

LIFE  
OF  
FATHER MARQUETTE,  
BY  
JARED SPARKS.



## FATHER MARQUETTE.\*

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It is generally believed, that the Mississippi River was first discovered by Ferdinand de Soto, as early as 1541. The accounts of his expedition in Florida are so highly exaggerated, so indefinite, and in many parts so obviously false, that little more can be inferred from them, than that he passed far into the country, had many combats with the natives, and finally died in the interior. The probability is so strong, however, that he and his party actually crossed the Mississippi, that it has usually been assumed as a historical fact.

Soto had distinguished himself as a military leader under Pizarro, in the conquest of Peru. He returned to Spain, renowned for his exploits, and enriched by the spoils of the Peruvians and of their unfortunate monarch Atahualpa, extorted

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\* A large part of this Memoir has heretofore been published in the appendix to the second edition of BURLEIGH'S *History of Kentucky*. It is here reprinted with considerable additions.

by iniquity and violence. He appeared in much splendor at the court of Spain, and, becoming acquainted with one of the companions of Narvaez, who had made an unsuccessful attempt to conquer Florida, he formed the project of achieving the conquest of that country. He solicited permission from Charles the Fifth to undertake the enterprise at his own expense, and his request was granted. The fame of Soto, the great wealth he had acquired in Peru, and the hope of making similar acquisitions in Florida, drew around him many adventurers, some of whom belonged to the first families in Spain. Several persons also joined him from the town of Elvas, in Portugal. In a short time he procured seven ships, and supplied them with every thing necessary for the voyage. The fleet sailed from St. Lucar, in the month of April, 1538, proceeding first to St. Jago in Cuba, and thence to Havana. The number of men that accompanied him is not precisely known. The most authentic account states it to have been six hundred; according to others it was much larger.

The Emperor had appointed Soto governor of Cuba, with the title of General of Florida, and Marquis of all the lands he might conquer. Leaving his wife at Havana, he sailed from that port on the 18th of May, 1539, and landed at the Bay of Espiritu Santo, in Florida. After

many wanderings and adventures, he arrived at the *Great River*, so called in the narrative, (supposed to be the Mississippi,) and crossed it in June or July, 1541. He died the next year, on the 21st of May; and his followers, under Moscoso, as the story says, constructed brigantines, in which they sailed down the river to its mouth, and, after a voyage of fifty days, they entered the river Panuco, in Mexico, on the 10th of September, 1543.

The first account of Soto's expedition purports to have been written by one of the Portuguese adventurers, who accompanied it throughout, and returned to his native country; and who styles himself, in the titlepage of his narrative, "Fidalgo d'Elvas," rendered by Hakluyt, "*A Gentleman of Elvas*." The name of the writer has never been ascertained. The book was first published at Evora, in 1557, more than fifteen years after the principal events it narrates.\* There is much show of exactness in regard to dates,

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\* The title of this edition is as follows. "*Relacam Verdadeira dos Trabalhos que ho Governador don Fernando de Souto y certos Fidalgos Portugeses passarom no Descobrimeto da Provincia la Frodida. Agora novamente feita per hum Fidalgo d'Elvas*." Copies are extremely rare. The price of one, mentioned in Mr. Rich's "Catalogue of Books relating principally to America," is stated at £31 10s. sterling. It is a small octavo, in black letter.

but the account was evidently drawn up for the most part from memory, being vague in its descriptions, and indefinite as to localities, distances, and other points usually noted by journalists. This account was translated into English by Hakluyt, and published in 1609, with a very long title, beginning, "*Virginia richly valued, by the Description of the Main Land of Florida,*" &c. This little volume is extremely rare, not being included in either of the editions of Hakluyt's celebrated collection, though reprinted in the Supplement to that of 1809. The translator's object was to advance the purposes of the "Virginia Company," which had then recently been formed. Another English translation was published anonymously in the year 1686, entitled "*A Relation of the Conquest of Florida by the Spaniards under the command of Fernando de Soto.*" This was translated from the French version of Citri de la Guette, which appeared in Paris the year before.

The Inca Garcilaso de la Vega completed his work on Florida in the year 1591. It was first printed at Lisbon, in 1605.\* The author's

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\* Entitled, "*La Florida del Ynca ; Historia del Adelantado Hernando de Soto, Governador y Capitan General del Reyno de la Florida, y de otros heroicos Cavaleros Españoles é Indios ; escrita por el Ynca Garcilasso de la Vega.*" The volume is a small quarto. A handsome

style is flowing and agreeable, but his fancy constantly takes the lead of his judgment, and no tale is too marvellous for his pen. It was one of his chief objects, as stated in his Preface, "to render justice to the memory of the brave Ferdinand de Soto, which has been cruelly defamed by certain English, French, and Italian writers." Hence a large portion of his work is taken up with the adventures of Soto. Although he wrote more than forty years after the death of his hero, yet he had no other written materials for his guidance, than those which had been furnished by the "*Gentleman of Elvas*"; and in fact, the narrative of this unknown person is the only authority, which can be considered of any value, respecting the wanderings of Soto. In several points Garcilaso differs from his original. Citri de la Guette says, that he took his account chiefly from the narration of a common soldier, who was in Soto's expedition, and this at least forty years after the events. Little could be gathered from such a source, which is worthy of confidence. Both of the accounts are too romantic and vague for history;

