We hourly expected," wrote Biard when he found himself down on the James River, "to walk ignominiously up the ladder to be let down disgracefully by the rope." The governor, in fact, insisted upon it, but other counsels prevailed and Biard and his companion were sent back to witness the complete demolition of all the French colonies south of the St. Lawrence. Though they were threatened with death for refusing to act as guides, they were compelled to look on at the woful spectacle. Recognized by their compatriots, they were set down as traitors who had led their enemies thither for that savage work of hatred. Explanations were impossible and they sailed away as the fire of the blazing dwellings of Bar Harbor and Port Royal illumined the sky, cursed by their fellow countrymen and at the same time certain of death at the hands of their piratical captors. Even to-day they are held by some historians as guilty of the baseness of destroying, out of revenge, the place where they had not been permitted to live.

Of Argall's three vessels only one ever reached Virginia. The second was shattered on the rocks off the coast and the third, which held the two Jesuits, was driven by tempests across the Atlantic. Time and time again there was question of dropping them into the ocean and at last their fate seemed irrevocably fixed when the storm-tossed bark was compelled to enter a port of the Azores. It was a Portuguese possession and the presence of two priests in chains would mean death for their captors. But they remained hidden in the hold while the bark was being searched, and



when the sails were hoisted again and the ship steered for the coast of England, the pirates regarded with veneration their two captives whose self-sacrifice had saved both ship and crew. With joy the sailors entered the harbor of Pembroke in Wales, but there a new danger awaited them. They were in a French vessel—the one they had seized at Bar Harbor—they had no papers—they were evidently freebooters, and the gallows would certainly be their fate at the hands of their own countrymen. In despair they appealed to the Jesuits, who came ashore and explained the situation. In the eyes of the English the sailors were no longer pirates, but patriots, and the Jesuits were publicly thanked for protecting them. They were feasted by the municipality, they discussed religion with the principal ministers and were sent back in safety to France. But there another storm burst upon them. The story of the disaster had preceded them and had poisoned the public mind. They were traitors to their country and merited death. Only the influence and explanation of Champlain saved them from public execration and perhaps execution. Nine years afterward Biard died. Had he lived only a little longer he, too, would have stood with Massé at the side of Brébeuf and Champlain, and would have labored again among his degraded and beloved Indians, but his work was done.

Thus Saint Sauveur passed from history, and only the memory of it remained. What happened in the long interval of 300 years till Catholicity came back to its own we do not know, except that the French Baron de Castine was there, and Cadillac, the founder of Detroit, was its Seigneur; but beyond that, nothing. The Capuchins were in the neighborhood for awhile, and at last the little chapel of Saint Sylvia, following no doubt the suggestion of its name, sheltered itself in the woods, and almost seemed to fear to face the world. But times and men have changed, and there is now no reason why the successors of the heroes who founded Saint Sau-

veur should choose an out of the way place to worship God. Hence it was that the splendid church of the Holy Redeemer, whose title revivés in an English form the ancient and venerable name of Saint Sauveur, was projected to stand in the most beautiful part of what is now no longer an humble settlement, but the gathering place of the wealth and fashion of the world.

Properly has such a site been chosen. For no claim goes further back than Saint Sauveur's, and none has around it the halo of such sacred memories. First in point of time and holiness, it should be first in point of honor.

Its message to the world is a special and a glorious one. For although every Catholic church must ever exalt the name of Jesus Christ and inculcate the lesson He has taught, the duty falls with greater force on those that have the Holy Name written on their portals. It is especially urgent now because the voice of the Sovereign Pontiff is heard ringing through the world, commanding and compelling the ministers of God to make the claims of Christ the constant theme of their instructions and exhortations, and also because simultaneously with this movement in the Church, the united energies of the most determined and bitter enemies of Christianity are bent on obliterating all knowledge, nay, if possible, all remembrance, of the life and doctrines of the Redeemer of mankind from the minds and hearts of the present generation.

