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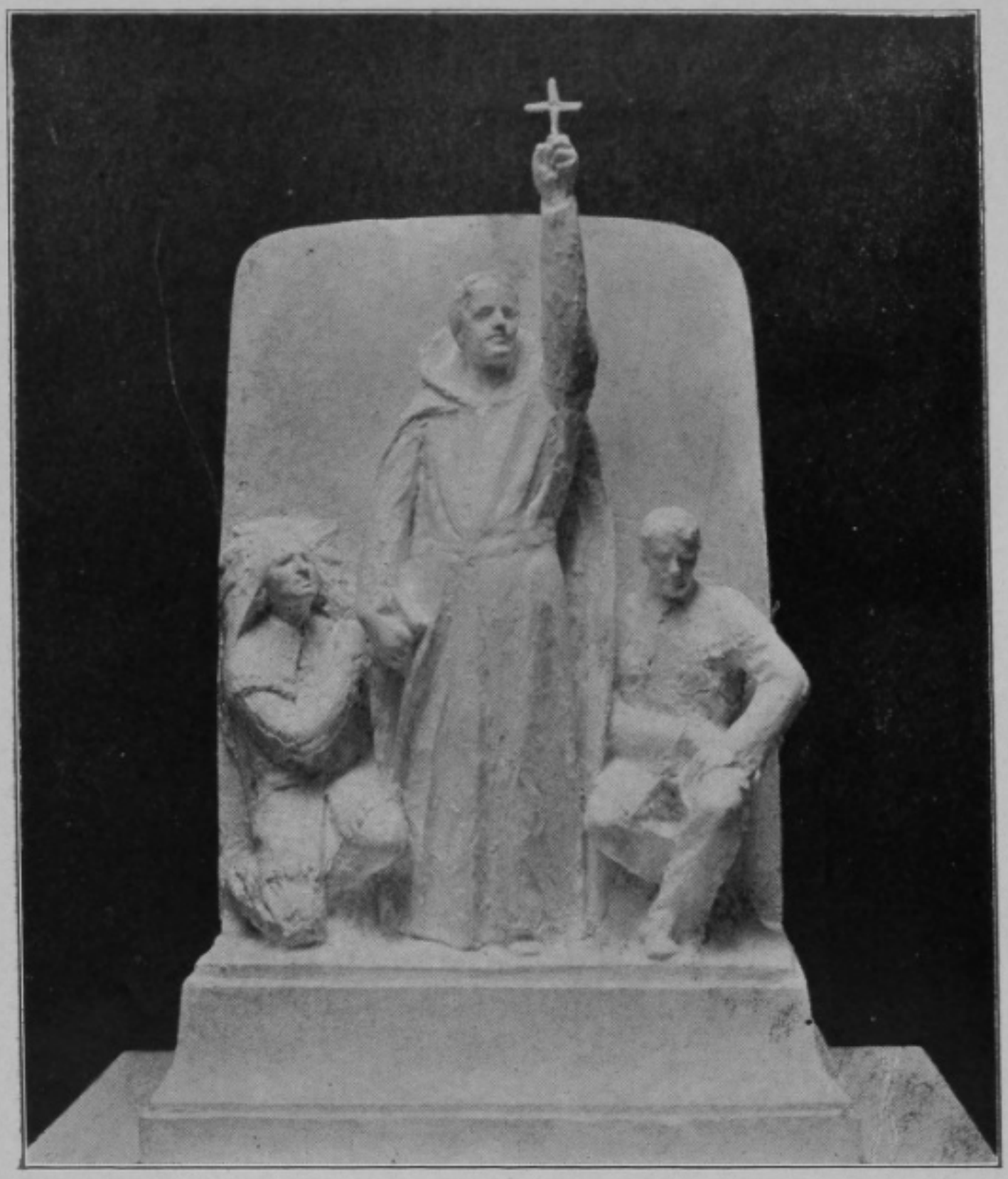

"The Francis Xavier of the Northwest."

The above is a reproduction of the design of a monument of Father Claude Allouez by Sidney Bedore of Chicago. The center figure represents Father Allouez; the figure at the left of the group, the Indian; at the right, Nicolas Perrot.

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Father Claude Allouez

"The Francis Xavier of the Northwest"

1622---1922

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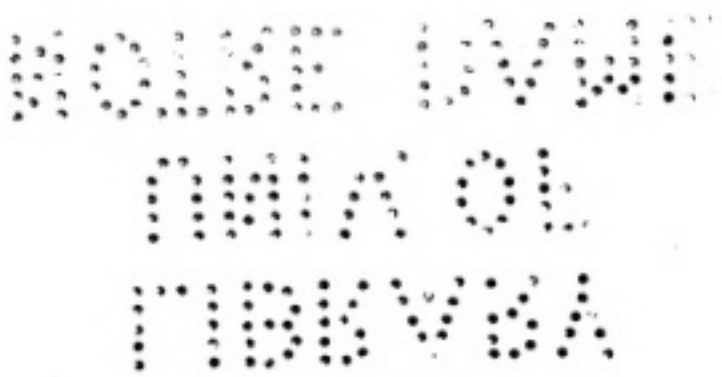

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REV. CLAUDE JEAN ALLOUEZ

APOSTLE OF THE OTTAWAS

THE HARBINGER OF CHRISTIAN LOVE TO THE VARIOUS INDIAN TRIBES OF WISCONSIN IN THE FOX RIVER VALLEY

1622--1922

At the time that the illustrious Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, was passing to his eternal reward, there was born in France, a child, who in time was to become a no less successful worker in the vineyard of the Lord, though far away from the sunny slopes of his native land.

It was Claude Jean Allouez, "The Apostle of the Ottawas," of whom Bancroft says: "He has imperishably connected his name with the progress of discovery in the West." And, Father Verwyst:

"Father Allouez may justly be called the 'Apostle of Wisconsin,' for he is the founder of every Indian mission within the limits of our State."

Claude Jean Allouez was born in eastern France, at St. Didier-en-Forest, Haute Loire. The date of his birth, it seems, remained unknown to John Gilmary Shea, Bancroft, and other early historians; now, however, thanks to the researches of Father Camille de Rochemonteix, who in 1896 published his work on the Jesuit missions, it has been fixed as June 6, 1622, just 300 years ago.

Little is said of his childhood; his early education was received at Puy (the capital city of the district in which his parents lived) under the tutelage of the renowned Saint Francis Regis, which fact suggests, that evidently, he came of a well-to-do family. He graduated from the college of Puy at the age of seventeen. In September, 1639, he entered the novitiate of the Jesuit order at Toulouse, where the next three years were

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spent; later on four years were devoted to higher or advanced studies after which he was occupied for three years in teaching; then followed his course in theology, which was pursued at Toulouse for another four years. He was ordained to the priesthood in the year 1655.