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edition in folio was printed at Madrid, in 1723. It has been twice translated into French, first by Baudoin, and afterwards by Richelet, and several times printed. A German translation was also published, in 1753; but the book has never been translated into English.

yet some of the names of places and of Indian tribes, and descriptions of the country, in the narrative of the anonymous Portuguese writer, could hardly have been given except from personal observation; and they render it in the highest degree probable, that Soto crossed the Mississippi near the thirty-fourth degree of latitude.

It may be doubted, at least, whether either of these works can be trusted, as affording genuine historical materials. They have been cited by respectable writers in default of other authorities; but they border so closely upon the regions of romance, that they may as justly be ranked in this class of compositions, as in that of history. This is generally conceded in regard to Garcilaso.\* His predecessor, the *Gentleman of Elvas*, is thought to have higher claims; and perhaps he has; yet whoever follows him closely will be likely to run into ten errors in

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\* The French biographer of Garcilaso de la Vega, in the *Biographie Universelle*, apologizing for his want of accuracy, as compared with Herrera, says, "Cet écrivain recommandable a composé son histoire du Nouveau-Monde sur un grand nombre de matériaux, tandis que, pour écrire celle du Pérou et de la Florida, Garcilaso n'avait que son patriotisme et son génie." Patriotism and genius are undoubtedly qualities of a high order in a historian; but it is equally certain, that, if he relies only on these, he will write a very indifferent history.



arriving at a single truth, with the additional uncertainty of being able to distinguish the former from the latter. The narrative is moreover disfigured with descriptions of atrocious acts of injustice, oppression, and cruelty committed against the natives, as revolting to humanity as they were disgraceful to the adventurers. The thirst for gold, which was the stimulating motive to this enterprise, seems to have absorbed every other passion and every generous sentiment. Robbery, slavery, mutilation, and death were practised, not only without compunction, but apparently as means supposed to be justified by the cause in which they were engaged. In short, if this narrative is worthy of credit, few readers will be inclined to dissent from the remark of Philip Briet, in his *Annales Mundi*, that it is difficult to decide whether cruelty or avarice was the predominant trait in the character of Soto.

British writers have mentioned a subsequent discovery of the Mississippi, in 1654, by an Englishman named Wood. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to find any proofs, that the Mississippi was ever seen by this person.\*

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\* Professor Keating says, "This is not the same Colonel Wood of Virginia, whom Coxe mentions as having discovered several branches of the great rivers Ohio and Meschasebe."—LONG'S *Expedition*, Vol. I. p. 236. But he gives us no clue for ascertaining what Wood it was.

In short, the first Europeans, who are certainly known to have discovered and explored this river, were two Frenchmen, Father MARQUETTE and M. Joliet, in the year 1673. Marquette was a native of Picardy, and Charlevoix calls him "one of the most illustrious missionaries of New France," adding, that he travelled widely, and made many discoveries besides that of the Mississippi. He had resided some time in Canada, and attained a proficiency in the languages of the principal native tribes, who resided in the regions bordering on the Upper Lakes. The first settlement of the old town of Michillimackinac, in 1671, is ascribed to his exertions and influence.

The Indians had given many accounts of a great river at the West, which flowed southwardly, and which they called *Mississipy*, as the word is written by Marquette. It became a matter of curious speculation, what course this river pursued, and at what place it disembogued itself into the sea. There were three opinions on this subject. First, that it ran towards the southwest, and entered the Gulf of California; secondly, that it flowed into the Gulf of Mexico; and thirdly, that it found its way in a more easterly direction, and discharged itself into the Atlantic Ocean somewhere on the coast of Virginia. The question was not less

important in a commercial and political view, than interesting as a geographical problem.

To establish the point, and to make such other discoveries as opportunities would admit, M. de Frontenac, the governor of Canada, encouraged an expedition to be undertaken. The persons, to whom it was intrusted, were M. Joliet, then residing at Quebec, and Father Marquette, who was at Michillimackinac, or in the vicinity of that place. Marquette wrote an account of his tour, and voyage down the Mississippi, which was sent to France, and published eight years afterwards in Paris. From this account the following particulars are chiefly taken. In some parts the translation is nearly literal, and all the prominent facts are retained.