It is easy to explain this antagonism, for there is nothing that appeals to the heart of man with such power as the personality of Jesus Christ. He comes as a luminous vision out of the darkness of the past. It is only a faint glimmering at first, but all along the pathway of the ages, the great prophets of God, towering aloft in their exalted sanctity, are stationed to call out to the slumbering nations to lift up their eyes and see the glory with which the earth is being illumined. Clearer and more distinct the beauty and power and majesty of His countenance is revealed, as time con-

tinues on its course; and when at last He blesses the earth by His presence with all the light of the now-verified prophecies upon Him, He appears as the fairest of the children of men, crowned with every gracious and lovely gift that can adorn humanity. He is tender and sweet and compassionate; He is radiant with holiness, and points the way from the depths of sin to the most transcendent sanctity. The multitudes forget the necessities of life, and follow Him into the desert to listen to the music of His words, and to feed on the sweetness of His lips that distill honey and the honeycomb. All nature does His bidding; the sea grows solid beneath His feet, and the storm is stilled; strength returns to the palsied limbs, and sight to the darkened eye, and even the sepulchres give up their dead. The Angelic hosts sing their canticles of joy above His crib at Bethlehem; a heavenly splendor illumines Him on Mt. Thabor; in majesty and power He rises from the tomb, and amid the radiant armies of heaven He ascends from earth to take possession of the kingdom He has won for mankind. But best of all, the deepest darkness of Calvary in which He dies becomes His greatest glory, and His cross of ignominy is the instrument with which He conquers the world.

But that is not all. He is not only Man but God; He is the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity; He is the everlasting, omnipotent One, the Lord and Master and Ruler of the Universe; the Creator by whom, and in whom, all things were made, and before whom all creatures in heaven and earth must bow. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, from whom all things derive and to whom they all return; Jesus Christ, the Lord God, yesterday, to-day and forever. Well may we echo the indignant and almost angry cry of St. Paul: "Let him who loveth not Jesus Christ be anathema."

On one of the loftiest peaks of the Andes, on the frontiers of Chile and Argentina, stands a colossal statue of the Di-

vine Redeemer. It was erected as a perpetual guarantee of friendship between the two nations, a barrier against war and bloodshed; a divine appeal, that if ever they are aroused to rage and fury against each other, the waves of passion might break at the feet of the Prince of Peace.

Happy would we be if here at this gateway of the ocean, upon the lofty hill that towers above us, there were some such splendid memorial of Christ dominating the tumultuous ocean that breaks on the shore, as well as the restless billows of social and political discontent that menace ruin in the land beyond. For we must not forget that it is only His law that can ensure peace and permanency to a nation. The apostacy from Christianity cannot be anything but an appalling menace to civilization.

Such a monument will in all probability never be erected there, but more eloquent lessons will be taught by the church which is to be here at the base of the mountain. Every stone of it will preach its sermon to the world. Every sign, and symbol, and ceremony will appeal to those who are outside its walls. Its pulpit will plead; its prayers will impetrate; its sacraments will illumine; and, above all, its unceasing sacrifice will propitiate the anger of God. Nay, its people will be other Christs. By the divine life which they will receive at the altar they will co-operate with Him to whom this church is consecrated. Their moral principles, which are His, will give stability to the constitutions of their country; the possession of sanctifying grace will give a divine character to their earthly lives which will be but a preparation for the eternal blessedness they shall possess, when they shall see, face to face, the Divine Person whom, behind the veil of faith, they adored and served on earth as the Holy Redeemer.

The Re-consecration of  
the Rasle Monument

Norridgewok, August 23, 1907



## The Re-consecration of the Rasle Monument

It is 200 years ago since Catholicity first came to Norridgewok or Narantsouac, as it was then called. In 1646 two Jesuit priests left the protecting walls of Quebec to go out into the wilderness to preach the Gospel to the Indians. One was Isaac Jogues, who with the ever memorable words upon his lips: "Ibo sed non redibo, I go but I shall not return," calmly and joyfully went forward to his bloody death on the Mohawk. The other was the glorious Gabriel Druillettes, who carried his canoe around the seething cataract of the Chaudière, where that river leaps over the scarred rocks into the St. Lawrence, paddled up to its source, and, crossing to the Kennebec, descended the stream until it brought him to the sea, the first white man to make the perilous journey.

He was the first missionary at Norridgewok. We have told his wonderful story before, and it is sufficient to recall how, after laboring here, he was compelled to withdraw. Later on, then, we see him struggling to reach the Indians far up at the North Sea, then journeying to the west with the saintly Garreau, who was cruelly murdered on the Island of Montreal; and finally in his old age still lifting up the cross on the faraway shores of Lake Superior. The Kennebec may be proud of its first apostle.

