
The Jesuit Relations

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THE JESUIT RELATIONS¹

FROM the posting of Luther's theses to the battle of Lützen, the history of Europe is an intricate record of religious agitation. "A few centuries ago," says Lowell, "the chief end of man was to keep his soul alive, and then the little kernel of leaven that sets the gases at work was religious and produced the Reformation. . . . Now that the chief end of man seems to have become the keeping of the body alive, and as comfortably alive as possible, the leaven also has become wholly political and social." The comforts of the body and the lust of gold were certainly not disregarded in the sixteenth century, for the age of Luther was likewise the age of Francis I. and of Cortés. But it was a time when merchants talked theology at the dinner table, when freebooters said prayers and when even Benvenuto Cellini sometimes thought about his eternal welfare. Whether the rancor and the inhumanity which so abounded be ascribed to depth of conviction or to party hatred, they show how prominent the religious motive was.

When the era of the later Reformation is looked at from any other side than that of theological politics, the colonial movement comes rapidly into the foreground. And indeed we do not escape from the religious atmosphere of Europe when we follow the sails of the emigrants into distant roadsteads. In the case of the Huguenot and the Nonconformist colonies the home government acted like a step-mother, and small bands of enthusiasts endured exile for the sake of their sectarian views. As soon as they had landed on the new continent they blessed God for having brought them thus far and then set about the erection of what they considered to be a godly state. "Let them," they felt, "which have been redeemed of the Lord, show how He hath delivered them from the hand of

¹ Citations in the notes refer to Mr. Thwaite's edition of the *Jesuit Relations*, the completion of which has suggested the present article. Its full title is as follows: *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents. Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France. 1610-1791. The Original French, Latin, and Italian Texts, with English Translations and Notes; Illustrated by Portraits, Maps, and Facsimiles.* Edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, Secretary of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company. 1896-1901. Seventy-one Vols.)

Publication began in 1896 and all the documents to be printed have appeared, (Vols. I.-LXXI.). The set also includes two volumes of index, but as this article goes to press these are not yet published.

the oppressor. Let them confess before the Lord His lovingkindness, and His wonderful works before the sons of men.”¹

These words which were suggested to Bradford by the landing of the Mayflower reveal the mood of the Calvinist refugee. Sixteen years later another type of religious colony was projected by Jérôme le Royer de la Dauversière, a layman of Anjou, and Jean-Jacques Olier, a priest who afterwards founded the Company of Saint-Sulpice. The Société de Notre-Dame de Montréal did not spring from persecution but it was sealed with passion for the faith and it transferred to the forests of New France the spirit of the Catholic Revival. Bradford and his companions left England because they were molested by an intolerant king. The disciples of Olier came to Montréal “éloignant d’elles toute vue de lucre temporel et d’intérêt de commerce et ne se proposant d’autre fin que la gloire de Dieu et l’établissement de la religion dans la Nouvelle-France.”² However separate their origins and however different their temper, both colonies carried beyond the Atlantic the dominant interest of Europe.

Amid the activities of religious warfare and of colonial expansion the Jesuits held a place to which they had been raised partly by the genius of Loyola and partly by the sufferings of Xavier, but which they kept by dint of determination. On the Catholic side their power was unrivalled and for firmness of resolve they were surpassed by none of their Calvinist foes, the burghers of Leyden and of La Rochelle, the Ironsides of Cromwell and the Scottish Covenanters. To the Papacy they became favorably known in the days of Paul III., though they did not reach their full eminence until after Laynez had played his brilliant part at the second session of Trent. They made themselves the dread of Protestantism by enforcing the Tridentine Decrees, by bringing back to Rome the reputation for scholarship which she had lost and by diverting the aim of princes from the pursuit of pleasure or of ambition to the cause of propaganda. Outside Europe their energy was no less marked and their success was almost equally great. Eight years after the vow of Montmartre, Xavier landed at Goa to begin the work which extended the influence of the Company to the Far East and opened up the long course of Jesuit missions. His deeds in Cochin, Madura and Travancore were known to the world before the militant tendencies of his European brethren were more than suspected, and when he died at San-Chan the noblest field of Jesuit effort had

¹ William Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation*. Charles Deane, Ed. Boston, 1856, p. 77.

² These words are quoted from Faillon's *Histoire de la Colonie Française en Canada*, Vol. I., p. 380. They originally appeared in a memorial which was addressed by the Associates of Montreal to Pope Urban VIII.

been disclosed. Charles Legobien exclaims at the beginning of the *Lettres Édifiantes*: "From the time of St. Ignatius and of St. Francis Xavier the zeal for foreign missions has been, as it were, the soul and spirit of our Institute."¹ The Apostle to the Indies remained the one type of missionary hero and the authors of the Jesuit Relations drew their daily inspiration from his example. "A thousand times," says one of them, "the thought of St. Francis Xavier passes through our minds and has great power over us."²

There are two further reasons why an allusion to Xavier should come before any account of the writings in which the Jesuits described the mission of New France. He was not only the leader of a fresh war against paganism and a martyr to the hardships of his task. Besides showing the way, he fixed a method of appealing to the heathen mind which was afterwards followed by the members of his society in four continents. The rise of the Jesuits to a controlling position throughout the Catholic parts of Europe is paralleled by the rapid spread of their outposts to the east and west. The second half of the sixteenth century saw them established wherever the Spanish and Portuguese zones of influence extended. The early years of the seventeenth century brought them a chance of joining the French colonies at Port Royal and Quebec. Thus if we look back to St. Francis Xavier we see that their missionary tradition had flourished for nearly two generations before Biard and Massé first saw the shores of Acadia. Their experience already embraced India, the Malay Archipelago, Japan and China, Mexico and Peru, Brazil and Paraguay. It was not so much through the personal favor of Henry IV. that they first entered New France. Their men were ready and their policy was formed. They were eagerly awaiting the moment of invitation. Though ignorant of native languages they were not novices but adepts when they began their life among the Micmacs and the Etchemins.

