

A BISHOP'S DISCOVERY.

More Light on the Irish Legend of St. Brendan.

A Medal of St. Peter supposed to have been made in the first centuries of Christianity. Found by two Jesuit Fathers in Dutch Guiana.

The late visit of Bishop Wulfig, Vicar Apostolic of Dutch Guiana, having drawn attention to that country, a few lines on the subject will prove interesting. It has been several times stated that there lived in the interior of Guiana tribes of Indians who had never come into contact with civilization. This I learned during my residence in that country, although the matter appeared somewhat uncertain. But the more I investigate, the more am I confirmed in my opinion. It is true the interior of Dutch Guiana has yet to be explored, but that of the adjacent colony has become better known through the efforts of Jesuit missionaries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In the year 1574, two Jesuit Fathers Jean Grillet and Francois Bechamel, made a voyage to the interior of French Guiana. At that time, the only Indians with whom the missionaries were acquainted were the Galibis and Aracarets who lived on the coast. Further inland lived the Nouragues, and beyond these the Acoquas, who were said to be a warlike tribe addicted to cannibalism. The latter were accused of having exterminated an entire Nation and boiled their flesh. To arrive in the country of the Acoquas the Fathers ascended the Uvia River, which flows into the sea east of Cayenne. Father Grillet, in a letter describing his voyage, mentions the names of several other Indian tribes, such as the Mapronanes and the Arlanes, both in the neighborhood of the Amazon; and the Mercieux Indians whom we met in the interior, remembered only to have seen one Frenchman in their country before. In general the missionaries were well received by the Indians, Nouragues as well as Acoquas, and it seemed that the reports concerning their cannibalism had been exaggerated, although they appear to have occasionally fallen into this vice.

After passing the cataracts, the Fathers were obliged to travel twenty four leagues over very rugged mountains. Having passed through the country of the Nouragues, they entered into the Tenaporibo river, where some years before three Englishmen had been killed and eaten by the Nouragues. The missionaries were the first Frenchmen to visit this river. Mention is also made here of the tribe of the Morous. As regards the religion of the Indians, Father Grillet writes that the Galibis, the Nouragues and the Acoquas were Montheists in theory, but practiced no worship of God. The character of the Nouragues and Acoquas was found to be mild and tractable, although they had been occasionally guilty of cannibalism.

The Jesuits found polygamy to be one of the greatest obstacles to the evangelizing of these natives, for among the Nouragues and Acoquas the polygamous were six to one.

About the year 1732, when a station was established on the Oyapoc River, the Jesuits, in digging the foundation of a church, discovered at a depth of four or five feet from the surface a little medal entirely covered with rust. After cleaning it they found it to be a medal of St. Peter, and of a design apparently belonging to the first centuries of Christianity. This fact is related by Pere Lombard, in "Lettres edifiantes et curieuses." We may ask whence came this medal to be buried there? Pere Lombard says that the Indians of Guiana were unacquainted with medals, and that it appeared that no Christian had thus far inhabited that portion of the New World. The alluvial deposit in which the medal was found, says M. Romanet du Caillaud, in the "Missions Catholiques," was already very ancient at that period.

The last named gentleman, in consideration of these facts, immediately supposes that Christianity has been preached in that country a long time before the discovery of America by Columbus. He brings forward a few specious reasons to support this supposition. He admits the possibility of Christians of the early ages flying from persecution, having sought the remote coasts of America. That this exists is proved by the vessel in Tenerife was across the Atlantic to Trinidad.

The legend of the night have been Guiana was the alighted, and he found. Or the position correspond

between the exterior worship of the Aztecs in Mexico and the Catholic religion. But if Christianity had really been preached in America, why is it that every vestige of it had disappeared at the time of its rediscovery by the Spaniards? The finding of the medal does not appear to be of sufficient weight.