The two Fathers Bigot came next, the elder of whom, exhausted by his many years of labor on the Kennebec, was carried by his devoted brother to the blessed sanctuary on the St. Lawrence, where the darkness of death was brightened by the presence of his Indians, who remembered his dying instructions and continued his apostolic work by repeating them to their people. It was he who built "the rude unshapely chapel" that Whittier has immortalized.

Above them all, however, rises the luminous figure of Sebastian Rasle, who, more than all the rest, is the apostle of Narantsouac. His Unitarian biographer and admirer, Converse Francis, says of him: "I am deeply moved by the life of this pious, devoted and extraordinary man. Nurtured amidst European learning, and accustomed to the refinements of one of the most intellectual nations of the Old World, he banished himself from the pleasures of home and from the attractions of his native land, and passed thirty-five years of his life in the forests of an unbroken wilderness, amidst the squalid rudeness of savage life, and with no companions during those long years but the wild men of the woods. With them he lived as a benefactor and a brother, sharing their coarse fare, their disgusting modes of life, their wants, their perils, their exposures, under the stern inclemency of a hard climate, always holding his life cheap in the toil of duty, and at last yielding himself a victim to dangers he disdained to escape. And all this that he might gather these rude men into the fold of the Church and bring them to what he sincerely held to be the truth of God and the light of heaven."

Of marvelous austerity of life, he never let wine cross his lips, and his only food was hominy, and at times nothing but nuts and acorns which he dug up in the forest; and in his latter years not infrequently suffering the agonies of starvation. Heroic in his views of obedience, he abandoned his most cherished purpose and traversed the continent in its wildest condition in pursuit of souls. Constantly united with God, in the midst of his overwhelming labors, he never omitted his yearly spiritual retreat in distant Quebec, and he never changed the time, lest his desire of it might grow slack.

Devoted to his flock, he followed them on their expeditions, for twenty years after an accident had crippled his limbs; of angelic purity of life, he was untouched by the moral horrors with which he was surrounded, and of superb courage he could reply to his superiors who saw the dark



storm gathering and wanted to save him: "I will not withdraw; it is proper that I should die with my flock"; and finally, when the moment came, facing the blazing muskets of the foe to protect his people, and like the Sebastian of old, falling in his blood, riddled by unnumbered wounds.

It was when the seventeenth century was drawing to a close that he came to Narantsouac. That was in 1697 or 1698, and until the 23d of August, 1724, the day of his tragic death, there never was a moment that was not stamped with the sublimest heroism.

Unfortunately he came when the ownership of the land between the Penobscot and Kennebec was disputed. It was a question as to whether Acadia extended to the Penobscot or Kennebec, but the controversy should never have been settled by the murder of a minister of God. That he kept the Indians loyal to the French was no more of a reproach than for the English of Boston to have kept their Indians loyal to them. He would have been a traitor to his country to have done otherwise. That he fomented Indian uprisings was a calumny which he himself has refuted, and the testimony of such a man is sufficient, or, if corroboration were needed, we have the word of that glorious old Revolutionary hero, John Stark, in whose greatness Maine rejoices, that Stark's native place, though exposed to the brunt of Indian warfare, was always preserved from savage violence by the interposition of Father Rasle. That his death is a blot upon our honor, we should admit with those brave soldiers of the Revolution who, on their way up the Kennebec in 1775, to capture Quebec—lingered lovingly in the sacred place. "At a short distance below Norridgewok Falls," says their annalist, who was none other than Benedict Arnold, their commander, not yet dishonored by his treason, "was a wide and beautiful plain, once the site of an Indian village, belonging to a tribe from whom the falls took their name, and memor-

able in the annals of former days as the theatre of a tragical event, in which many of the tribe were slain in a sudden attack and among them Father Rasle, the venerable and learned missionary who had dwelt there twenty-six years. The foundation of a church and of an altar in ruins are still visible, the only remaining memorials of a people whose name was once feared, and of a man who exiled himself from all the enjoyments of civilization to plant the cross in a savage wilderness, and who lost his life in its defense. Let history tell the story as it may, and let it assign such motives as it may for the conduct of the assailants, the heart of him is little to be envied who can behold the melancholy vestiges of a race extinct, or pass by the grave of Rasle, without a tear of sympathy and a sigh of regret."

The unhappy and unchristian lust for land, which was then and is still inflicting such dishonor upon our country, almost inevitably ending in the destruction of all the native races, was at the back of this tragedy. But now that the bitterness of religious feeling has subsided, it may be safely said without offence, that there was also an element of hatred for the religion which the Indians practised, and of which their missionary was such an illustrious example, that prompted this deed which has left such a blot upon our history; but for which Maine is not responsible, for the aggressors came from beyond its borders.