On the 13th of May, 1673, Father Marquette and M. Joliet, with five other Frenchmen, embarked in two canoes, with a small provision of Indian corn and smoked meat, having previously acquired from the Indians all the intelligence they could afford respecting their proposed route.

The first nation through which they passed, was the *Folles Avoines*, (Wild Rice,) so called from the grain of that name, which abounds in the rivers and marshy lands. This plant is described as growing about two feet above the water, resembling European oats, and gathered by the savages during the month of September. The

ears are dried, separated from the chaff, and prepared for food either by pounding into meal, or simply boiling the grain in water.\*

The natives, having been made acquainted by Father Marquette with his design of visiting the most remote nations, and preaching to them the Gospel, did their utmost to dissuade him from it, representing the cruelty of some of the tribes, and their warlike state, the dangerous navigation of the river, the dreadful monsters that were found in it, and, finally, the excessive heat of the climate.

He thanked them for their good advice, but declined following it; assuring them, that, to secure the success of his undertaking, he would gladly give his life; that he felt no fear of the monsters they described; and that their information would only oblige him to keep more on his guard against surprise. After having prayed, and given them some instructions, he parted from them, and arrived at the *Bay of Puans*, now called Green Bay, where considerable progress had been made by the French priests in the conversion of the Indians.

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\* Charlevoix mentions the *Folles Avoines* as residing on a small river, which flows into the Bay of Puans from the west. *Malhomines* was the name by which they were known among the Indians, and they were supposed to be a branch of the Pottowattomies. — *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, Tom. III. p. 291.

The name of this bay has a less unpleasant meaning in the Indian, than in the French language, signifying also *salt bay*, which induced Father Marquette to make strict researches for salt springs in this vicinity, but without success. He concluded, therefore, that the name was given to it in consequence of the ooze and mud, deposited there, from whence, as he thought, arise vapors, that produce frequent and violent thunder storms. He speaks of this bay as about thirty leagues long, and eight leagues wide at its entrance, gradually contracting towards its head, where the flux and reflux of the tides, much like those of the sea, may be easily observed.\*

Leaving this bay, they ascended the river, since known as Fox River, that empties into it. At its mouth, he says, the river is broad and deep, and flows gently; but, as you advance, its course is interrupted by rapids and rocks; which he passed, however, in safety. It abounds with bustards, ducks, and teal, attracted by the wild rice, which grows there. Approaching the village of *Maskoutins*, or *nation of fire*, he had the curiosity to taste the mineral water

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\*The appearance of these tides has attracted the notice of travellers from the earliest times, and has recently engaged the attention of scientific observers. Mr. Schoolcraft has collected many facts on the subject. — *Journal of the Expedition under Governor Cass*, p. 373.

of a stream in its vicinity. The village consisted of three several nations, namely, *Miamis*, *Maskoutins*, and *Kikabeaux*. The first were the most friendly and liberal, and the finest looking men. Their hair was long over their ears. They were good warriors, successful in their expeditions, docile, and fond of instruction. They were so eager to listen to Father Allouez, when he was among them, that they allowed him no repose, even in the night.\* The Maskoutins and Kikabeaux were coarser, and less civilized; their wigwams were constructed of rushes, (birch bark being scarce in this country,) and might be rolled up in bundles and carried where they pleased.

In visiting these people, Father Marquette was much gratified at seeing a large cross erected in the centre of the village, decorated with thank-offerings to the Great Spirit, for their success during the last winter. The situation of the village was striking and beautiful, it being built on an eminence, whence the eye overlooked on all sides a boundless extent of prairie, interspersed with groves and forests. The soil was good,

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\* Father Allouez was an enterprising and successful missionary. He arrived at the Sault Ste. Marie in 1668, and traversed the country between Lake Superior and Lake Michigan. Charlevoix speaks of his having visited the *Miamis* and *Maskoutins* the year before Marquette's expedition. — *Histoire, &c.* Tom. I. p. 448.

producing abundantly Indian corn, grapes, and plums.

Immediately on their arrival, Father Marquette and M. Joliet assembled the chiefs, and explained to them the objects of their expedition, expressing their determination to proceed at all risks, and making them some presents. They requested the assistance of two guides, to put them in their way; which request the natives readily granted, returning for their presents a mat, which served them as a bed during the voyage. The next day, being the 10th of June, the two Miamis, their guides, embarked with them in sight of all the inhabitants of the village, who looked with astonishment on the hardihood of seven Frenchmen in undertaking such an expedition.