The other reason which exists for connecting St. Francis Xavier with the Canadian mission is more important still, since it affects the whole character of the Jesuit relations as literature and as material for history. In times past these narratives have been praised and disparaged, alike without a sense of their true character. But a few years ago Father Camille de Rochemonteix prefixed to his notable work *Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle-France au XVII^e Siècle*, a statement about the scope of the Relations which defines their limits with perfect clearness and candor. After what he has said re-

¹ *Lettres Édifiantes*. Paris, 1717. Prefatory Epistle, p. iii.

² *Divers Sentimens et Avis des Pères qui sont en la Nouvelle France*. *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. VIII., p. 187.

garding their origin they should prove misleading to no historian who employs them.

Here again we must revert to the dawn of Jesuit history and to the Indies. From the outset of his career in the east, Xavier saw the value of letting Europe know how it fared with him and his followers. We need not ascribe to him a love of self-glorification. He felt that bulletins from the mission field would touch the sympathy of friends and refute the voice of slander. Thenceforth the Jesuits never ceased to emphasize all the events in their work among the heathen which could warm the imagination and kindle the faith of their hearers. They made "edification" a prime object and when the writer took up his pen he thought of creating a certain effect. Personal letters to the Provincial or to the General were one thing, annual letters which were meant for the private use of brethren elsewhere were another thing. The published reports belong to still a third class. Xavier himself outlined the principles which the Jesuit missionary should follow when he was preparing his statement of progress for general circulation. In an order addressed to Gaspard Barzée, who had received charge of the mission at Ormuz, he makes this rule: "You will send periodical letters to the College of Goa, wherein are set forth the various labors which you undertake to secure the increase of the divine glory, the methods which you follow, and the spiritual results with which God crowns your feeble efforts."¹ Beira, another Jesuit, is also instructed by Xavier to inform Loyola and Rodriguez of everything "which when known in Europe will lead the hearer to glorify God."²

Unfortunately for the interests of historical research the Company of Jesus has not thrown open its archives to public inspection. Were we able to compare the three kinds of documents which were sent home by the missionaries we should doubtless possess the means of revising our opinion about some details. Whether our knowledge of essential facts would be altered by the publication of the more private dispatches is a matter of conjecture. The letters which were sent to the Provincial or to the General contained, there is every reason to believe, comments upon the efficiency of individuals, and if heart burning ever arose among the missionaries it must have found relief in complaint to headquarters. Father de Rochemonteix says that while all the private correspondence has not been preserved, much of it still exists. And he enjoyed the

¹ Rochemonteix, *Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle-France au XVII^e Siècle*, Vol. I. Introduction, p. viii.

² Rochemonteix, Vol. I. Introduction, p. viii.

great advantage of having access to it. He selects as examples certain delicate questions like the acts of the governors, the conflicts between governor, intendant and bishop, the strifes of the orders, the sale of brandy to the savages, and asks whether, apart from the honor of the church and the interests of the colony, it would have been fair or salutary to give the world food for scandal. "Les missionnaires ne se seraient-ils pas écartés de la route si sagement tracée par l'illustre apôtre des Indes?"¹

We must thank Father de Rochemonteix for another statement which can hardly fail to affect our estimate of the Jesuit Relations. The annual letters were designed for members of the Society and a strict rule guarded them from publication or from any other means of disclosure to outsiders. Accordingly they are beyond the reach of modern readers except when a general remark about them is offered by the Jesuit historian. Father de Rochemonteix affirms that they are the natural complement to the Relations. They depict the dark side of the mission, the discouragements and failures, the mood which is created by reaction from an undue confidence. The recruit after his heart had been stirred by the Relations went to the scene of action and there discovered how many things had been omitted from the published report. His disappointment at once expressed itself in his letters and he could not help using the language of "disagreeable surprise." "The Relations," wrote Father Claude Boucher to Father Bagot in 1663, "say only good and the Letters only bad. . . . The Relations should not be read with the idea that they say everything, but merely what is edifying."²

Where Jesuits of the seventeenth century gathered wrong impressions it is not strange that more recent writers should have gone astray. No one can praise the Relations on the ground of their complete accuracy. A vein of panegyric runs through them and without accusing their authors of wilful dishonesty we are bound to observe their leaning towards a sanguine rather than towards a gloomy or an impersonal outlook. The note of optimism is sounded whenever there is a chance to speak of a generous donor, a well-disposed governor, a forward proselyte. The success of the mission is the first thought. Whatever assists the good cause is edifying and therefore to be set down. Whatever retards is kept out of sight. Things indifferent or of a remote bearing upon the principal subject may be mentioned if in the writer's opinion they possess a value of their own, but neither political nor commercial

¹ Rochemonteix, Vol. I. Introduction, p. xiv.

² Rochemonteix, Vol. I. Introduction, p. xvi.

events are recorded with a systematic view to their importance. Father de Rochemonteix, who is clearly willing to allow the Relations their full weight, is at the same time impressed by a sense of their incompleteness. His plea is that despite their confessed limitations they bear all the marks of truth, because they were written in the presence of eye-witnesses by men like Biard, Charles Lalemant, Le Jeune, Vimont, Jérôme Lalemant, Ragueneau, De Quen, Le Mercier, Dablon and Brébeuf.