As early as 1705, an attempt was made to put an end to Father Rasle. When the snow was deep on the ground, and the country was like a frozen lake, 270 men on snow shoes invested the village. They found it deserted; the inhabitants had fled, and the record of the raid merely says in its rude way: "The large chapel with the vestry at the end of it, and the house, the troops burned to the ground." They thought no more than that of the dreadful desolation they had caused. Leaving helpless women and children in the snows of the Maine woods; desecrating the temple of God, and hunting its

minister like a wolf, aroused no horror in their hardened souls.

Sixteen years afterward, the General Court of Massachusetts sent 300 men to repeat the outrage. Rasle had barely time to escape with his life, for his crippled limbs made flight difficult, and at one time he lay crouching on the snow, within a few feet of his pursuers. He returned to find himself in the midst of the ruin of his beloved mission.

The last act of the tragedy occurred on August 23, 1724. Three hundred, some say 1,000, men surrounded the village and without warning opened fire on the helpless inhabitants. A mad rush was made for the river; some sprang into the canoes, but had no paddles; others attempted to swim the stream; not more than fifty gained the opposite bank and of these some fell, pierced by bullets before they could gain the shelter of the woods. Where was Father Rasle? Standing under the village cross, confronting the foe to save his people. He fell riddled with musket balls; his skull was crushed in; his white scalp (he was then near 70) torn off and sold in Boston. The buildings were then given to the flames and when the troops withdrew some of the poor Indians stole back, gathered up the mangled remains of their beloved father, and buried them under the smouldering remains of the altar where that morning he had offered the Holy Sacrifice of the mass. Around him were buried the seven noble Abenakis who died to defend him. And so Narantsouac passed away forever.

And yet it has not passed away. The memory of Narantsouac can never be obliterated from the history of Maine. It will never cease to be a sanctuary to which men will come to meditate and pray. For all time it is consecrated ground; invested with a holiness that no other place possesses. For though our heart thrills with emotion when we find ourselves standing upon some ensanguined battlefield where thousands have died in defense of their country's honor or life, and

though we understand as Lincoln so splendidly expressed it on the field of Gettysburg, that the blood of a nation's soldiers imparts a consecration to the place where it is shed, yet we know also that over and above even this necessary, noble and holy love of country, the instinct of religion exerts a stronger and more ineradicable power over the human soul. It is the soul's acknowledgment of God's supreme right over his creation, and hence it is that men of all creeds, and men with none, will in spite of themselves confess to a feeling of awe when they enter the precincts of this holy place where sacrifice was once offered to Almighty God, and where a holy priest poured out his blood upon the steps of the altar. The existence and character of Narantsouac is fixed forever. Nor will the name of Father Rasle be ever forgotten. Statesmen and soldiers and scholars have come and gone in the upbuilding of the nation. Their deeds are chronicled in our histories and their statues adorn our public places. They have gained the fame which they sought, but alas! the records of their achievements soon grow dim in the nation's memory. But here is one who fled from recognition, who self-exiled from his country buried himself in the impenetrable forests, and who, more than fifty years before the American Revolution, stood forth a conspicuous figure in our national life. The long struggle for his hold on the Indians and the dark tragedy of his taking off forms one of the vivid pages of our country's annals. Fifty years after his death our Revolutionary heroes come to his grave and venerate his memory. A hundred years go by, and a great prelate raises a monolith above his ashes, our universities and museums glory in the possession of his relics. Harvard treasures his writings, and Portland his cross and the box in which he kept his chalice. Historians who are aliens to his faith record the greatness of his deeds, and poets weave in immortal verse the story of his noble life. Under the guidance of the devoted bishop who is inspired by the memory of the martyred priest great throngs are now gath-

ered on the anniversary of his death, and are no doubt beginning that long series of other pilgrimages to his tomb, where thousands will pay their tribute of piety and love; and perhaps in the course of time, the Church recognizing the greatness of its minister may place a halo upon his brow, and salute him as a saint and martyr. Is there any greater man in the history of Maine?