A year later, in recognition of his scholarship, ability as an orator, as well as his sanctity of life, Allouez was appointed lecturer, or preacher, in the celebrated cathedral town of Rhodez (Ro-da'), capital of the department of Aveyron, which from its sunny crest and slope overlooks the Aveyron River gently flowing at its base. But all the beauty and grandeur of his native place could not quench the fire of missionary zeal, which, as in the hearts of all Jesuits, glowed within the breast of Allouez. The opportunities and honors of the pulpit appealed not to his soul—it was his holy and only ambition to spread the light of the Faith, to carry salvation to the children of the forest in far away lands. No wonder, therefore, that Allouez received his appointment as missionary to New France from his superior at Toulouse, Père Rocette, S. J., on March 3, 1657, with an ecstacy of joy, and realizing that his wishes and hopes were about to be fulfilled, exclaimed: "Seigneur, je suis à vous!" "Lord Jesus, I am Thine."

Father Allouez was now thirty-five years of age. He is described as a man of middle stature and sturdy frame; his Superior says of him: "He is possessed of a vigorous constitution, of a fine mind and disposition, of good judgement and great prudence; he is firm in purpose, proficient in literature and theology, and eminently fitted for missionary work."

Accompanied by two lay brothers, Father Allouez sets out for the coveted field of labor in the Western World, the companion and guest of the newly appointed governor, Viscount d'Argenson; the latter resplendent in the decorations received at the most dazzling court in Christendom; the former, with only the simple emblem of his Divine Master—the Crucifix—adorning his habit.

Landing at Quebec on July 11, 1658, Father Allouez was soon occupied with the multifarious duties of mission life among the various Indian tribes along the St. Lawrence River. He at

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the same time assiduously applied himself to the study of the various Indian dialects, especially the Huron and Algonquin, in which latter language he became especially proficient. Some time after his arrival at Quebec he writes: "To convert our Indians, we need work no miracle, except that of doing them good and suffering without complaint, except to God, regarding ourselves as useless servants."

In 1663 while Father Allouez was superior at Three Rivers (*) Bishop Laval in recognition of his "piety, purity of life, and ability," created him Vicar-General of the Mission in the West, and all missionaries to whom the Bishop had given or might subsequently give faculties for that district, were made subject to him. This act dated July 21, 1663, is the first act of ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Church in our Western States.

Being later on appointed to the Ottawa Mission as successor to the saintly Father Menard, he sets out for this post and arrives at Montreal from Three Rivers in 1664, only to find, that the flotilla of canoes, with which he was to journey, had departed. And so, a year of anxious waiting had to pass before he could take up his labors there. The flotilla at last returned, some time in May of the following year, composed of more than four hundred savages of no particular tribe, a motley crew from among the various nations which had fled westward from the more savage Iroquois. Finally, on August 8, 1665, Allouez departs with his "Angels of the upper Algonquins" as he was pleased to call them, in spite of the treatment which he received at their hands, which was anything but angelic.

During the preparation of Father Allouez and his six donnés (attendants) for the long voyage, no encouragement was offered to them by any of the Indians; on the contrary, their sullen silence forebode impending trouble which, when they reached the Ottawa River, burst upon them. Father Allouez was told in no uncertain terms, that if he dared to follow them farther, they would abandon him on some desolate island.

This threat seemed about to be executed, for owing to the fact that the canoe which carried Father Allouez had become un-

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(*) Trois Rivieres, a city of St. Maurice County, Quebec, Canada.

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seaworthy, further progress was made temporarily impossible, and he with his French companions were obliged to go ashore to repair their canoe. Resuming their journey the next day, they were fortunate enough in coming up with six canoes at the portage. Contrary to expectations, the Indians made room for them on condition, that they would paddle from morning till night. Father Allouez not being an adept at paddling, nor sufficiently strong in carrying great loads at the portages, became the object of the contempt and derision of the savages. Added to this, the Indians relieved him of his hat, his blanket, and such other articles of clothing as they considered useful or ornamental for themselves.

The cravings of hunger also were not easily satisfied in the midst of all these hardships. Their diet consisted of bitter roots, putrid meat, and a certain kind of moss which grows on rocks. This latter was a kind of leaf in the shape of a shell. It was always covered with caterpillars and spiders, and this when boiled was called "soup."

On the 2nd day of September, the flotilla entered Lake Superior which Allouez named Lake de Tracy, in honor of Monsieur (*) de Tracy, to whom he considered the Indians very much indebted. The Indians venerated this lake as a divinity, either on account of its vast extent, or because of its generous supply of fish, and offered it sacrifice.

Notwithstanding the many trying hardships that marked every step of the journey, God did not deny to Father Allouez experiences, that proved to him consoling beyond words to express.

At one landing, he had the happiness of offering up Holy Mass; again, he had the opportunity of baptizing two children who were in danger of death; and in passing the bay of Saint Theresa (named by the venerable Father Menard) Father Allouez says, "I found some remains of his labors. They were two Christian women, who had always kept the faith and who shone like two stars in this night of paganism. I had them pray

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(*) Alexander de Prouville, Marquis de Tracy, was sent over to Canada as Lieutenant-General, by the king of France in 1665.

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to God after refreshing in them the memory of our mysteries."

Having traversed the south shore of Lake de Tracy during the month of September, on October the first, 1665, the flotilla entered Chequamegon Bay, where it encountered at least seven Indian tribes, that were living as one community,—eight hundred of the men were fully armed. The great number of these people encouraged Father Allouez to begin here his missionary labors. He accordingly built a little bark chapel which he dedicated to the Holy Ghost, calling the site, "La Pointe du Saint Esprit." The Jesuit map, said to have been drawn up by Marquette and Allouez, places the mission of the Holy Ghost on the main land on the Bayfield peninsula, at the head of Chequamegon Bay, and not on Madeline Island, as is sometimes stated. Father Allouez says:

"This section of the lake shore where we have settled down, is between two large villages, and is, as it were, the center of all the tribes of these countries, because the fishing here is very good, which is the principal source of support to these people."

He was now occupied from morning until night in receiving the Hurons, Algonquins and members of other tribes, instructing them, baptizing and teaching their children, who soon learned, as he says, to "chant the Our Father and Hail Mary."

It is a marvelous spectacle that imagination pictures for us as we follow Father Claude Allouez in the narrative of his first missionary efforts on the lower shore of Lake Superior.

Nature everywhere is still in her primeval glory. The peace of the virgin forest and the lake shore is still undisturbed, save for the gentle swish-swash of the wave, or high above, for the soughing of the wind-swept tree-tops. Here and there, at rare intervals, where the hunting and fishing may be better, some roving band of savages stops and makes its camp. The braves devote the day to foraging for food supplies, while the squaws remain at home to cure the meats, prepare the food and perform the general drudgery. At night they gather around the camp fires or in the wigwams. It is needless to say, that all the squalor, the filth, the brutality and debauchery that go with savage life are there. And, it is into such haunts that the lone and solitary missionary ventures—sublime for his trust in God and great

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because of the love that he bears to these, the least of his Master's children.

They are startled by his advent, but curiosity finally possesses them. They want to see the Blackrobe and to hear him speak. They marvel at the story of the good God who offered up His only Son that others might have life-everlasting. It is an unbelievable tale. They ridicule the missionary and heap contumely upon him. Sneers and taunts are his reward, but nothing daunted, he holds his peace and fearlessly goes on with the work of salvation, until finally some primitive soul feels the touch of Divine Grace and yields itself to Christ.