The question of honesty might be discussed at great length and it deserves to be treated in a special monograph. We have seen that the Relations were composed with a set purpose and left much unsaid. Do their omissions ever constitute a real *suppressio veri*? Or, going farther still, do their statements often misrepresent the facts with which they deal? It is not enough to urge, as Father de Rochemonteix does, the high character of the authors. A long experience proves the willingness of the religious to cut sharp corners when the interests of their order or of their cause are at stake. Whether it be called self-deception or whether one harbors the design of conveying a wrong impression, the result is the same. We therefore limit the sphere of the Jesuit Relations to such information as will promote the glory of God and we then ask whether, even here, the naked truth is told.

Many of those who wrote the Cramoisy Relations were in the truest sense heroes and when we speak of probity we do not cast a slur upon their fame. But owing to the intensity of purpose, which the Jesuits felt, they could not without an effort be dispassionate where their cherished objects were at stake. They have awakened a more profound distrust than any community in the Roman Church. Among millions their name has become a synonym for insincerity and veiled untruth. Knowing how far the dislike of the Jesuits by their opponents may be traced to dread and jealousy, we shall hesitate to accept popular report about their methods. The historical critic must be on the watch against the Jesuits, against their enemies, and against his own prepossessions.

One of the attacks which has been made upon the Jesuit Relations is worth a reference because it was begun in the seventeenth century and has been renewed within recent memory by well-known historians of New France. The fathers, it is maintained, did not shrink from exaggerating the number of their converts until the bounds of all probability were passed. The Jansenists and the Recollets charged them with embellishing the list of their churches and with claiming the spiritual conquest of tribes which they had never reached. Arnauld's *Morale pratique des Jésuites* and Le Clercq's

Établissement de la Foy are either satirical or sceptical, and when we reach M. Sulte's *Histoire des Canadiens-Français* we meet with very brisk raillery concerning the number of savages whom the Jesuits saw fit to term Christians. "We are told," observed M. Sulte, "that numerous conversions were made among the Hurons. One of my friends has calculated that the Jesuit Relations mention sixty thousand of these conversions. Now the Hurons at the period of their greatest power never exceeded ten thousand."¹ And he then quotes the Sulpitian, de Galinée "who states that in his time (1670) the Jesuits did not dare to say mass before their flocks because the latter only mocked at the ceremony." M. Lorin, the clever and learned author of *Le Comte de Frontenac*, also distrusts the reports which were spread abroad about the success of the Jesuit missions. He distinguishes between the settlement of natives under Christian auspices at centers near Quebec or Montreal and the missions of the remoter regions. Notre Dame de Quebec and La Prairie de la Madeleine really prospered, while away in the Huron and Iroquois cantons the value of the work consisted in promoting the zeal of the missionaries.²

The attitude of M. Lorin towards the Jesuit Relations is not, however, quite the same as that of M. Sulte, and a comparison of their views may help us to reach a decision regarding the worth of the intelligence upon this point. M. Sulte holds the fathers guilty of deception. At least the passage which we have quoted is unqualified by any explanation of the discrepancy between sixty thousand converts and ten thousand Hurons. M. Lorin without being convinced by the tales told of Jesuit ascendancy over the savage mind acquits the missionaries of malice and traces the exaggerated reports of their success to the unwisdom of their friends. After proving how slight an effect was produced upon the western Indians by the Sulpitians as well as by the Jesuits, he goes on to praise the Relations for their moderation. "Mais il faut ajouter que, si des amis trop zélés faisaient grand bruit, comme dit Arnould, des prétendues églises de sauvages du Canada, ce ne sont pas les Relations qui leur en donnaient le droit : ces récits, pour qui les lit sans parti pris, n'ont en rien l'allure d'un chant de triomphe ; ils sont simples, modestes comme les résultats obtenus."³ In spite of the statistics compiled by M. Sulte's friend one fails to see that the Relations present either obstacles or results under false colors. Circumstances alter cases and when the Jesuits fixed their standards

¹ *Réponse aux Critiques*, p. 3. The date of this pamphlet is July 1, 1883.

² *Le Comte de Frontenac*, p. 60.

³ *Le Comte de Frontenac*, p. 60.

for the savage convert they placed the minimum low enough for the meanest intellect.¹ After a modern revivalist meeting the newspapers sometimes furnish us with a paragraph about the number of souls that have been saved. The computation is a liberal one based on the simple act of standing up or coming forward, which does not always mean an efficient change of heart. The Jesuit missionaries with their belief in the force of rites and sacraments counted their converts fast, especially when the state of politics encouraged the Indians to treat them with a moderate amount of civility. A list of the genuine and devoted Christians who were redeemed from paganism among the distant tribes would cut a poor figure beside the claims put forth in the Relations; but we may consider that when the Jesuits reckoned up their spiritual gains for the year they thought or hoped each sign of friendliness meant a change of heart. We know the final fate of the mission and baptismal details have lost much of their meaning. The writer's intent is the chief consideration. Was he concocting a fable or was he guided by an honest aim? At this point the Relations will stand careful scrutiny. Ministering though they do to the instinct of devotion and breathing out a kind of official cheerfulness, they do not shrink from confessing cases of positive failure or the evil conversation of the Indians who have been admitted to the Church. From their own pages one could prove that the Jesuits had extravagant hopes and a tendency to number on their side all those who were not against them, but the general straightforwardness of the narrative is established by passages wherein the crudeness of barbarian Christianity is virtually admitted.²

Having noticed the most famous example of perversion or of alleged perversion, which the Jesuit Relations afford, we may pass

¹ In Cotton Mather's *Life and Death of the Reverend Mr. John Eliot* (London: 1694) there is an interesting attack upon the methods of the Jesuit missionaries. Eliot, says his biographer, "was far from the opinion of those who have thought it not only warrantable, but also commendable to adopt some Heathenish usages into the Worship of God, for the more easie and speedy gaining of the Heathen to that Worship" (p. 132). A little later (pp. 134-138) Mather explains how by an odd accident "the Manuscripts of a Jesuit, whom the French employed as a missionary among the Western Indians" have fallen into his hands; "in which papers there are both a Catechism containing the Principles which those Heathens are to be instructed in, and cases of Conscience referring to their Conversations." One might suppose from the preamble that the catechism would contain full proof to Jesuit paganism. But the questions and answers simply reveal the old physical conception of heaven and hell, whereas the cases are not nearly so ridiculous as some which are given in the *Lettres Provinciales*. The authors of the Relations make no secret of the means which they took to attract the attention of the savages. Some of their devices were ingenious and none of them degraded Christianity to the level of fetish worship.