They knew, that within three leagues of the Maskoutins was a river, which discharged itself into the Mississippi; and further, that their course must be west southwest; but so many marshes and small lakes intervened, that the route was intricate; the more so, as the river was overgrown with wild rice, which obstructed the channel to such a degree, that it was difficult to follow it. On this account their guides were necessary, who conducted them safely to a portage, which was about two thousand seven hundred paces across. The guides aided them in transporting their canoes over the portage to the

river, which ran towards the west, and then they left them and returned.\*

The travellers quitted the waters, which flow towards Quebec, five or six hundred leagues from that place, and embarked on an unknown stream. This river was called *Mescousin* (Wisconsin). It was very broad, but its bottom was sandy, and the navigation was rendered difficult by the shoals. It was full of islands, overgrown with vines; and the fertile banks through which it flowed were interspersed with woods, prairies, and groves of nut, oak, and other trees. Numbers of bucks and buffaloes were seen, but no other animals. Within thirty leagues of their place of embarkation, they found iron mines, which appeared abundant and of a good quality. After continuing their route for forty leagues, they arrived at the mouth of the river, in forty-two degrees and a half of latitude; † and on the 17th of June,

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\* This description of the wild rice in the river, and of the portage, agrees very exactly with that of Mr. Schoolcraft. He says the portage is a mile and a half, being equal to two thousand six hundred and forty paces. And of the river he tells us, "It is filled with wild rice, which so chokes up the channel, that it is difficult to find a passage through it." — *Journal, &c.* pp. 363, 364.

† Father Marquette's estimate of the latitude approaches very near the truth. By a series of observations, Fort Crawford, at Prairie du Chien, four or five miles above the mouth of the Wisconsin, has been ascertained to be 43° 3' 31". — *Long's Expedition*, p. 245.



they entered with great joy the waters of the Mississippi.

This river derives its source from several lakes in the north. At the mouth of the *Mescousin* its channel was narrow, and it flowed onwards with a gentle current. On the right was seen a chain of high mountains, and on the left fertile fields interrupted by islands in many places. They slowly followed the course of the stream to the south and southwest, until, in forty-two degrees of latitude, they perceived a sensible change in the surrounding country. There were but few hills and forests. The islands were covered with beautiful trees.

From the time of leaving their guides, they descended the two rivers more than one hundred leagues, without discovering any other inhabitants of the forests, than birds and beasts. They were always on their guard, kindling a fire on the shore towards evening, to cook their food, and afterwards anchoring their canoes in the middle of the stream during the night. They proceeded thus for more than sixty leagues from the place where they entered the Mississippi, when, on the 25th of June, they perceived on the bank of the river the footsteps of men, and a well beaten path leading into a beautiful prairie. They landed, and, leaving the canoes under the guard of their boatmen, Father Marquette and M. Joliet set

forth to make discoveries. After silently following the path for about two leagues, they perceived a village, situate on the margin of a river, and two others on a hill, within half a league of the first. As they approached nearer, they gave notice of their arrival by a loud call. Hearing the noise, the Indians came out of their cabins, and, having looked at the strangers for a while, they deputed four of their elders to talk with them, who slowly advanced. Two of them brought pipes ornamented with feathers, which, without speaking, they elevated towards the sun, as a token of friendship. Gaining assurance from this ceremony, Father Marquette addressed them, inquiring of what nation they were. They answered, that they were Illinois, and, offering their pipes, invited the strangers to enter the village; where they were received with every mark of attention, conducted to the cabin of the chief, and complimented on their arrival by the natives, who gathered round them, gazing in silence.

After they were seated, the *calumet* was presented to them, and, while the old men were smoking for their entertainment, the chief of all the Illinois tribes sent them an invitation to attend a council at his village. They were treated by him with great kindness, and Father Marquette, having explained to him the motives of this voyage, enforcing each part of his speech

with a present, the chief in reply expressed his approbation; but urged him, in the name of the whole nation, not to incur the risks of a further voyage, and rewarded his presents by the gift of a *calumet*.

The council was followed by a feast, consisting of four courses, from each of which they were fed with much ceremony; and afterwards they were conducted in state through the village, receiving many presents of girdles and garters from the natives. The following day, they took leave of the chief, promising to return in four moons, and were accompanied to their canoes, with every demonstration of joy, by more than six hundred savages.

Before leaving this nation, Father Marquette remarked some of their peculiarities. The name *Illinois*, in the native language, signifies *men*, as if implying thereby, that other tribes are brutes in comparison, which in some sense Father Marquette thought to be true, as they were more civilized than most of the tribes. Their language, on the borders of the river, was a dialect of the *Algonquin*, and was understood by Father Marquette. In the form of their bodies the Illinois were light and active. They were skilful in the use of arms, brave, but mild and tractable in disposition. They were entirely ignorant of the use

of leather, and iron tools, their weapons being made of stone, and their clothing of the skins of wild beasts. The soil was rich and productive, and game abundant.