What a joy for the missionary when amid such surroundings the first fruits of his sowing are garnered!

Thus it was that Father Allouez began his career as missionary among the Hurons and Algonquins of Lake Superior, and rested not until the day of his death, visiting tribe after tribe throughout the vast expanse of territory from Point du Saint Esprit in northern Wisconsin, to the present states of Illinois Indiana and Michigan.

He says, "God gave me the grace to make myself understood by more than ten different tribes, but I confess it is necessary to beg Him for patience in order to suffer joyfully the contempt, raillery, importunity, and arrogance of these savages."

Polytheists, the Indians offered sacrifices to the idols representing their deities. The sun was an especial object of veneration. Tobacco was a common oblation. It was usually thrown at the idol or object venerated. An account also is given of the sacrifice of a dozen dogs to an idol, for the purpose of allaying a pestilence.

Idolatry, sorcery, polygamy, and the revolting practices characteristic of pagan life, flourished to the fullest among the Indians, forming as it were their social and religious creed. Yet in the midst of these conditions Father Allouez converted many, baptizing in the year 1666, four hundred children. This encouraged him to move his little chapel to the center of one of the larger villages; unfortunate move, for the Indians incited by the chief of the sorcerers and their medicine men wrecked the little chapel which forced him to withdraw to his former site.

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On May 6, 1667, he set out for Lake Nipigon or Alimibegong to visit the Nipissiriniens who had fled north from the savage Iroquois, and who, in part, had been converted to Christianity, but for some years had not seen a priest. This was a most hazardous journey. They had to paddle their canoe twelve hours a day with little or no food, until the twenty-third, when they succeeded in getting a plentiful haul of sturgeon.

Having met some Christian Nipissiriniens, Father Allouez gathered them together and erecting a bower he built an altar, celebrated Mass and gave an instruction to his little congregation.

Here he met two women, mother and daughter, who had been captured by the Iroquois and had escaped from captivity, but had been retaken again, after which they were closely watched, and, if possible, more cruelly treated. One day, however, they found themselves under charge of a single Iroquois, the others having gone to hunt. They saw their opportunity. The girl asked the unsuspecting brave for a knife with which to dress a beaver skin which had been given her to prepare. He handed her the knife. In an instant she had buried it in his heart; her mother finished the work by beating out his brains with a block of wood. They then made for their own country, which they eventually succeeded in reaching. An incident of this kind was nothing unusual in the life of these people.

Allouez reached the Nipissirinien Village on June 3. Finding among the many idolators twenty Christians, he remained with them for two weeks, returning thence to La Pointe, after having traveled a distance of nearly fifteen hundred miles.

It is almost incredible that in the midst of the licentiousness and depravity of savage life, souls should be found willing to embrace the faith of Christ with its doctrine of selfdenial. Yet Father Allouez was often comforted by the almost Christian perfection of some of his neophytes; and the edifying death-bed scenes he describes, more than compensated him for his many trials. He narrates: "One was a young girl, fourteen years of age, who diligently attended all the catechetical instructions I gave, and joined in the prayers which I had them say, of which she had learned a good many by

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heart. She fell sick. Her mother who was not a Christian, called the sorcerers and had them perform all the follies of their infamous trade. I heard about it, went to seek the girl and made her a proposal of Baptism. She was overjoyed to receive it; after which, child though she was, she opposed all the juggleries they tried to perform around her, saying, by her Baptism she had renounced all those superstitions; and in this generous combat she died, praying to God until she breathed her last sigh."

Another edifying relation is that of the death of an old man about one hundred years of age, who was taken care of by his two daughters. These attended the instructions in the chapel regularly and on returning to their wigwam intelligently related all to their father. "When I went to see him I found him acquainted with our mysteries, and the Holy Ghost working in his heart by the ministry of his daughters, he vehemently begged to be made a Christian. This I granted him by conferring baptism without delay, seeing him in danger of death. I never saw an Indian who was more willing to pray to God. Among other prayers he repeated the following with extraordinary fervor: 'My Father, who art in heaven; my Father, may thy name be sanctified.' These words contained more sweetness for him than those I suggested—'Our Father, who art in Heaven!' Seeing himself one day so far advanced in age, he exclaimed of himself in the sentiment of St. Augustine: 'Too late have I known Thee, O my God; too late have I loved Thee!' I doubt not that his death which soon followed, was precious in the eyes of God, who had suffered him to remain in idolatry for so many years, reserving but a few days for him to end his life in this Christian manner."

For two years Father Allouez labored among those wild people, alone. He then returned to Quebec, where he arrived on August 3rd, 1667, to give an account of his stewardship to his Superior and to enlist assistants for the great work.

He remained at Quebec but two days, and on his return to La Pointe du Saint Esprit took with him Father Louis Nicolas, and a lay brother; also four donnés (attendants), who were to aid in the support of the missionaries.

The trials of these good Fathers can be better imagined

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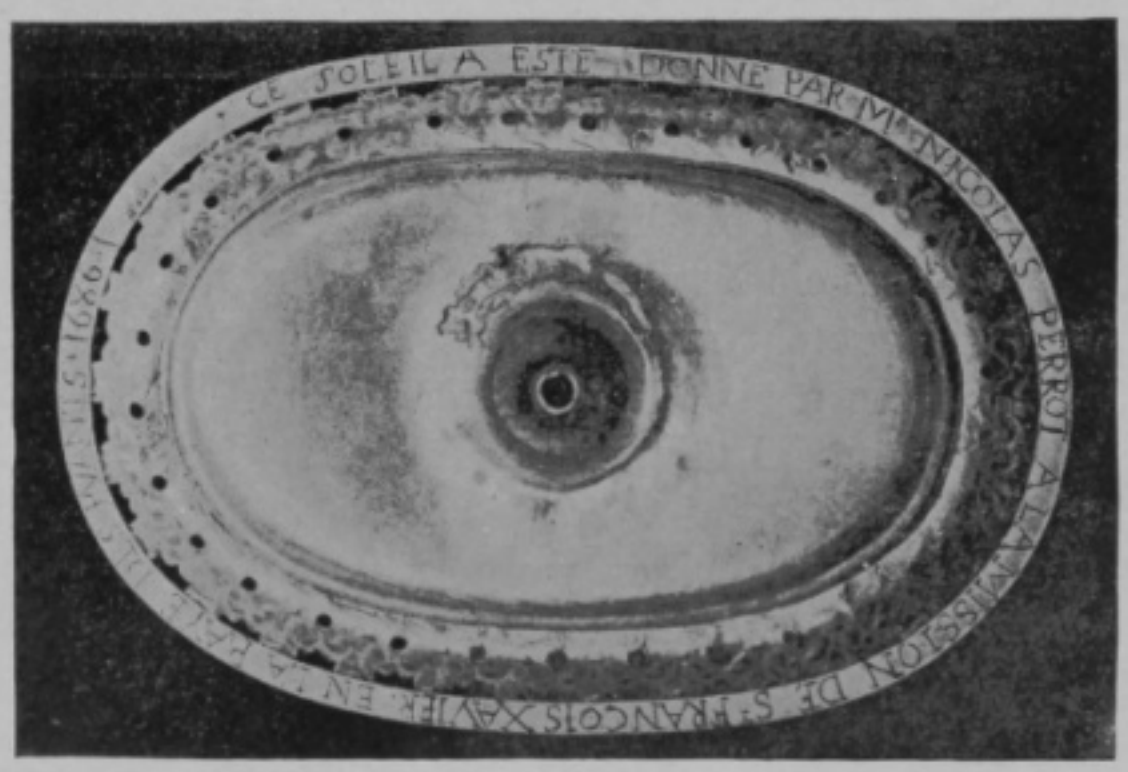