In the first place, who can tell how old the alluvial deposit was? We know that the rivers of Guiana carry yearly an immense quantity of sediment to the ocean, where constantly-shifting mud-banks are formed. That no Christian had ever visited the Oyapoc before 1732 is now contradicted by discovery. It is now proved that Columbus did not land in Guiana; and, besides, the French and Dutch had been on the Oyapoc before the medal was found. Moreover, we know that the Jesuit Fathers had been in relation with the savage of the interior in the seventeenth century, as the letter of Father Grillet proves.

I doubt not that if the interior of Dutch Guiana is once opened many hitherto unknown savage tribes will be found to live in the depths of its gigantic forests.—Rev. C. Warren Carrier, C.S.S.R., in Boston "Pilot."

St. Anthony and the Infant Jesus.

During one of his missions in the province of Limousin, St. Anthony of Padua lodged in the house of a very virtuous man, who, knowing the saint's love for solitude, gave him the most retired room. He himself rose at midnight to see how the holy preacher passed the night. Quietly approaching St. Anthony's room, his eyes were delighted by a wonderful sight. Through a crevice in the door he saw the chamber brilliantly illuminated and St. Anthony tenderly caressing a lovely child. He witnessed the astonishment and joy of the holy man at the unexpected apparition of the Divine Infant. The pious host, having secretly adored God who had so honored his abode, retired from the scene, his soul filled with happiness at having been permitted to give shelter to the saint. The next morning St. Anthony, who had learned from the Infant Jesus that the apparition had been seen by the owner of the house, called the host and earnestly entreated him not to divulge what he had witnessed. Thus in most of his pictures and images St. Anthony is represented holding the Divine Child in his arms to commemorate this miracle.

The Anti-Slavery Crusade.

The Holy Father has issued an encyclical addressed to Bishops engaged in the anti-slavery movements. In this encyclical he explains the mission of Cardinal Lavigerie, and expresses thanks to the sovereigns who assisted the work of the Anti-Slavery Conference. In addition he advises continued missionary efforts in East Africa and announces that he has instituted an annual collection in behalf of the anti-slavery movement, to be taken up on the Feast of the Epiphany.

Not only at Ottawa but also at Montreal are the Franciscans restored to Canada, and they are opening houses of their order in both cities. Montreal was formerly one of the headquarters of the Recollects, and there is, therefore, a peculiar fitness in the restoration of the order in that truly Catholic city, where the friars were once numerous.

Ireland Under England's Rule.

William O'Brien, one of the Irish envoys to this country during one of his speeches, gave this startling information regarding the fruits of England's rule of Ireland. He said that since the present Queen ascended the throne eighty-seven Coercion Acts have been passed, 1,000,000 have perished of famine, 3,200,000 have been evicted from the homes they built and the fields they reclaimed. In the nineteenth century, Ireland alone of all the countries of Europe is suffering from famine; its population is less than at the beginning of the century, and is decreasing, while its energies are blighted by the cruel cormorants who call themselves the English garrison in Ireland. And this state of things is destined by the Coercion Act to endure forever and ever.

Little Sins.

No sin can be small which is a great offence against a great God—against a great majesty, a great authority, a great purity, a great justice, a great truth. No; not the least venial sin that was ever committed can be absolved but through the Precious Blood which was shed upon the Cross. Little sins! God have mercy on those who talk this language.—Cardinal Manning.

Recipient of a Large Silver Medal.

Archbishop Ryan of Philadelphia, has made Professor Edwards of the University of Notre Dame, the recipient of a magnificent large solid silver medal showing the exterior of the Cathedral of Philadelphia. The workmanship displayed on the medal is exquisitely artistic. Connoisseurs say it is the finest medal ever struck at the United States mint.

THE CURVATURE OF THE EARTH.

Reasons Why It Is Impossible for the Naked Eye to See the Roundness.