After this peaceful interview with the natives, the voyagers embarked again, and passed down the stream, looking out for the river *Pekitanoni* (Missouri), which empties into the Mississippi from the northwest. They observed high and steep rocks, on the face of which were the figures of two monsters, which appeared as if painted in green, red, and blue colors; frightful in appearance, but so well executed, as to leave Father Marquette in doubt, whether they could be the work of savages, they being also at so great a height on the rocks as to be inaccessible to a painter.

As they floated quietly down a clear and placid stream, conversing about the figures they had just passed, they were interrupted by the sound of rapids before them; and a mass of floating timber, trunks and branches of trees, was swept from the mouth of the *Pekitanoni* with such a degree of violence, as to render the passage dangerous. So great was the agitation, that the water was thereby made very muddy, and it did not again become clear. The *Pekitanoni* is described as a large river flowing into the

Mississippi from the northwest, with several villages on its banks.\*

At this place Father Marquette decided, that, unless the Mississippi altered its previous course, it must empty its waters into the Gulf of Mexico; and he conjectured from the accounts of the natives, that, by following the stream of the Pekitanoni, a river would be discovered, which flowed into the Gulf of California.

About twenty leagues south of the Pekitanoni, and a little more to the southeast, they discovered the mouth of another river, called *Ouabouiskigou* (Ohio), in the latitude of thirty-six degrees; a short distance above which, they came to a place formidable to the savages, who, believing it the residence of a demon, had warned Father Marquette of its dangers. It proved nothing more than a ledge of rocks, thirty feet high, against which the waves, being contracted by an island, ran with violence, and, being thrown back with a loud noise, flowed rapidly on through a narrow and unsafe channel.

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\* This relation agrees with facts, although the mudiness of the waters of the Missouri has been found to be produced by a different cause. "The painted monsters," says Stoddard, "on the side of a high perpendicular rock, apparently inaccessible to man, between the Missouri and Illinois, and known to the moderns by the name of *Piesa*, still remain in a good degree of preservation."—*History of Louisiana*, p. 17.

The Ouabouskigou came from the eastward, where the country was thickly inhabited by the tribe of *Chuouanons*, a harmless and peaceful people, much annoyed by the Iroquois, who were said to capture them as slaves, and kill and torture them cruelly.

A little above the entrance of this river were steep banks, in which the boatmen discovered iron ore, several veins of which were visible, about a foot in thickness, portions of it adhering to the flint-stones; and also a species of rich earth, of three different colors, namely, purple, violet, and red, and a very heavy red sand, some of which, being laid on an oar, left a stain during fifteen days. They here first saw tall reeds, or canes, growing on the shores, and began to find the *maringouins* (mosquitoes) very troublesome; the attacks of which, with the heat of the weather, obliged the voyagers to construct an awning of the sails of their canoes.

Shortly afterwards they saw savages armed with muskets, waiting their approach on the bank of the river. While the boatmen prepared for a defence, Father Marquette presented his *calumet*, and addressed them in Huron, to which they gave no answer, but made signals to them to land, and accept some food. They consequently disembarked, and, entering their cabins, were presented with buffalo's meat, bear's oil, and fine plums.

These savages had guns, hatchets, knives, hoes, and glass bottles for their gunpowder. They informed Father Marquette, that he was within ten days' journey of the sea; that they purchased their goods of Europeans, who came from the east; that these Europeans had images and beads, played on many instruments, and were dressed like himself; and that they had treated them with much kindness.\* As they had no knowledge of Christianity, the worthy Father gave them what instruction he could, and made them a present of some medals. Encouraged by the information received from these savages, the party proceeded with renewed ardor on their voyage, between banks covered with thick forests, that intercepted their view of the prairies; in which, however, they heard at no great distance the bellowing of buffaloes. They also saw quails upon the shores, and shot a small parrot.

They had nearly reached the thirty-third degree of latitude, steering towards the south, when they discovered a village on the river's side, called *Metchigamea*. The natives, armed with bows and arrows, clubs, and tomahawks, prepared to

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\* Channels of trade had been opened with the Spaniards in Florida, and other Europeans in Carolina and Virginia. Colonel Wood is said to have crossed the Alleghanies from Virginia, in 1670; doubtless for this object.

attack them; some in canoes, trying to intercept their course, others remaining on shore. Father Marquette in vain presented his *calumet* of peace. They were ready to attack, when the elders, perceiving at last the *calumet*, commanded the young warriors to stop, and, throwing their arms at the feet of the strangers, as a sign of peace, entered their canoes, and constrained them to land, though not without some uneasiness.