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than described,—ridicule from idolators, insolence, hunger, ill-treatment of all kinds, are what Fathers Claude Allouez and Louis Nicolas endured in their efforts to christianize the savages.

In 1669 Allouez again reported to his Superior at Quebec. He did not, however, return to the Ottawas at La Pointe, for as he had previously informed them, they were obdurate and did not respond to the graces so generously bestowed on them. He, therefore, determined to "shake the dust from his shoes and leave them."

The Pottawatamies had frequently invited him to their country. This was not, however, for the purpose of receiving religious instruction from him, but rather to secure his protection from the ill-treatment of some young Frenchmen who had come among them to trade.

Arriving at the Sault, he continued his journey southward, accompanied by two French voyageurs. This voyage, perilous at any season, was doubly so at this time, November the third. Cold piercing winds; rocks and shoals; sleeping upon the bare ground at times; waking one morning to find themselves covered with a mantle of snow, their canoe covered with ice, so that it barely could be kept afloat; tossed from island to island; such were the delights of this mission trip.

At last they chanced upon a cabin of Pottawatamies, who welcomed them and shared their store of provisions with them, which consisted principally of "fene," the nut of the beech tree, roasted and pounded into flour.

The voyage terminated on the eve of St. Francis day, at the mouth of the Oconto River. On the Feast Day, December the third, Father Allouez offered up the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, at which eight Frenchmen attended with great devotion. There it was that the foundation of the third and greatest mission of the Northwest, "St. Francis Xavier," was laid, and not at Green Bay, as some writers have chronicled, but near the site of the present city of Oconto. Here six French traders had taken up winter quarters in the mixed Indian village of Sauk, Fox, Winnebago and Pottawatami.

The Indians of this place were said to be "unusually barbarous, lacking in ingenuity, not knowing how to make a dish

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or a ladle." The missioner and his companions found it difficult to get material for a cabin, and still more difficult to sustain life on Indian corn, acorns, and a few fish. But Allouez made no complaint; his purity of purpose,—to win souls to God—lightened every burden and seasoned the poorest fare.

The attention of Father Allouez was first given to the Sauks, the most barbarous of the tribes. He spent his time in visiting the cabins, baptizing, catechising and teaching; those who seemed well disposed were taught to chant the Pater and Ave' in their own tongue.

On the seventeenth of February he crossed the Bay to visit the Pottawatamies who were camped on the east shore, about six miles from the mouth of the Fox River, a site now known as "Red Banks."

The following day, calling a council of the elders, he explained to them the mysteries of the Faith, the suffering of the lost soul and the eternal joy of the just, which so impressed them, that they asked him to send them an instructor, or to remain with them. Encouraged by their demeanor, he visited them in their cabins, instructing them as best he could. A week later, on February 23rd, he set out on his return trip to his village. Uufortunately, the intense cold coupled with a high wind and deep snow prevented them from crossing the bay, and obliged him and his companions to spend the night on the ice. Continuing the journey next day, Father Allouez writes: "I had my nose frozen and I had a fainting fit that compelled me to sit down on the ice, where I should have remained, if by Divine Providence I had not found a clove in my pocket, which gave me strength enough to reach the settlement."

The fire of Divine love, thus enkindled in the breast of these simple children of the forest during his visit to Red Banks, descended to succeeding generations. In later years, it especially flashed to a bright flame in the life of Margaret Okeewah ("Noko") (*) who, when forty years old, paddled

(*) "Noko" is the Indian word for Grandmother. She was thus familiarly greeted and welcomed by Green Bay's best families a generation ago. Noko lived to be one hundred twenty-five years old; died Feb. 13, 1868; she was buried from Holy Cross Church, Bay Settlement, by Rev. Father Daems, and rests in Holy Cross cemetery at Bay Settlement.

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her canoe from Red Banks to the city of Milwaukee, to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation from the Rt. Rev. John Martin Henni, first bishop of that See.

May not Red Banks be called holy ground, "The place where first they trod?"

Desiring to establish a mission among the Outagamies, (Foxes) a branch of the Algonquin family, who were located on the banks of the Upper Fox River, Father Allouez left St. Francis on April sixteenth to journey southward. He spent the first night at the head of "Baye des Puants" (Fetid water) now Green Bay, entering the Rivière des Puants (Fox River) which he named St. Francis. His first stop was at the weir set by the Sacs at the Rapids, afterwards Rapides des Pères, on April the seventeenth.

While the navigators, to avoid the rapids, pushed their canoe through the shallows or made portages when necessary, our missionary set out on foot along the banks of the Fox River, entranced at every step by the exquisite beauty of the scenery about him, which to his enraptured soul was but a symbol of the greater joys that God has in store for His own. And thus the little party made its way to Rapid des Croche, Grand Kekalin, Little Chute, Grand Chute (city of Appleton), Lac des Puants, which he named St. Francis (now Lake Winnebago), Lake Butte des Morte, Poygan, Winneconne; all of which localities may claim to have received the blessing of Wisconsin's great apostle.

Crossing Lake Winnebago to the present site of the city of Oshkosh on Sunday, April the twentieth, Father Allouez celebrated Mass there, and then pursued his course to the upper Fox, River, through Lake Butte des Morte to the Wolf River, finally reaching the Outagamie village on the twenty-fourth. Unfortunately, French traders seemed to have dealt unfairly with the people of this village, and in consequence, their attitude to the French, in general, was not only one of distrust but of open hostility as well. This deserved prejudice made it doubly hard for the missionary, who says: "If these men (referring to the French traders) behaved as they ought, I should have less trouble in giving these poor people better ideas of the whole French nation."

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Yet this animosity was not evident in their reception of Father Allouez. The people came in crowds to meet him, all anxious to see the "Manitou" who was coming to visit them, and accompanied him most respectfully to their cabin, where he was received as an honored guest.

Many of these Outagamies, in their wanderings, had reached the shore of Chequamegon Bay and had visited the Mission at La Pointe du St. Esprit, where they had listened to the discourses of Father Allouez, and had urged him to visit their country far to the south,—a land of plenty, with its vine clad hills, fertile valleys, and rivers teeming with fish. A scene most fascinating for the brush of an artist, but to the mind of the man of God the picture presenting itself was the soul of the savage illumined by Christian faith and hope and love. To realize this ideal was the object of his journey.