² See, especially, such of the Relations as treat of the Iroquois mission from 1669 to 1672.

to the larger aspects of the series. Enemies still abound and notes of hostility can be detected as soon as one begins to read the body of existing criticism. The old taunt that the Jesuits made an attempt on the life of La Salle is not quite forgotten and they are held guilty of sacrificing the spiritual needs of the French settlers to their project of converting the natives. The spirit which prompts such attacks is evident in some of the comments upon the Relations, but no one has yet ventured to reject their testimony altogether. The Abbé Faillon wrote his *Histoire de la Colonie Française* for the sake of glorifying Montreal at the expense of Quebec and the Sulpitians at the expense of the Jesuits. Notwithstanding this animus he cannot refrain from citing the Relations on almost every page. They are, we should think, the largest source from which he draws and no one in his position could have used other materials. The letters of Mère Marie de l'Incarnation and Dollier de Casson's *Histoire de Montreal* are also high authorities for the origins of New France, but to write of the St. Lawrence Valley or the west without using the Jesuit Relations would be almost like writing the history of the Heptarchy without Bede. Their merits are decidedly more prominent than their incompleteness or their shortcomings.

The historians of French Canada point proudly to the religious character of the colony which was founded by Champlain. Garneau, it is true, and Sulte are not imbued with a love of ecclesiastical control but they cannot escape from its presence. At most they form a small minority when compared with those of their compatriots who deem the Old Régime to have been hallowed by the moral authority and the actual power of the church. Faillon, alluding to the treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye, says: "Dès la restitution du Canada à la France, les Cent-Associés, ayant en vue d'établir solidement la colonie française, avaient résolu, pour cela, de lui donner la religion pour fondement."¹ Ferland makes a wider observation still. "Ainsi, la religion a exercé une puissante et salutaire influence sur l'organisation de la colonie française au Canada; elle a reçu des éléments divers, sortis des différentes provinces de la France; elle les a fondus ensemble; elle en a formé un peuple uni et vigoureux, qui continuera de grandir aussi longtemps qu'il demeurera fidèle aux traditions paternelles."²

These are two voices in a large chorus and the condition of things which they applaud undoubtedly prevailed, if we except the traders and the *coureurs de bois* from the rule of the clergy. Herein

¹ *Histoire de la Colonie Française*, Vol. I. p. 268.

² *Cours d'Histoire du Canada*, Vol. I. Introduction, p. v.

lies one virtue of the Jesuit Relations, that they correspond so well to the temper of colonial life. Before the coming of the Carignan Regiment the tone of Canadian society was ascetic. The discipline of Geneva under Calvin and Beza was not much more strict than the censorship which existed at Quebec under the Jesuits and at Montreal under the Sulpitians. A time came when *cabarets* were introduced, and in January, 1667, the officers encouraged gaiety by giving a ball. But every symptom of dissipation was checked wherever the church could carry out its aim of promoting piety and obedience. The first colonists were poor, hardworking and religious. It was impossible to be thought a good citizen without being devout and the language of devotion best conveys the reigning sentiment. The Protestant reader will find much of the Relations tedious or trifling because he is unable to draw edification from actions which the Romanist reveres. "A good old woman, who had found her Rosary that she had lost, said: 'Oh, how glad I am that I have found my Rosary! I lost it two days ago. During the whole of that time it seemed to me that I was sick at heart,—not only on account of my loss, but also because I no longer felt the cross striking against my heart as it used to do, when I carried my Rosary hung around my neck.' Such sentiments show that there is no longer any barbarism in these hearts, since love for the Cross dwells in them."¹

This passage relates to a squaw and not to a Frenchwoman. Long chapters are filled with similar anecdotes about the holy words and deeds of the Christian savages. The piety of the colonists is less described for the mission is the absorbing subject, but the religious concord of the French is not forgotten. In 1640 the Relation announces a golden age which is marked by the reign of "peace, love and good understanding among our French people." "The principal inhabitants of this new world, desiring to preserve their innocency, have ranged themselves under the banner of the blessed Virgin, in whose honor they hear the Holy Mass every Saturday, often frequent the Sacraments of life, and lend ear to the discourses that are given them on the dignities of this Princess, and on the blessedness of the peace and union that bind them here below on earth, to render them one with God in Heaven." The caterpillars and grasshoppers of the previous season had been killed by processions and public prayers, while the birth of Louis XIV. was celebrated by a tragi-comedy which displayed "the soul of an unbeliever pursued by two demons who finally hurled it into a hell that vomited forth flames." One of the Algonquins present was so

¹ *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. XXV. p. 189.

impressed by the sight "that he told us two days later that he had been greatly frightened that night by a very horrible dream." Best of all, the savages were deeply influenced by the "good example of the chief men of the colony. Monsieur our Governor sometimes approaches the holy table with them; he honors them by his presence, coming to visit them at St. Joseph. Having learned that these good Neophytes were to receive communion on the day of the feast of our Father and Patriarch, St. Ignace, he came to perform his devotions with them in our Chapel of St. Joseph. Madame de la Peltrie was there at the same time, to be godmother to some children that were to be baptized. Was it not beautiful to see these worthy and titled persons mingling with the Savages,—and all together approaching Jesus Christ? This simplicity creates for us a golden age."¹

During the days of Richelieu and Mazarin, New France presented many features of a theocracy and the Jesuit relations form a record which mirrors the spirit of obedience to King and Church. Such is their principal outlook towards the Old World whence the ideals of loyalty and worship were drawn. But if they belong to Europe by origin they belong to America by every other tie. Their range extends from Acadia to Wisconsin, from Hudson's Bay to the Mississippi. Ferland contrasts the advance of the Jesuits into the heart of the continent with the tarrying of the English upon the coastline of the Atlantic. Bancroft, in a passage which has grown too hackneyed for further quotation, exaggerates their forwardness by giving them priority over the beaver trappers. It is our great good fortune that they not only explored but described. They have left us a minute portraiture of the Indians and have interwoven S. J. with the annals of geographical discovery in North America.