As the savages were not acquainted with any of the six languages spoken by Father Marquette, he addressed them by signs, until an old man was found, who understood a little Illinois. Through this interpreter, he explained their intention of going to the borders of the sea, and gave the natives some religious instruction. In reply they answered, that whatever information he desired might be obtained at *Akamsca* (Arkansas), a village ten leagues lower down the river; and presented them with food. After passing a night of some anxiety, they embarked the following morning with their interpreter; a canoe with ten savages preceding them. About half a league from Akamsca, they were met by two canoes full of Indians, the chief of whom presented his *calumet*, and conducted them to the shore, where they were hospitably received and supplied with provisions. Here they found a young man well acquainted with the Illinois lan-



guage, and through him Father Marquette addressed the natives, making them the usual presents, and requesting information from them respecting the sea. They answered, that it was within five days' journey of Akamsca, that they knew nothing of the inhabitants on its borders, being prevented by their enemies from holding intercourse with these Europeans; that their knives and other weapons were purchased partly from the eastern nations, and partly from a tribe of Illinois, four days' journey to the westward; that the armed savages, whom the travelers had met, were their enemies; that they were continually on the river between that place and the sea; and that, if the voyagers proceeded further, great danger might be apprehended from them. After this communication, food was offered, and the rest of the day was spent in feasting.

These people were friendly and hospitable, but poor, although their Indian corn produced three abundant crops in a year, which Father Marquette saw in its different stages of growth. It was prepared for food in pots, which, with plates and other utensils, were neatly made of baked earth by the Indians. Their language was so very difficult, that Father Marquette despaired of being able to pronounce a word of it. Their climate in winter was rainy, but they had no snow, and the soil was extremely fertile.

During the evening the old men held a secret council. Some of them proposed to murder the strangers, and seize their effects. The chief, however, overruled this advice, and, sending for Father Marquette and M. Joliet, invited them to attend a dance of the *calumet*, which he afterwards presented to them as a sign of peace.

The good Father and his companion began now to consider what further course they should pursue. As it was supposed, that the Gulf of Mexico extended as far north as thirty-one degrees and forty minutes,\* they believed themselves not to be more than two or three days' journey from it; and it appeared to them certain, that the Mississippi must empty itself into that gulf, and not into the sea through Virginia, at the eastward, because the coast of Virginia was in the latitude of thirty-four degrees, at which they had already arrived; nor yet into the Gulf of California, at the southwest, because they had found the course of the river to be invariably south. Being thus persuaded, that the main object of their expedition was attained; and considering, moreover, that they were unable to resist the armed savages, who infested the lower parts of the river, and

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\* It is hardly necessary to say, that, although this is nearly accurate, in regard to the most northerly part of the Gulf of Mexico, it is an error as to the mouth of the Mississippi, which is below twenty-nine degrees.

that, should they fall into the hands of the Spaniards, the fruits of their voyage and discoveries would be lost, they resolved to proceed no further, and, having informed the natives of their determination and rested another day, they prepared for their return.

After a month's navigation on the Mississippi, having followed its course from the forty-second to the thirty-fourth degree of latitude, they left the village of Akamsca, on the 17th of July, to return up the river. They retraced their way, slowly ascending the stream, until, in about the thirty-eighth degree of latitude, they turned into another river (Illinois), which abridged their route and brought them directly to Lake *Illinois* (Michigan). They were struck with the fertility of the country through which that river flowed, the beauty of the forests and prairies, the variety of the game, and the numerous small lakes and streams which they saw. The river was broad and deep, and navigable for sixty-five leagues, there being, in the season of spring and part of the summer, only half a league of portage between its waters and those flowing into Lake Illinois. On its banks they found a village, the inhabitants of which received them kindly, and, on their departure, extorted a promise from Father Marquette to return and instruct them. One of the chiefs, accompanied by the

young men, conducted them as far as the Lake; whence they proceeded to the *Bay of Puans*, where they arrived near the end of September, having been absent about four months.\*

Such is the substance of Father Marquette's narrative; and the whole of it accords so remarkably with the descriptions of subsequent travellers, and with the actual features of the country through which he passed, as to remove every doubt of its genuineness. The melancholy fate of the author, which followed soon afterwards, was probably the reason why his expedition was not in a more conspicuous manner brought before the public.

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\* The following distances have been communicated by General Wool, Inspector General of the Army of the United States, who is personally acquainted with the route, and has had the best means of forming an accurate estimate.

	Miles.
From Green Bay up Fox River to the portage, . . . . .	175
From the portage down the Wisconsin to the Mississippi, . . . . .	175
From the mouth of the Wisconsin to the mouth of the Arkansas, . . . . .	1087
From the Arkansas to the Illinois River, . . . . .	547
From the mouth of the Illinois to Chicago, . . . . .	305
From Chicago to Green Bay by the Lake shore, . . . . .	260
Total, . . . . .	2549

General Wool observes, that some persons estimate the route about fifty miles more, but he thinks it will

In addition to this narrative, nothing is known of Marquette, except what is said of him by Charlevoix.\* After returning from this last expedition, he took up his residence, and pursued the vocation of a missionary, among the Miamis in the neighborhood of Chicago. While passing by water along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan towards Michillimackinac, he entered a small river, on the 18th of May, 1675. Having landed, he constructed an altar, performed mass, and then retired a short distance into the wood, requesting the two men, who had charge of his

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rather fall short than exceed the above result. It would appear, therefore, that the whole distance, passed over by Marquette and Joliet in this tour, was at least two thousand five hundred miles.