Assembling the elders of the tribe on the day following his arrival and invoking God's blessing on the undertaking, Father Allouez explained the purpose of his visit,—to give them knowledge of the Creator of heaven and earth, the dependence of the creature upon Him, the punishment for sin, and the eternal happiness of the just. They received his message with marked attention and reverence. He also made known to them the great blessings to be realized from the establishment of a Mission in their midst. Strange to say, his advice was readily accepted by his hearers, and thus was laid the foundation of St. Mark's Mission on April 25, 1670.

The location of St. Mark's mission was long shrouded in doubt. Father Verwyst places it near Mukwa, Waupaca County. Father La Boule says: "Not far from the Wolf River." Msgr. (afterwards Bishop) J. J. Fox and P. V. Lawson, September 19-20, 1899, revisited and re-examined some of the Indian sites in Waupaca county, and in a letter to Editor Reuben G. Thwaites, September 25, 1899, (Jesuit Relations) express the opinion that the mission was located at Manawa, in the township of Little Wolf. Mr. Lawson says: "White Lake in the township of Royalton is the 'Little Lake of St. Francis' of Allouez."

On April the twenty-seventh, Father Allouez took leave of the "children of St. Mark's," wending his way to the Mascouten

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village (Machkoutench, 'Fire Nation') on the Upper Fox, nine miles from the site of Portage city, where he arrived on April 29. Here he found the Miamis who, driven from northern Indiana and eastern Illinois into Wisconsin by the fierce Iroquois, united with the Mascoutens.

Like the Outagamies, these people received the missionary with great joy, presenting to him their choicest gifts. "This is well, Blackgown, that thou comest to visit us; thou art a Manitou; we give thee tobacco to smoke. Let the earth give us corn, and the rivers yield us fish; let not disease kill us any more, or famine treat us any longer so harshly." To all of which the priest replied that he was only a servant, a messenger to them from the Creator of all things.

The Mascoutens were allies of the Outagamies, their customs and language being somewhat similar. The missionary had little difficulty in understanding them and in being understood by them in turn. He instructed them in the mysteries of holy Faith, spending the few days with them in prayer and exhortation, begging God's blessing upon the Mission of St. James which he established on the Feast day, the first of May, 1670.

They beseech the Blackgown again and again to remain with them. Father Allouez promises to revisit them at no distant day, and prepares with his two Frenchmen for the return trip. Wind and tide must have been most propitious, for the next act chronicled is: "Father Allouez preaching to the Menominees (Wild Rice) at the mouth of their river on the eighth of May and here establishing the mission of St. Michael. Two other missions founded among the Menominees, it is supposed, were those at Suamico, and Pensaukee in Oconto county."

In the autumn of the same year, 1670, Father Allouez accompanied by Father Dablon, now superior of the Western missions, again visited the Mascoutens. On reaching the rapids at Kakaling (Kaukauna) they discovered a stone idol to which divine homage was paid by the savages. The face was painted in typical Indian style, while around its base, as votive offerings, were strewn tobacco, arrows and other gew-gaws by them considered precious. The missioners caused the idol to be raised from its pedestal, and thrown into the depths of the river.

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Allouez was heartily welcomed by his spiritual children of the St. James Mission, and observed with keen delight the favorable impression made on Father Dablon by the place and the people. Father Dablon says he is not surprised that the Miamis joined their allies (the Mascoutens) in this favored place, the beauty of which had about it something of a terrestial paradise.

"Flying visits," these of the Missionary must have been, for from the September of 1670 to May, 1671, he visited the Mascoutens, Miamis and Kickapoos on the upper Fox; the Optagamies on the Wolf, the Sacs on the lower Fox and Rapides des Peres; and around Baye des Puants, the Sacs, Foxes, Pottawatamies, Menominees and Winnebagoes.

In May of 1671, in response to orders from his Superior, Father Allouez, attended by a Frenchman and an Indian, departs for Sault Ste. Marie, to assist at the great pageant, arranged to commemorate the taking possession of the Western World, from Lake de Tracy to the South sea, in the name of the Grand Monarch Louis XIV, king of France and Navarre, by his emissary M. de Lusson. The story reads like a fairy tale.

A strange and picturesque assembly took part in the festivities; there were French coureurs de bois from the depths of the forest, Indians of fifteen different tribes with as many chiefs, dressed in all their savage panoply of war, four Jesuit priests, Seur Lusson, Monsieur Talon and last but not least Nicolas Perrot, who seemed to have been the moving spirit of the entire celebration. It is no stretch of the imagination to record this as one of the greatest and most unique gatherings in the history of pioneer America.

One can well imagine the awe and wonderment of the simple natives, when amid pomp and pageantry, to the sound of music and the crash of fire-arms, extolled by address after address, to the shouts of "Vive le Roi," a monarch in a far off land was proclaimed King and Ruler of the these vast regions. And thus the Jesuit missionary, the soldier of fortune in these distant parts, the voyageur and the Indian chief hailed the sovereignty of the Bourbons in our land, and the fleur-de-lis floated over the vast territory a part of which is now Wisconsin.

But after all, the great and the most impressive feature of

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the celebration consisted in the planting of the Cross and in the veneration shown to the emblem of Christianity by that motley throng, and in this Father Claude Allouez was chief actor.

This wonderful demonstration took place June the fourteenth, Sixteen Hundred Seventy-one.

The celebration over, Allouez accompanied by Father Andre returned to Baye des Puants. It was at this time that Joliet was appointed to search for the "Great River,"—so much talked of. Marquette, not the experienced Allouez, was commissioned to accompany him. Though such be the fact, it was, nevertheless, the knowledge of the geography of these parts and the experience of Father Allouez which stood the explorers in good stead, and while just credit is given Joliet and Marquette for the discovery of the Mississippi, it should not be forgotten that Allouez "blazed the trail."

Early in 1671 war broke out with savage fury between the Nadouesis (Sioux), the Iroquois of the Northern regions, and the Ottawas and Hurons of La Pointe. The Sioux were the victors; those of their enemies who fell into their hands were treated with unspeakable cruelty; those who were fortunate enough to escape, fled from their villages and sought asylum at Sault Ste. Marie.

The mission at La Pointe was now deserted and Lake Superior was closed to French enterprise. Henceforth it is the mission of St. Francis Xavier which becomes the center of Jesuit operations in Wisconsin. This in 1671 was moved to Rapides des Peres, where on the east side of the Fox River, Fathers Allouez and Andre constructed a little cabin and chapel.

Why was De Pere chosen?—Father Allouez having founded every mission in Wisconsin from La Pointe to its southern limit realized that this site possessed unusual advantages. Nature had been most lavish in showering blessings on this spot. The noble Fox majestically sweeps by in its onward course to the sea, while sentineled on either bank are stately oak, beech, maple, and other forest kings, plentifully interspersed with fruit trees—apple and plum, besides grapes and berries of various kinds.