Generally speaking, we say that the curvature of the earth amounts to about seven inches for the statute mile; more exactly, it is 6.99 inches to the mile, or 7.962 inches for a geographical mile. Any amount of artificial assistance with optical instruments does not make it possible for the eye to perceive the least jota of curvature, even though the gaze is directed from the highest eminence. This is because the vision is not capable of comparing heights and distances. The effect of the known curvature of the globe may be illustrated in the following manner:

Take down your globe, place a book, pane of glass or even a ruler against it—either of the two objects first named being best adapted to such an experiment; you will observe instantly that the book or pane only touches in one point, the globe's surface falling away in all directions from the point of contact.

Now suppose the ocean's surface to be calm and frozen, and a sheet of glass many miles square laid upon it. At one mile from the place of contact the glass will stand out nearly 8 inches (this measurement being upon the ocean, the mile is a nautical one), in fact, will lack but .088 of an inch of being 8 inches from the pane; at three miles it will be 6 feet, at nine miles 54 feet and so, 6n. The number of feet of depression is equal to two-thirds of the square of the number of miles for any observable distance.

The atmosphere plays an important part in estimating the visibility of objects. On this account part of this depression must be canceled to make good the phenomenon of refraction, which causes objects of all kinds to appear higher than they would if there were no atmosphere. Careful measurements have shown that the error from refraction averages more than one-seventh of that from curvature. The rule, therefore, commonly used for correction of curvature and refraction is: Square the number of miles and take four-sevenths of it for the correction in feet. Thus, if an object is visible at a distance of five miles we may know that its height is at least 144 feet.

Or, if the height of a visible object is known—say 100 feet—take one-fourth of this, multiply by seven and take the square root of the product (which gives the distance of the object), in this instance a fraction of over thirteen miles. A man swimming in the ocean can perceive a tower 200 feet high and nineteen miles away as a mere speck on the horizon; but if the man were elevated 100 feet above the surface of the water he could plainly perceive a tower 100 feet high at a distance of twenty-six miles.—St. Louis Republic.

The Colors of Cigars.

One of the most interesting things to me, being an ex-member of the trade, is to study the simple little brands on the ends of the cigar boxes in the tobacconists' stores and wonder how many of the people who use the contents know the meaning of the word, "claro," etc. Nowadays a smoker calls for a light, medium or dark colored cigar as his fancy dictates. To the dealer, however, there is a nicer and more exact method of naming the shade. "Claro," for instance, stands for the lightest shade of all and is mostly found in the cheaper grade of twofers. About the palest in color of the ordinary cigar is the "Colorado." Then comes "Colorado Maduro," next "Maduro," and lastly "Oscuro," which is the darkest, heaviest cigar made. The "Colorado Maduro" and "Maduro" shades are the most sought for in the best grades of domestic cigars, while consumers of imported brands run to "Maduro" and "Oscuro."

It seems difficult to get a really good imported cigar that is not dark colored. All of them are strong, and while many men affect the darkest, high priced kinds, I believe that but few of them really enjoy them. As good a cigar as any man need smoke can now be bought for ten and fifteen cents. A few experts may find value and solace in a tin foil covered twenty-five cent weed, but when anything over a quarter is paid it is money thrown away for ornaments like tin foil, band, fancy linings to box, etc. At present prices of tobacco and labor a manufacturer can't put a value of fifty cents in one cigar unless he folds in twenty-five cents worth of postage stamps, and yet many people smoke these expensive sorts.—Chicago Journal.

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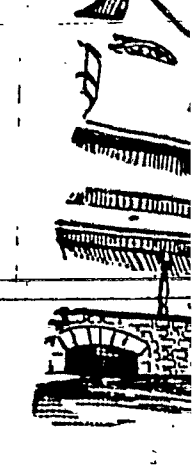
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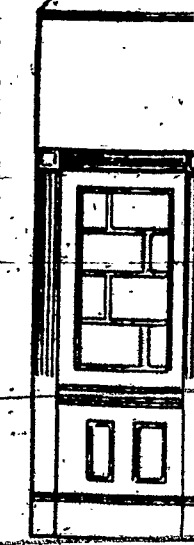
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