Considering the manner in which Father Marquette travelled, being conveyed in boats up and down rivers, through an unknown country, it cannot be supposed that his estimate of distances would be exact, particularly as he had no means of deciding the velocity with which he was carried along by the currents of the streams. Deceived by the rapid motion of the water, he reckoned the distance from the portage to the mouth of the Wisconsin to be forty leagues, or one hundred and twenty miles, whereas General Wool states it to be one hundred and seventy-five; and Mr. Schoolcraft, who ascended the river, estimates the distance at one hundred and eighty-two miles from Prairie du Chien to the portage.

\* *Histoire de Nouvelle France*, Tom. III. p. 314.

canoe, to leave him alone for half an hour. When the time had elapsed, the men went to seek for him and found him dead. They were greatly surprised, as they had not discovered any symptoms of illness; but they remembered, that, when he was entering the river, he expressed a presentiment that his voyage would end there. To this day the river retains the name of *Marquette*. The place of his grave, near its bank, is still pointed out to the traveller; but his remains were removed the year after his death to Michillimackinac.

The manuscript of Father Marquette, containing the particulars of his voyage, was sent to France, where it fell into the hands of Thevenot, who had recently published a large collection of miscellaneous pieces, entitled, "*Relations de divers Voyages Curieux*," &c. in two large folio volumes. Having subsequently collected a few other curious tracts, he gave these to the public, under the title of "*Recueil de Voyages*," a small duodecimo volume, printed at Paris in 1681. In this work the Narrative of Marquette first appeared, under the title of "*Découverte de quelques Pays et Nations de l'Amérique Septentrionale*," accompanied with a map. It occupies forty-three pages. •

A very defective and erroneous translation was published at London, in 1698, as a supplement to

an edition of Hennepin; but it was here thrown into the shade by the pretended discoveries of that mendacious traveller, who, several years after the death of La Salle, falsely assumed to himself the merit of having descended the Mississippi to its mouth. Hennepin was never below the confluence of the Illinois with the Mississippi. By the order of La Salle, and in company with M. Dacan, he went down the former river, and up the latter as high at least as the *Falls of St. Anthony*. This was in 1680, seven years after Marquette's expedition. All the discoveries made by Hennepin were above the mouth of the Wisconsin. He claimed nothing more in the first edition of his work; but, after La Salle's death, he fabricated the tale of his voyage down the Mississippi, and mingled so much falsehood with truth, that it is now difficult to separate the one from the other. To him belongs the honor, however, of naming the Falls of St. Anthony and the country of Louisiana. It is said by Charlevoix,\* that the name of *Louisiana* was given by La Salle, who descended the Mississippi in the year 1682; but it is doubtful whether it can be found in any printed work before Hennepin's "*Description de la Louisiane*, Paris, 1683." This contains a dedication to Louis the Fourteenth, adulatory in the

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\* *Histoire*, &c. Tom. I. p. 571.

extreme, and it is believed the name was given for the same end. In his second edition, which was prepared in Holland, he complains of being neglected by the King of France, and changes the title of his book to "*Nouvelle Découverte d'un très Grand Pays situé dans l'Amérique, &c.* Utrecht, 1697." To this edition is prefixed a dedication to William the Third, King of Great Britain, more laudatory if possible than the one to Louis. In the Preface he utters bitter invectives against his enemies, who, from his own account, were very numerous; and he endeavors to explain, by a series of puerile and improbable statements, the reasons why he did not claim the discovery of the Mississippi, from the mouth of the Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico, before the death of La Salle.

The publications of Hennepin, the descriptions of the enterprising adventures and discoveries of La Salle, and the premature death of Marquette, were among the principal causes why the services and the *Narrative* of the last were overlooked, and in a measure forgotten. Indeed, they would hardly have escaped from oblivion, had not Charlevoix brought them to light, in his great work on Canada, nearly seventy years after the events.\*

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\*There is a curious passage relating to this subject in a volume, entitled "A Description of the English



The narrative itself is written in a terse, simple, and unpretending style. The author relates what occurs, and describes what he sees, without embellishment or display. He writes as a scholar, and as a man of careful observation and practical sense. There is no tendency to

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Province of Carolana, by the Spaniards called Florida, and by the French La Louisiane; by Daniel Coxe." This volume was printed at London in 1722, and contains a full description of the country bordering on the Mississippi. The author's father claimed a large territory in Louisiana by virtue of a charter, which had been granted to Sir Robert Heath by King Charles the First. He endeavors to prove, that the English discovered the country before the French, and among other proofs he adduces the following.