Skillful contrivances for catching fish, inventions of the Sacs of these rapids, are most peculiar and confined it seems ex-

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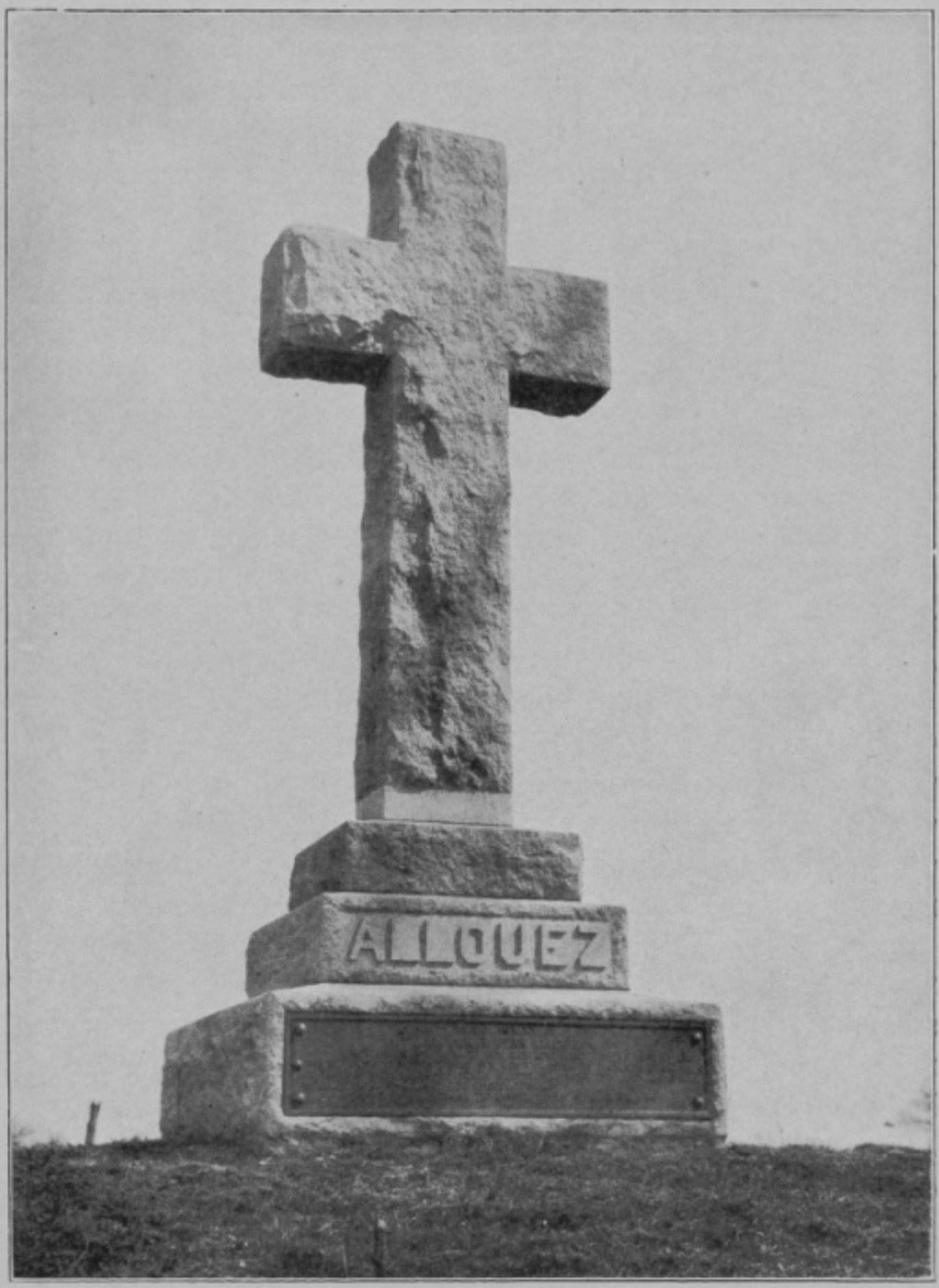

Monument to Father Allouez at Niles, Mich.

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clusively to this place. One device is a net in which game is caught as well as fish,—perch, pike, pickerel and hell-divers, all in the same snare.

Hunting was equally plentiful and profitable in the forest; bears, wild cats and deer, as well as much small game and wild fowl abounded hereabout.

To all these advantages is added one of vastly greater importance. De Pere was the center of traffic for the surrounding Indian tribes. Father Allouez says: "Hence it was that we turned our eyes thither, with a view to placing our Chapel there in the midst of more than ten different Nations, who can furnish us over fifteen thousand souls to be instructed in the truths of Christianity."

Fathers Allouez and André now undertook the task of apportioning the territory for their work, the latter taking the tribes around Green Bay, there being six Nations in the fifty odd miles between De Pere and Menominee; while Father Allouez again returned to his charges on the upper Fox, Lake Winnebago and other points in central and southern Wisconsin.

The burning of their little cabin and chapel at De Pere by hostile Indians on Dec. 22, 1672, was a severe blow. The Fathers sustained not only the loss of their buildings but what to them was of greater importance, the loss of their records and documents. Friendly Indians offered them shelter and received them into their cabins. As was the custom, the missioners slept on the floor, with the children, the dogs, and the accompanying pests—a companionship certainly not conducive to peaceful slumber. Added to these, the odor of fish (hanging everywhere from the rafters in the cabin to dry) was almost overpowering, and one does not wonder when reading that they frequently went into "the open" for fresh air. Soon, however, a temporary chapel and cabin were erected.

Meanwhile, overcome by his arduous labors in search of the Great River, and subsequent mission work among the Illinois, Father Marquette returned from his trip broken in health and spent the winter of 1673-4 in this little sanctuary, then called "Mission of St. Francis Xavier at Baye des Puants." There were

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at this time over two thousand Christian Indians belonging to this mission.

In 1676 a fine new church was built at De Pere by Father Albanel, S. J., successor to Father Andre. Palisades were erected around the church for protection against attacks. Within this enclosure were dwellings, trading houses, shops, etc. It is said Nicholas Perrot assisted in the construction of this church. In any case, a beautiful Monstrance bearing the following inscription on its base: "Ce Soleil A Eté Donné Par Mr. Nicolas Perrot A La Mission De St. Francis Xavier En La Baye Des Puants 1686." (Eng). This Solary was presented by Mr. Nicolas Perrot to the Mission of St. Francis Xavier at Baye des Puants 1686—connects his name with the structure.

This Monstrance was plowed up at the site of the Mission at De Pere in 1802. It is now in the Historical Archives, Madison, Wis. Its use,—a receptacle for the Blessed Sacrament, when carried in procession, or in giving Benediction.

On the death of Father Marquette, which occurred May 19, 1675, it became necessary to select a successor for the Illinois mission, no less able and zealous, and the indefatigable Allouez was chosen for this important position.

