ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY

St. Louis, Mo.

Extract from "WESTERN MISSIONS AND MISSIONARIES" by Rev. P.J. De Smet, S.J., published in 1863, by James B. Kirker, 599 Broadway, New York, N.Y. pp. 512-516.

"On whatever side Father Nobili turned his steps among these Indians tribes, he was received with open arms, and they brought him infants to be baptized. An extract from the Journal of Father Nobili, dated Fort Colville, June, 1846 and published in the Oregon Missions, No. XVII., reveals the zeal of the missionary."

'While I remained at Fort Vancouver, I baptized upwards of sixty persons, during a dangerous sickness which raged in the country. The majority of those who received baptism, died with all the marks of sincere conversion". On the 27th of July, I baptized nine children at Fort Okinagane--the children of the Chief of the Sioushwaps were of the number. He appeared full of joy at seeing a Blackgown direct his course towards their country. On the 29th I left Okinagane, and followed the company. Every night I prayed with the whites and Indians. On the road, three old men came to me, and ernestly begged me to 'take pity on them, and prepare them for heaven!' Having instructed them in the duties and principles of religion, and the necessity of baptism, I administered to them, and to forty-six children of the same tribe, what seemed to be the height of their desires, the holy sacrament of regeneration.

'On the 11th of August, a tribe of Indians residing about the Upper Lake on Thompson's River, came to meet me. They exhibited towards me all the marks of sincere and filian attachment. They followed me several days to hear my

instructions, and only departed after having exacted a promise that I would return in the course of the following autumn or winter, and make known to them the glad tidings of salvation.

'At the Fort of the Shoushwaps, I received a visit from all the chiefs, who congratulated me on my happy arrival among them. They raised a great cabin to serve as a church and as a place to teach them during my stay. I baptized twelve of their children. I was obliged, when the salmon fishing commenced, to separate for some months from these dear Indians, and continue my route to New Caledonia.

'I arrived at Fort Alexandria on the 25th. All the tribes I met manifested towards me the same emotions of joy and friendship. To my surprise I found at the Fort a frame church. I returned in the fall and remained there a month, engaged in all the exercises of our holy ministry. The Canadians performed their religious duties--I joined several in marriage, and administered to many the holy communion. Twenty-four children and forty-seven adults received baptism.

'On the 2nd of September, I ascended the River Fraser, and after a dangerous trip, arrived, on the 12th, at Fort George, where the same joy and affection on the part of the Indians attended me. Fifty Indians had come down from the Rocky Mountains, and patiently awaited my arrival for nineteen days, in order to have the consolation of witnessing the ceremony of baptism. I baptized twelve of their children and twenty-seven others, of whom six were adults advanced in age. I performed there the ceremonies of the planting of the cross.

'On the 14th, the feast of the exaltation of the holy cross, I ascended the River Nesqually, and on the 24th, arrived at the Fort of Lake Stuart. I spent eleven days in giving instructions to the Indians, and had the happiness of abolishing the custom of burning the dead, and that of inflicting torments upon the bodies of the surviving wives or husbands. They solemnly renounced all their juggling and idolatries. Their great medicine-hall, where they used to practise their superstitious rites, was changed into a church. It was blessed and dedicated to God

under the patronage of St. Francis Xavier. The planting of the cross was solemnly performed with all the ceremonies proper to such occasions. Sixteen children and five old men received baptism.

'The 24th October, I visited the village of the Chilcotins. This mission lasted twelve days, during which time I baptized eighteen children and twenty-four adults, and performed eight marriages. I blessed here the first cemetery, and buried with all the ceremonies of the ritual, an Indian woman, the first converted to Christianity. I next visited two other villages of the same tribe--in the first I baptized twenty persons, of whom three were adults. In the second, two chiefs with thirty of their nation received baptism, and two were united in matrimony. Polygamy prevailed everywhere, and everywhere I succeeded in abolishing it. In a neighboring tribe I baptized fifty-seven persons, of whom thirty-one were adults. I also celebrated nine marriages.

'After my return to the Sicoushwaps, I baptized forty-one persons, of whom eleven were adults. I visited five more villages among the neighboring tribes, among whom I baptized about two hundred persons. I performed the ceremony of the planting of the cross, in eight different places, and founded four frame churches which were constructed by the savages.

'On an average, each village or tribe consists of about two hundred souls.

'In the neighborhood of Fort Alexandria
the number of souls amounts to.....1255
About Fort George..... 343
In the neighborhood of Frazer's Lake..... 258
" " " Stuart's Lake..... 211
" " " McLeod's Lake..... 80
" " " Fort Babine.....1190
" " " Bear Lake..... 801
Total number of souls.....4138

'Population on Thompson's River, or on the land of the Siouslwaps or Atnans.

'The number of Siouslwaps, so called, is.....	583
" " Okinaganes.....	685
Population on the North Branch.....	525
" " Lake Superior.....	322
" at the Fountain of Fraser Lake.....	1127
Number of Knife Indians.....	1530
Total number of souls.....	4772'.

During his sojourn in New Caledonia, Father Nobili, had to endure great privations. Through the course of one whole year, his only subsistence was a sort of moss or grass and roots. His chief food was horse-flesh, and often he was reduced to eating the flesh of dogs and wolves. What he suffered from cold, hunger, and other privations is only known to God. To man, the reality would seem incredible.

After having dwelt among the savage tribes six years, during which he showed himself a worthy disciple of Jesus Christ, in bringing back souls to God, and in eradicating the vices which predominate in them, in obedience to the orders of his superiors, he forsook his dear Indians and came to California, in 1849, with his health greatly enfeebled.

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