The state of nature seems the less attractive the more we know about it. Had Rousseau been familiar with the traits of the American Indians as they were observed by Le Jeune, Brébeuf or Le Mercier, he might have seen reason to modify his praises of the primitive condition. The Jesuit Relations contain a multitude of details which cannot be construed to mean anything but filth,² superstition and the most devilish cruelty. Perhaps we must allow something for a natural prejudice against the unredeemed. The beastliness of the pagan sets off the piety of the convert. Otherwise we

¹ *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. XVIII. pp. 83-89. See also Vol. VI. pp. 102-106.

² See Biard's *Missio Canadensis* (*Jesuit Relations*, Vol. II. p. 78): "Pedunculos capitis quaesitant et in deliciis habent." Charles Lalemant uses the same illustration (*Jesuit Relations*, Vol. IV.): "De netteté chez eux il ne s'en parle point, ils sont fort sales en leur manger et dans leurs cabanes, ont force vermine qu'ils mangent quand ils l'ont prise."

can detect no bias in the mind of the fathers against the savages. They are indulgent towards the ignorance of the braves who scoff at them, and torture never extorts a revengeful word. To the Jesuit the aborigines were no more accountable for their actions than young children.¹ A display of resentment would have reduced the missionary to the level of his heathen charge. Accordingly he bore every blow without a murmur and kept himself from despising those whose salvation he was trying to secure. It follows that he did not write about the Indians with the object of doing their habits and reputations an injustice.

Broken illusions often have the same effect as malice in adding a sombre tone to the page of a traveller, but the Jesuits never felt that kind of admiration for the Indians which leads to a recoil. The squalor and degradation of the Micmacs were at once seized upon by Biard, and what Charles Lalemant thought of the Algonquins may be seen from the following words which occur in a letter to his brother Jérôme: "If a Frenchman has offended them, they take revenge by killing the first one they meet, without any regard for favors which they may have received from the one whom they attack. . . . Their conversion will give us no little trouble. Their licentious and lazy lives, their rude and untutored minds, able to comprehend so little, the scarcity of words they have to explain our mysteries, never having had any form of divine worship, will tax our wits."² Neither Biard among the Micmacs nor Charles Lalemant at Quebec were well acquainted with the native dialects and it was not until the third attempt of the Jesuits that the missionaries gained the means of learning how the mind of the red man worked. The Relations of 1632-1649—that is, from the first report of Le Jeune to the death of Brébeuf—bear witness to several fine qualities;³ the endurance of the warriors and their calmness under torture, the dignity of the speeches at councils of the tribe, and the generosity that wins a man honor. Wider knowledge, however, did not materially alter the verdict of Biard and Lalemant, though

¹ The Relation of 1647 contains a long biographical notice of Isaac Jogues in which his feeling towards his Iroquois captors is fully explained. "Jamais il n'eust au milieu de ses souffrances, n'y dans les plus grandes cruautés de ces perfides, aucune aversion contre eux, il les regardoit d'un oeil de compassion comme une mere regarde un sien enfant frappé d'une maladie phrenetique, d'autrefois il les contemploit comme des verges dont nostre Seigneur se servoit pour chastier ses crimes, et comme il avoit toujours aymé ceux qui le corrigeoient, il adoroit la Justice de son Dieu, et honoroit les verges dont il le punissoit."

² *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. IV. p. 217.

³ See, especially, the following passages in the *Jesuit Relations*: Vol. VI. p. 228; Vol. VIII. p. 126; Vol. X. p. 258; Vol. XVI. p. 200; Vol. XXV. p. 182; Vol. XXIX. p. 226.

it supplied somewhat different grounds of condemnation. The Indian of the Jesuit Relations, despite his craft and courage, appears to be more like a wild animal than a human being. The Iroquois resemble the panther and the Attikamégues, the hare ; but both are bound to barbarism by defects of nature and not by a love of noble simplicity.

From the Montagnais to the Natchez is a long flight and the Jesuits came in contact with many tribes. Of all the Indian races to whom they preached the Hurons and the Iroquois are the most prominent in the Relations besides being the greatest warriors of their respective regions. The Iroquois were the stronger and from their dealings with French, Dutch and English they reach a historical eminence which the Hurons do not share. In their country, too, the Jesuits had singular adventures and conducted their mission on a large scale. The double sacrifice of Jogues, the daring journey of Le Moyne and the escape from the Onondagas through the *festin à manger tout* were unsurpassed by any exploits of the Jesuits in North America. But still the classical period of the Relations comes between 1632 and 1649. The mission to the Hurons depicts every soul-stirring feature of Jesuit life among the Indians with the added attraction of novelty. The struggle with the language difficulty ending in success, the struggle with suspicion ending in partial success, the struggle with savage unbelief and malice ending at best in partial failure, the alternations of hope and despair ; all these trials and excitements mount to a dreadful tragedy, the overthrow of a nation and the ruin of a church which the Jesuits had created amid blood and tears. The climax of pathos is reached when Christopher Regnaut (a *donné* of the mission) having described the martyrdom of Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalemant, ends by apologizing for the rudeness of his style. "Ce n'est pas un Docteur de Sorbonne qui a composé cecy vous le voyez bien ; cest un reste d'Iroquois et une personne qui a vescu plus qu'il ne pensoit."¹

The decay of the Indians through war, pestilence and hard drinking, can be plainly made out from the Relations, although it became more marked after 1673, when the Cramoisy series ended. The missionaries did their best to stop the brandy trade, which, long before Gladwin,² they saw was deadly to the natives. During the latter part of the seventeenth century Frontenac defended the traders on the plea that alliances would follow the drink wherever

¹ *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. XXXIV. p. 36.