Nor is Rasle merely a memory. For in spite of all the triumphs of modern civilization, in spite of the limitless power of the mighty nations it has founded, the splendid cities it has built, its stupendous wealth, its material progress, its startling scientific discoveries, its mastery of sea and of earth and sky; it is, nevertheless, displaying to an alarming extent and in most unexpected ways, tendencies which almost forebode and perhaps announce a reversal to primitive savage conditions. Look at the millions of men torn from all the arts and occupations of peace, whom Clemenceau, the savage depredator of France, described as "a soldiery of slaves," armed with terrible instruments of death, and ready to butcher each other at any moment, and whom the envoys of peace at The Hague do not dare to disband or disarm. Are they very far removed from the old Iroquois on the war-path? Are those millions of organized anarchists, who announce their intention of destroying all existing governments, and whose history is already written in outrages of the most inhuman description, very unlike the savages of old in their wild outbreaks of rapine and murder? Are the now common violations of international justice in the oppression and robbery of weaker nations by the stronger anything but conditions which were supposed to be long since extinguished by modern civilization? Is the abolition of domestic decency, the constantly repeated rupture of the marriage bond followed by new associations till a condition is arrived at almost of shameless promiscuity, anything else but a return to savage modes of life? Is the abandonment of Christianity,

the openly avowed abolition of the moral law which has hitherto obtained in our economic and social relations, anything but savage? Is the scientific teaching of pantheism which is now in vogue anything but a renewal of paganism and the worship of nature? Is the present state of things more assuring to the governments of the world than was that of the colonies when the Hurons and Mohawks and Abenakis were setting fire to villages and attacking stockades? There are not a few wise men who regard it as a critical period in the life of our present civilization, and who see no way of averting the disaster.

Rasle shows the way. Behold him, all alone in these dark forests, standing with his uplifted cross, in the midst of his savages, checking their atrocities in war, preventing their hideous murders, restraining their unbridled lusts, putting an end to their indescribable orgies of drunkenness and debauchery, explaining, exhorting, entreating, imploring, where his life was continually in danger, on their bloody battlefields, in their forests, in their filthy cabins, in the midst of disease and defilement, speaking to them of God, of their souls, of heaven, of hell, of morality, and finally in spite of the efforts of white men to stop him by depriving him of life, leading them by superhuman efforts, after years of indescribable hardship and suffering, to some knowledge of human dignity and human obligations, transforming them into Christian men and women, and, though we can hardly credit it, developing in them Christian virtues as brilliant as those that illustrated the early church.

Thus from the woods of the Kennebec Rasle arises as an apostle for modern times. For the words that come from the lips of this man, long since dead, are simply this: "Bring back the world to Christianity. Teach the doctrines of Christ; enforce His laws." Without those doctrines and without those laws the Abenakis would have rotted in their corruption; without them the civilized nations of to-day will

inevitably descend into a similar degradation. Such is the lesson which he taught on the first day that he crept into an Indian wigwam; and he is teaching the same lesson now.

His lips indeed are mute, but for seventy-five years in these lonely woods has this silent shaft been repeating his exhortations. Through storm and sunshine, through darkness and light, while the lightning was quivering above its head, and the snows and heats have been eating into its heart, and undermining the foundations beneath its feet, it has been holding aloft the sacred symbol of salvation, the cross, which is the summary and substance of Christianity; not indeed as the old Roman legions saw it glittering in the skies with the words above it: "In this sign shalt thou conquer"; but on the contrary in the way it is most commonly regarded to-day, namely, as a sign of reproach, an emblem of ignorance, a proof of intellectual servitude, and a badge of superstition; but, nevertheless, for those who have eyes to see, as radiant as the sun, and with the same words flashing above it as saluted the old Roman legionaries: "In this sign shalt thou conquer." For just as in the divine scheme of salvation it was necessary that Christ should abide in humiliation in order that he might rise in glory, so it is ordained that while belief in him is almost invariably associated with reproach and contempt it has at the same time a divine assurance of rising with Christ in the glory of eternal life. In brief, it is in the faith of Jesus Christ alone; it is in the cross which is its concrete expression, that there is to be found salvation, not only for individual souls, but for the nations of the world. The monument that has been all these years lifting up the cross of Father Rasle to heaven has been doing nothing else than preaching that hard but salutary truth.