"In the year 1678, a considerable number of persons went from New England upon discovery, and proceeded as far as New Mexico, one hundred and fifty leagues beyond the river Mississippi; and at their return rendered an account to the government of Boston, as will be attested, among others, by Colonel Dudley, then one of the magistrates, afterwards Governor of New England, and at present Deputy Governor of the Isle of Wight, under the Honorable the Lord Cutts. The war soon after breaking out between the English and the Indians, many of the Indians, who were in that expedition, retreated to Canada, from whom Monsieur La Salle received most of his information concerning that country, by him afterwards more fully discovered. And they served him for guides and interpreters, as is attested by Monsieur Le Tonty; who accompanied Monsieur La Salle; as also by Mon-

exaggeration, nor any attempt to magnify the difficulties he had to encounter, or the importance of his discoveries. In every point of view this tract is one of the most interesting among those, which illustrate the early history of America.

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sieur Le Clerc, in a book published by order of the French King."—p. 117.

This extract is from a memorial presented to King William, in favor of Coxe's claim, in the year 1699. The Attorney-General reported that Coxe's title was good in law.

The substance of the above paragraph is repeated in a pamphlet, published in the year 1762, after the preliminaries of peace between England and France had been made known, and entitled "An impartial Inquiry into the Right of the French King to the Territory west of the Great River Misissippi, in North America, not ceded by the Preliminaries; including a Summary Account of the River and the Country adjacent." It is stated in this pamphlet, that, "in the year 1678, some New England men went on discovery, and proceeded the whole length of the southern coast of the continent as far as Mexico; at their return rendering an account of their proceedings to the government of Boston."—p. 53. How far these statements are borne out by other testimony, I have not had the means of ascertaining; but, if they are correct, the lower waters of the Mississippi were discovered and crossed by these adventurers from Massachusetts, four years before the river was descended by La Salle, and five years after the upper waters had been discovered by Marquette.

Marquette's map, attached to the *Narrative* in Thevenot's "*Recueil*," is unquestionably the first that was ever published of the Mississippi River. In this light it is extremely curious; but it is also valuable as confirming the genuineness of the Narrative. It was impossible to construct it, without having seen the principal objects delineated. The five great rivers, Arkansas, Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and Wisconsin, in regard to their relative positions and general courses, are placed with a considerable degree of accuracy. Several names are entered on the map, which are still retained, and near the same places, with slight differences in the orthography. The Wisconsin (or, as the French write it, *Ouisconsin*) is written "*Missiousing*" in the map. It is "*Mescousin*" in the Narrative, perhaps by a typographical mistake for "*Mesconsin*." The Missouri, it is true, is named in the Narrative "*Pekitanoni*," which it may at that time have been called by the natives; but in the map a village is placed on the bank of that river, called "*Oumissouri*."

The Ohio River is named "*Ouabouquigou*," in which we may see the elements of *Ouabache*, which name it retains in all the early French maps, the river itself being denominated by what is now regarded as one of its principal branches.

The Arkansas is not named on the map, but

in the Narrative we are told of the village of "*Akamsea*," near the banks of that river, which is evidently the same name.

To the northward of the Arkansas is a place on the map called "*Metchigamea*." The same name is found to this day on French maps, applied to a lake very near the same place, and a little to the northward of the River St. Francis.

It should be kept in mind, that this map was published at Paris in the year 1681, and consequently the year before the discoveries of La Salle on the Mississippi, and that no intelligence respecting the country it represents could then have been obtained from any source subsequently to the voyage of Marquette. There is a slight error in the map in regard to the dotted line marked "*Chemin du retour*," because the Narrative is very explicit in stating, that the voyagers returned up a river, which, from the description given of it, could be no other than the Illinois. This dotted line, therefore, must have been a conjectural addition.

M. Joliet separated from Marquette at Green Bay, and returned to Montreal. In passing the rapids, just before he reached that city, his canoe was upset, and his journal and all his other papers were lost. He dictated a few particulars relative to his voyage down the Mississip-

pi, amounting to no more than three or four pages, which were published, and which agree, as far as they extend, with Father Marquette's Narrative.

In Francis de Creux's *Historia Canadensis* is a map of Canada, which purports to have been drawn in 1660. It includes the Island of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and New England, extending to the westward so far as to take in a small part of Lakes Superior and Michigan. The latter is called *Lacus Magnus Algonquiorum*. The river St. Lawrence and its branches, and the Lakes Ontario, Erie, and Huron, are well delineated on this map; but it does not cover any part of the territory embraced in the one, which accompanies the Narrative of Marquette. As before said, this map is manifestly original, and the first that was sketched of the Mississippi and its great tributary streams.

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# GENERAL INDEX

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