He left De Pere in October, 1676, with two attendants. As it was late in the season, they were obliged to remain among the Pottawatamies near Green Bay until the ice had formed on bay and lake. They equipped their canoe with a sail and placed it on runners, so as to be propelled over the ice by the wind; when this failed the canoe was drawn by hand. Reaching the present site of Sturgeon Bay, they portaged their canoe through the woods to Lake Michigan, which Allouez entered and called the Lake of "St. Joseph," because it was on March 19th, the feast of this Saint, that they took to the water again.

Arriving about the middle of April at the mouth of the Chicago River, (or some distance up the stream,) Father Allouez was met by a band of eighty Indians, led by their chief who welcomed him with every token of cordiality. Many of this band accompanied him later on to Kaskaskia, the greatest settlement of the Illinois (near Utica, Ill.) which he finally reached on April 27, 1677.

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Marquette had promised that he would send them another "Blackrobe" in his stead if he did not return. Allouez' coming was the fulfillment of this promise. He was received with great reverence, almost as "an Angel from Heaven;" they escorted him to the very cabin in which Marquette had lived and placed it at his disposal. He began at once to explain the purpose of his visit,—"to preach to them the true God, living and immortal, and his only Son, Jesus Christ." As would be expected here, his discourse was listened to with rapt attention.

The Missionary erected a small altar in the cabin of a leading chief; holding up the Crucifix he explained to the expectant crowd the mysteries of holy Faith. He says, "I could not have desired a larger audience or closer attention." The religious spirit manifested by these various nations in attendance was most gratifying; "the younger children were brought to be baptized, the older ones to be instructed."

On May the third, the feast of the Holy Cross, Father Allouez caused to be erected in the center of the village, a cross thirty-five feet high. The ceremony was attended by a large concourse of the Illinois, and the instructions and exhortations were listened to with becoming reverence. Young and old devoutly venerated this emblem of salvation; the children with spiritual fervor came to kiss the cross, while the older people requested that it be planted firmly so that it may never be in danger of falling.

Allouez did not long remain here, as he was temporarily called to another field, but later in 1678 he returned again to spend the remaining years of his life among his beloved children of the Illinois, ministering at the same time to twenty different tribes.

Rev. T. J. Campbell, S. J. says, "He wrote much about his mission, always graphically and interestingly, and one reads with the greatest delight the account of the events that occurred there; his descriptions of the country, of the habits of the people, etc. He remained eleven years in this apostolic field, journeying incessantly and ministering to his Indian children, until on the night of August 27-28, 1689, near what is now Niles, Michigan, on the St. Joseph River, he breathed his last, in the sixty-seventh year of his life. He is credited with having in-

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structed during his apostolic career 100,000 natives, 10,000 of whom he baptized. He had earned his name as 'the second Xavier.' "

We have accompanied this most remarkable servant of God on his various and arduous journeys, from his home of peace and plenty in pleasant France over the boisterous and trackless sea, to a strange land and a stranger people; leaving all who were near and dear to him, severing, as it were, all earthly ties. Impelled by the dominant thought, "the salvation of souls;" carrying out literally his act of perfect renunciation,—"Seigneur, je suis a vous," his every breath was drawn for God, and the unquenchable fire of Divine love ever animated his unbounded and insatiable zeal.

What cared this servant of Christ for the hardships, privations, hunger and cold he endured; the insults and injuries heaped upon him.—The more severe the trial, the greater the glory. He was fulfilling the desire of Him whom he served; taking to the untutored savage the two great essentials to happiness, the knowledge of the Gospel and the grace of the Sacraments.

After nearly half a century spent in such unremitting toil this indefatigable soldier of the Cross laid down his arms,—"He had fought the good fight, and the reward of the faithful servant in the kingdom of his Father awaited him.

It is impossible for us in this matter-of-fact age to sense or fathom the deep sorrow of the grief-stricken Indians as they helplessly stood about their dying missionary.

They were losing their best friend, their only guide, and their spiritual father.

He had come to them like an angel of the Lord, bringing with him the knowledge of a life that they had never dreamed of. His advent had meant peace for them; his word had enkindled the love of God in their breasts and his work was that of a mercy which they had not known before. They had tasted of the full sweetness of his ministry and now he was gone from them—never to return.

Reverently they lay his beloved remains to rest and mark the fresh mound with that emblem which he had so often raised up to their veneration—the cross. It was indeed a scrrowful

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procession that returned to its wigwam homes; bereft, desolate and uncertain of the future.

Thus ends the life story of the heroic Claude Allouez.

In recent years the good people of Niles have, by public subscription, erected a huge granite cross on the probable site of Father Allouez' grave. It is near the St. Joseph River which it overlooks. A bronze tablet at its base bears the following inscription: (*)

"To the memory of Father Claude Jean Allouez, S. J., whose intrepid courage won the admiration of the Indians; and whose Apostolic zeal gained for him the title of The Francis Xavier of the American Missions.

"Father Allouez was born at St. Didier, France, 1622, and died near this spot in 1689.

"Erected by the Women's Progressive League, Niles, Michigan, 1918."

The citizens of De Pere have erected a monument to the memory of Father Claude Allouez, near the site of the St. Francis Xavier Mission. This monument was unveiled by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, September 6, 1899.

Father Claude Jean Allouez has no statue in the "Hall of Fame," nor has the Catholic Church yet placed his name in her Calendar of Saints, but every generous mind who scans the story of his superhuman sacrifice will acknowledge that—"Greater love than this, no man hath."

(*) Photo of monument and inscription by kindness of Rev. V. F. Ducat, Pastor of St. Mary's, Niles, Michigan.

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Tablet Erected at De Pere, Wis., in 1899

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INDIAN MISSIONARY

(By B. I. Durward)

"Brave, pious heart, and loving too as brave,
Who left thy kindred and thy native land,
Bearing thy life as nothing in thy hand,
The savage Indians' deathless souls to save!

I owe thee much, and yet I cannot pay,
For thou hast now no need of anything
That I can do, or think, or say, or sing!—
What could my darkness offer to thy day?

Upon a hundred thousand heads, sun-browned
And wild, thy hand the cleasing waters poured!
Fourth from thy guileless lips they heard the sound
Of Jesus' name—forever more adored!

May they once more their 'Blackrobe' white-robed see,
And praise the Lord of love for aye with thee!"