² The Gladwin Manuscripts, edited by Charles Moore, in the *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, Vol. XXVII. p. 629.

it was, and that while the English sold rum to the Indians the French must be permitted to sell them brandy. Among the tragedies with which the Relations abound many are sadder but none is so relentless as the decline of those for whose sake the Jesuits entered the wilderness.

The Indians have their admirers and not every one will accept a sweeping condemnation of them. We have no wish to forget the mention of their better qualities which occurs from time to time throughout the Relations. The differences between the tribes were very great and any single statement about the barbarians of New France must have the weakness of neglecting profound distinctions. Still one feels safe in saying that poetical visions of the red men are unlikely to be prompted by reading the reports of the Jesuit missionaries. A further argument, we admit, may be brought against the worth of the Relations. It may be claimed that the Jesuits who disliked nomadic life and coveted the salvation of souls, did not understand the ambition of the Indians or grasp the objects of their higher affection. A recent reviewer of *Parkman's Life* raises a similar complaint: "His sympathies were narrow; his hostile and censorious attitude towards the life of the democracy of his own day explains why he shows in his works so little appreciation of the subtler traits of the Indian character."¹ If Parkman's eyes were closed, those of the Jesuits were closed before him. We all know how he prized the Relations and how he took them as an authority for Indian morals and customs. The Algonquins, the Hurons and the Iroquois may have cherished finer sentiments than the missionaries were able to discover but idealism did not adorn the routine of everyday existence either in the village or on the march.

Closely connected with the Indians is the large subject of Jesuit exploration. The fathers travelled in search of human beings and not of gold mines. Their first interest, therefore, is the good or bad disposition of a new tribe towards the faith. Local usages are cited to illustrate the state of mind which prevails and no detail of belief is found too trivial for description. After the religious practices have been noticed, information of every kind is given. The Relations appealed to the generosity of Catholic Europe and gifts often flow from awakened curiosity. Moreover it was impossible to journey through such a wonderful country without wishing to send home accounts of its inhabitants, its animals, its fish and even its mosquitoes. Hence the industry of the beaver, the white pelican's manner of fishing and the various fashions of head-gear worn by

¹ *Review of Historical Publications relating to Canada for the Year 1900.* Edited by Professor George M. Wrong and H. H. Langton. P. 72.

the natives are set forth with much liveliness. Had the Jesuits written for the purpose of creating a picturesque effect they might have told their acts of daring in a more vivid manner. The baldness of the Relations at moments when life and death issues are hanging in the balance, may detract from the excitement but it conveys an assurance of truth. "O, for a Jesuit Borrow on the shores of Georgian Bay or among the Mohawks," one might exclaim did he not remember that the manuscript would never have reached the office of Sebastien Cramoisy. As it is, a strong spice of adventure flavors almost every one of the narratives, defying the efforts of pious anecdote to mask it. Frequently strange or amusing incidents creep in. When Allouz and Dablon were preaching to the Indians of Green Bay the antics of their hearers nearly cost the missionaries their self-control. Two of the savages from a love of dignity sought to imitate sentries. They paced back and forth "with their muskets now on one shoulder and now on the other, striking the most astonishing attitudes, and making themselves the more ridiculous, the more they tried to comport themselves seriously. We had difficulty in refraining from laughter, although we were treating of only the most important matters—namely the mysteries of our religion, and what must be done in order not to burn forever in Hell."¹ The routes which the Jesuits took in going west, south and north are usually indicated by physical features, but at the present day the text is not always a sufficient guide. The topography of the Relations is obscure enough to arouse discussion and a time may come when it will provoke a battle royal of geographers, like the landfall of Columbus or the landfall of Cabot. In the meantime the courage of the Jesuit pioneer is gratefully remembered on all sides and the figure of Marquette which represents Wisconsin in the statuary hall of the Capitol need not seem an extravagant tribute to the memory of a Christian hero.

A complete review of the Relations would include some criticism of their style and an examination of the part which the Jesuits took in colonial politics. The fierce contests over tithes, over the excommunication of the brandy sellers and over the demand for permanent *curés*, besides affecting the mission more or less directly, help one to see the power of the Jesuits and the enthusiasm of the society for its work among the savages. These and kindred topics we must pass over in order to dwell before we close upon the noblest aspect of the series. We have called Marquette a hero and the Jesuit Relations are more than anything else a tale of heroism.

¹ *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. LV. p. 189.