So, too, has every sod of this sacred soil been eloquent in the same manner. From the blood which has crimsoned and consecrated the soil with which his ashes have commingled, comes the loud, the jubilant, the triumphant cry,

that better than all the world can give, better than the best blood of a man's heart, is his faith in Jesus Christ. Lo! here lies a man, and let us say it with all submission to the church's future decision, here lies a martyr who not only sacrificed all his earthly possessions that he might attest his own faith, but who made his life one of inconceivable suffering, and poured out every drop of his blood that the most abandoned creatures he could find might participate in this infinite blessing. In a word, the blood of Father Rasle will ever proclaim the truth which Christ uttered on the Mount of the Beatitudes, viz.: "Happy are we if we suffer persecution for justice," which means nothing else than that aggregate of virtue which can alone be achieved through faith in Jesus Christ. Happy are we if we suffer either to retain or obtain this faith. It is a small price to pay for our eternal salvation.

But of what avail is this voice in the wilderness? Of what avail? Why, there was another voice crying out in the wilderness and all Judea and Galilee came out to hear it; the heavens repeated its refrain and the whole world has been hearkening to it ever since: "Behold the Lamb of God." So, too, this precursor of Christ cried out in the wilderness of the Kennebec, and the whole world has heard him.

Go back to the scenes which the old Quaker bard describes when

"Well might the traveler start to see  
The dusky forms that wend their way  
From the birch canoe on the river shore,  
And the forest path to the chapel door;  
And mark the foreheads bended there;  
While above in benediction and in prayer,  
Like a shrouded spectre, pale and tall,  
In coarse white vesture—Father Rasle."

Nor let us ever erase from our memory that historic scene when our revolutionary heroes stood with moistened



eye and throbbing heart to contemplate the blackened ruins of God's sanctuary, crimsoned by the blood of God's priest. In sadness and sorrow they turned away and no doubt fought all the better for their country for having been privileged to stand at the grave of one who had died for God.

Remember also how seventy-five years ago a great multitude assembled here of every creed and every station, red men and white, who stood around this cross, at a time when prejudice was harsh and bitter, and ignorance engendered suspicion, but who nevertheless rejoiced to share in the homage paid to a great and a noble man. Nor should we forget those solitary pilgrims who journeyed hither to meditate upon the tragic story, to kneel perhaps in prayer above his remains or press their lips upon the stone that stands as a sentinel on his grave. Rasle spoke to them.

And may we not cherish the hope when we behold the throngs that are here to-day to commemorate his glorious deeds and inspire their own hearts with the story of his heroism, that for all time to come other multitudes will bend their steps to this woodland sanctuary for meditation and prayer, where every blade of grass, every sod, every grain of sand, every leaf and every wild flower that wafts its tribute of fragrance around his grave, and every wavelet of the river that flashes in the sunshine, or grows dark in the gloom of the forest, not only proclaim the glory and greatness of him who died for his fellow man, but teach the essential and necessary truth that in Jesus Christ alone we can find the light, which leads through the otherwise impenetrable mysteries of life; that through Him alone we can grow in the heroism which is called for in the battles we must sustain, and that toward Him alone we must tend if the heart is ever to find peace and rest.

But why should we speak only of the living? Lo! the long processions of the dead are seen wending their way hither, and we may regard it as little less than an inspira-

tion that prompted your apostolic bishop, Louis Sebastian Walsh, to consecrate forever as God's Acre this holy spot, where his illustrious namesake, Sebastian Rasle, laid down his life for Christ. It was a thought from heaven which provided that the beloved dead of this vast diocese might be laid side by side with Maine's great confessor and proto-martyr. Could there be a better or a holier resting place for those who lived for Christ than this beautiful and doubly consecrated place; and can the Catholic heart fail to feel anything but the profoundest gratitude for the noble and spiritual and Catholic solicitude that has irrevocably consecrated this venerable sanctuary to God, so that never through the lapse of time will any profane thing enter within its precincts? And is it an illusion to fancy that at no distant day a majestic and magnificent mausoleum may enshrine the sacred remains that slumber here, so that not only those who come with hearts burdened with sorrow for their dead, but other thousands, may assemble here to listen to the teachings of the faith of Jesus Christ.

Maine has no holier place than Narantsouac; no greater son than Sebastian Rasle, who won that title by shedding his blood for the first possessors of this land; and who offered his life a thousand times that whatever might be the future civilization of this territory, which is now a splendid commonwealth, might have as its foundation those divine truths on which depend the happiness of its people, the sanctity of its households, the stability of its laws and the permanency of its institutions. The name of Sebastian Rasle should be written in letters of light in the history of Maine.







*campbell*

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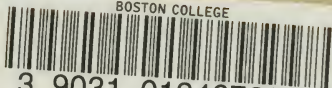


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