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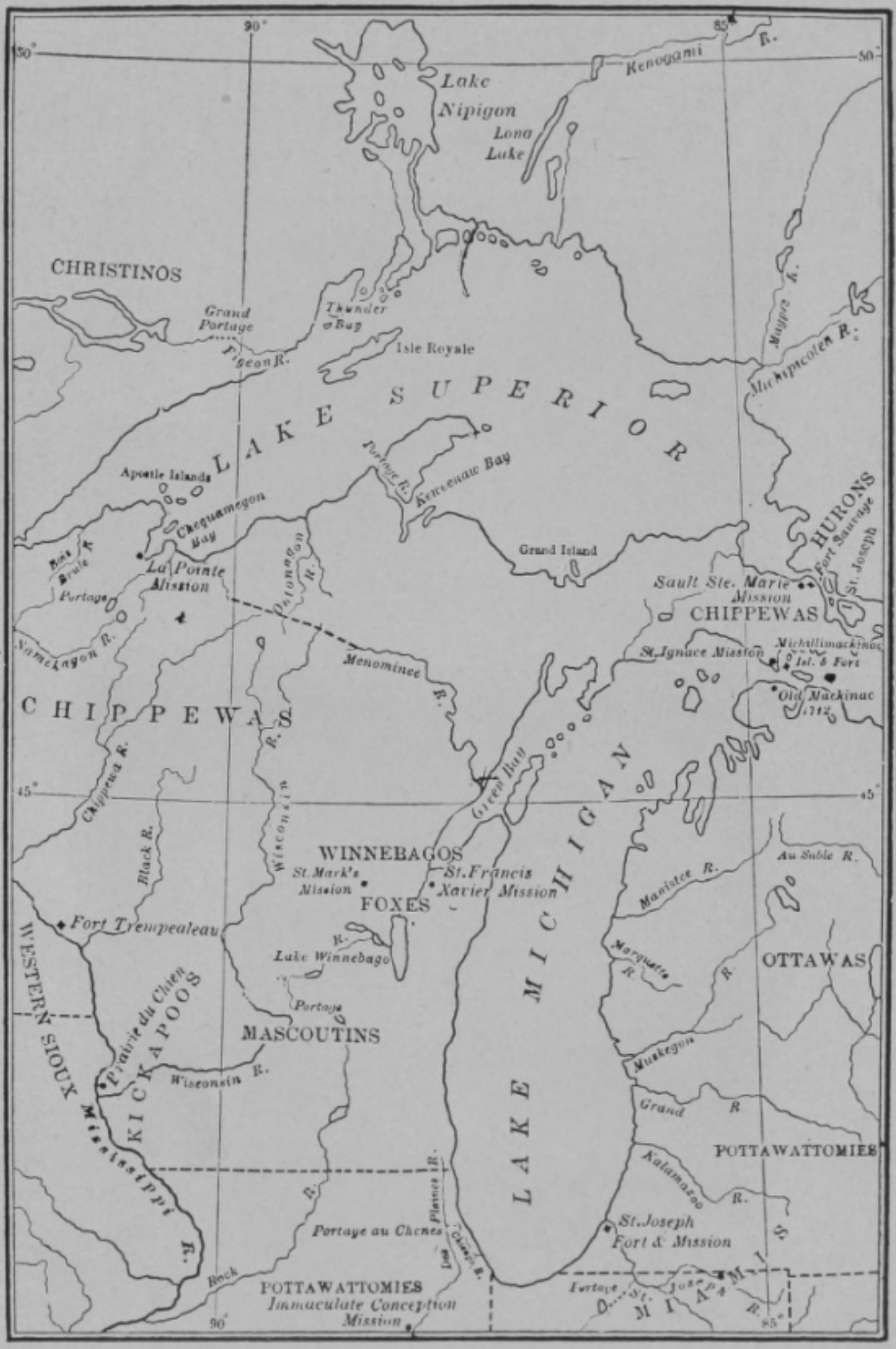

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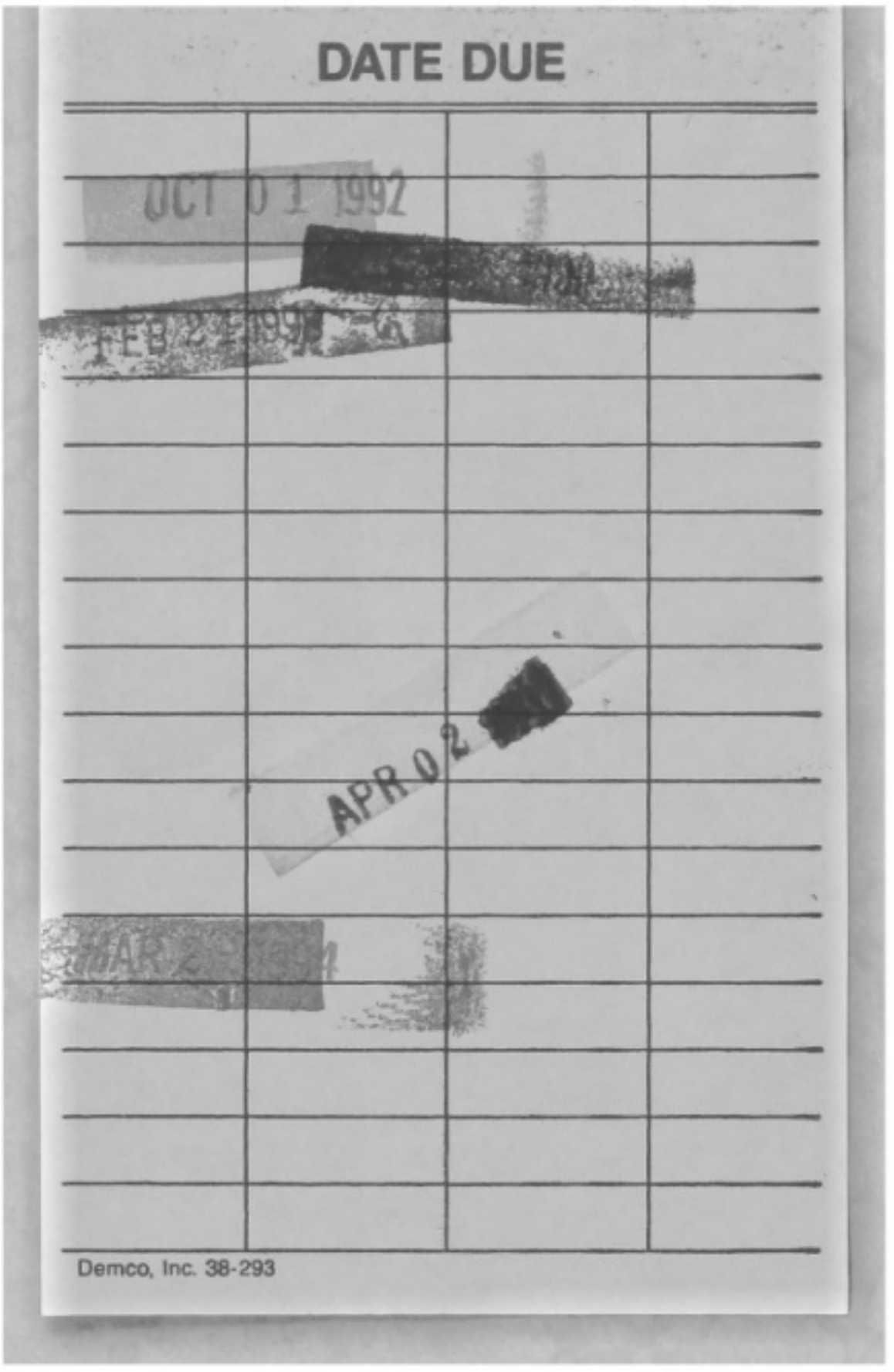

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Father Claude Allouez

"The Francis Xavier of the Northwest"

1622---1922

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