The Canadian French have worthies whose names may well awaken the fires of patriotism ; founders like Champlain and Maisonneuve ; fighters like Dollard and d'Iberville ; women like Jeanne Mance and Madeleine de Verchères. But neither by Frenchman nor *habitant* can the fame of the Jesuit missionary be dimmed. Without avowing much admiration for Loyola's views considered in themselves and without confessing that the spiritual benefits which accrued to the Indians equalled the sacrifices so freely offered, we ascribe the highest merit of the Jesuit Relations to their story of hardship and death. Much has been said and written about the courage of the Jesuit martyrs. One seldom observes the least desire to belittle it.¹ The only reason why we should lay stress upon it here is that it adds to the Relations an element of inspiration. The stripes which the missionaries bore for the filthy, cruel and indifferent savage are almost past belief. They tramped with him among the cedar swamps, they were asphyxiated by the smoke of his wigwam, they starved with him and, what was still more trying, they ate his food.² "It is," says Stevenson, "but a pettifogging pickthank business to decompose actions into little personal motives and explain heroism away." Among the Jesuits of New France one may look in vain for little personal motives, and to decompose a religious ideal into the impulses which have so often been called fanaticism and superstition would be least pleasant of all. The tortures of Jogues and Brébeuf are known everywhere and form a fertile theme for perorations. More obscure but no less glorious were Buteux's march through the melting snows of the Laurentians with the docile but wretched Attikamégues ; the life of Druillettes among the Abenakis which won him the honor of Winthrop, Bradford and Eliot at a time when the general court of Massachusetts was forbidding the presence of the Jesuits within its jurisdiction ;³ and Crépécul's sufferings among the Montagnais of the

¹ M. Sulte, however, thinks the Jesuit mission to have been useless and likens the courage of the fathers to the foolhardiness of the Light Brigade at Balaklava. Believing, as he does, that the Jesuit invasion of the Iroquois country was a means of provoking raids upon the colony, he can even say : "Contre chacun des martyrs jésuites nous pouvons opposer quarante martyrs canadiens-hommes, femmes et enfants assommés, écorchés brûlés, tourmentés d'une manière aussi horrible que l'ont été les pères Brébeuf et Lalemant ; mais l'Histoire ne s'en occupe presque pas. La raison de cet injuste oubli est tout entière dans la persistance que mettent les jésuites à glorifier, depuis plus de deux siècles, leurs martyrs dont ils font journellement un objet de réclame pour leur cause." *Histoire des Canadiens français*, Tome III. p. 144. See also, M. Sulte's *Réponse aux Critiques*, p. 6.

² "Vasa coquinaria non extergunt. Quo sunt crasso pingui magis oblita, eo melius, illorum judicio, nitent." Jouvency's *Canadicæ Missionis Relatio*. *Jesuit Relations*, Vol. I. p. 284.

³ At a meeting of the general court of Massachusetts held May 26, 1647, the following measure against the Jesuits was decreed : "This Court, taking into considera-

Saguenay basin. Bravery is one great virtue, unselfishness is another. And when the two are joined in religious ministrations to a species of mankind like the drunken Huron or the fiendish Iroquois, the record must be kept forever.

What we get from the Jesuit Relations depends in a more than ordinary degree upon what we bring to them. Often a book will test the reader's dullness or keenness of perception. But here the standard is not altogether that of literary talent or of historical insight. It is one of general outlook. The Relations are not merely narratives of individual experience and a magazine of antiquarian lore. They disclose with unusual clearness a certain form under which duty has presented itself to men, and there is no reason why they should not appeal to some hearts with all their original power.

Hic breve vivitur, hic breve plangitur, hic breve fletur ;
Non breve vivere, non breve plangere retribuetur.

Almost every one who enters into the other worldly spirit will be apt to hold the Jesuit Relations at a higher price than could be set upon them by a disciple of Diderot or Huxley. We are speaking of the series broadly and not of every page. At intervals one meets with passages of undeniable dullness. The prattle of precocious converts and the petty details of the mission awaken less interest than the local allusions of an Elizabethan play. The style though clear and simple is seldom brilliant. Few of the fathers were endowed with great talents and fewer still had independent views. Yet all who revere heroism and who are touched by man's power to triumph over the weakness of his will must see in the Jesuit Relations something more than a treasury of historical facts.

At the Lenox Library visitors are allowed to examine a set of small but costly volumes. Size and price considered these outdo the *Climbers' Guides* of Conway and Coolidge which have been jokingly called "the dearest little books in the world." What was paid for them we need not inquire for that is the gossip of bibliography. They are the original Jesuit Relations, published by the Cramoisy press between 1632 and 1673. Fifty years ago when American history was less studied than it is now these little books were indispensable. Henceforth they will be rarely used. All they

tion the great wars and combustions which are this day in Europe, and that the same are observed to be chiefly rayseed and fomented by the secret practises of those of the Jesuiticall order, for the prevention of like euills amongst o'selves, its ordred, by the authorities of this Court, that no Jesuit or ecclesiasticall pson ordayed by the authoritie of the pope shall henceforth come wthin o' jurisdiction." The first offense was punishable by banishment and the second by death, except in cases of shipwreck. *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay*, Vol. III. p. 112.

contain and much more has become public property since Mr. Thwaites issued the seventy-first volume of his new edition.

In the present article we have spoken of the Relations alone. There remain among the works which the missionaries wrote about New France the *Journal des Jésuites* and many fragmentary papers. By collecting these under the head of "Allied Documents" Mr. Thwaites has increased the bulk of his series and enlarged its range. The Relations stopped suddenly in 1673. They had proved so popular¹ and the mission field was at the time so wide that the cause of their suspension seemed mysterious. Different plots were suspected and guesswork flourished until Father de Rochemonteix in his introduction went over the whole ground and produced a final reason. On April 6, 1673, Pope Clement X. by the brief *Creditaæ* forbade the publication of all books and writings about foreign missions "sine licentia in scriptis Congregationis eorundem cardinalium."² As an indirect result the Relations of New France were no longer printed, although for several years manuscripts were prepared.³

The Jesuits remained in North America until their society was suppressed by the Parlement and by the Pope. Even after the events of 1761-1773 a few of the fathers lingered on at Quebec and Montreal. Looking back from the end of the eighteenth century the last survivors of the Mission could survey a period of one hundred and eighty years which had passed since Biard and Massé came to Port Royal. Less than a third of this time had been covered by the Relations, if we begin with Biard, and less than a fourth if we begin with Le Jeune. Mr. Thwaites's edition is conceived in a generous spirit. It embraces the entire term of Jesuit residence and it seeks to present all the original documents which are available for publication. We mean no disparagement when we say that most of the material and the best of it has been printed before. It was scattered, it was expensive and it was not in any sense ready for general use. Fresh records are always welcome, but before the discovery of new stores an editor of the old ones was needed.

The two hundred and thirty-eight pieces which Mr. Thwaites has collected from a vast body of information and, unless the Jes-

¹ The contemporary vogue of the Jesuit Relations, though not a subject of frequent allusion in the literature of the seventeenth century, was great. One may see from his autobiography how Chaumonot was stirred by reading Brébeuf's description of the Huron mission. Carayon's edition, 1869, p. 20.

² Rochemonteix. *Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle-France*, Vol. I. Introduction, p. xlv.

³ Some of these were published in Douniol's *Relations Inédites*, Vols. III. and IV. of which were edited by Father Felix Martin, Paris, 1861. The title of his supplementary series is *Mission du Canada. Relations Inédites de la Nouvelle-France (1672-1679) pour faire suite aux anciennes Relations (1615-1672)*.

uits produce their reserves, the future does not promise us a large supplement to it. An inventory of the contents would fill several pages and the briefest analysis would carry us beyond the limits of our space. This much may be said, that the Relations are the chief element in the series. The *Journal des Jésuites* comes next and then follows a group of letters from the missionaries to their friends or to the officials of the society. While these constitute the bulk of the work the miscellaneous pieces are by no means few or trivial. More than one hundred of the documents have been printed directly from the manuscript or from an apograph and a good many have never before been published. Mr. Thwaites has not been hindered by lack of sympathy. As can be seen from his acknowledgments aid has been freely offered. His deepest debt is to the Canadian Jesuits and especially to Father Arthur Jones, the archivist of St. Mary's College at Montreal. In France he has drawn from the *Archives des Colonies, des Affaires Étrangères de l'École de Ste. Geneviève* and from the *Archives Nationales*; in Canada, outside of St. Mary's, from the manuscripts of Laval University, of the Legislative Assembly at Quebec, of the Ursulines, of the archbishopric of Quebec and from copies contained in the Dominion archives; in the United States from the originals and copies of the Congressional Library and from private collections. The important document CX. (*a Déclaration des Terres*) he found in the *Archives Nationales*. He did well by Wisconsin in laying hold of the "*Voyages du P. Jacques Marquette*," and the Reverend A. Carrère of Toulouse transcribed for him a letter of Jean Enjalran. A prefatory note describes the source, whether manuscript or printed, from which each piece is taken. At the end of Douniol's *Relations Inédites* one may draw a dividing line. For the period before 1680 Mr. Thwaites reprints, for the most part, works which are no longer new. After that date the authorities tend to become poorer but the proportion of rare and unpublished material increases.

We shall not dwell long upon the beauty of type and paper which recommends this edition to the amateur. Ten years ago nothing so good could have been expected and nothing better could now be asked for. Nor in looking at the printed page should we forget the editor. While the publishers have fulfilled the promises of their prospectus, Mr. Thwaites has watched the proof-reader and taken pains to secure a perfect text. Those who read the Relations now can do so with the feeling that old slips and blemishes have not been taken out for the sake of appearance. The translation can also be praised, though in straining after literal accuracy it has now and then dropped below the standard of smooth English. The

chapter of errata at the close of Volume LXXI. includes a number of corrections to which we could add a short list were we convinced that the slips in question were serious blemishes.

Mr. Thwaites has earned the right to have his name linked permanently with the *Jesuit Relations*. He undertook a heavy task and its completion should bring him hearty thanks. Perhaps the difficulties can best be measured by the unwillingness of Canadian historians and of the Jesuits themselves to reprint the *Relations* in suitable form. The cloisters of Quebec and Montreal still nurture men whose acquaintance with the life of the Old Régime would have fitted them for editorial duties, and as for the French Jesuits Father de Rochemonteix has shown a mastery of all the literature affecting the Canadian mission. But either from lack of courage or the scepticism of publishers, Mr. Thwaites and the enterprising firm which supported him have been left to take the credit. The project was often discussed in Canada, its importance was everywhere admitted—and nothing resulted except the three fat volumes of 1858.

If criticism did not consist mainly of faultfinding, the reviewer's trade would be gone. In casting about for some ground of complaint against this excellent series, we think first of its bulk and then of the specialized knowledge which a commentary upon it demands. Its parts might almost have been edited, as the publications of the Hakluyt Society are edited, by separate individuals. Mr. Thwaites has a thorough grasp of colonial history and his notes prove it. From them we see what can be accomplished by the researches of one scholar, working single-handed at a great subject. He has, however, been at one disadvantage in writing about the affairs of French Canada from a distance, and at another in having to traverse so wide a territory. The most serious mistake which we have noticed is his acceptance of the theory that the *Relations* were brought to an end through the influence of Fontenac.¹ The comment inclines to err, where it errs at all, upon the side of neglected opportunity rather than of inaccurate statement. We suggest this cavil with a sense of reluctance and without allowing it much weight. It is the one adverse criticism which can be made and it is really a tribute to Mr. Thwaites's success. He alone has done nearly all that could have been accomplished by a staff of editors. His work besides being designed on a grand scale has been carefully wrought out. It is a fine achievement and it will always be held in honor.

CHARLES W. COLBY.

¹*Jesuit Relations*, Vol. I. Introduction, p. 41. "The series was discontinued probably through the influence of Fontenac, to whom the Jesuits were distasteful."