

RIORDAN: Footprints of the  
Spanish padres in N.M. and Arizona

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VICTOR R. STONER

Arizona State Museum

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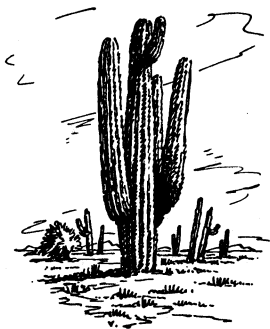
By

M. J. Riordan



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REV. VICTOR R. STONER

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# Foot Prints of the Spanish Padres.

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[*The following interesting and instructive paper was read by M. J. Riordan, of Flagstaff, Arizona, before the Newman Club, of Los Angeles, Cal., at its meeting in that city on the 18th of October, 1900*]

In all the world there is no bluer sky, than that which arches Arizona; in all the world there is no brighter sun, no softer moonlight, no more brilliant setting of stars than there. Indeed, the richness of her heavens has come to be known among astronomers by the distinctive name of "Arizona blue." But there are other things in Arizona and New Mexico beside skies and stars and moonlight. On ~~et~~ great ranges of mountains rear their crests to the clouds; long reaches of ashen, waterless, sage-clothed valley lie between, with here and there a stretch of pine, a clump of cedar, or a fringe of cottonwood. The earth at frequent intervals is cleft in twain by tremendous gorges, reaching far down into the nether depths. The mountains are honey-combed with

passes and rifts and defiles. Walls of sandstone cliffs, hundreds of feet in height, and sheer, once the bulwark of the seas, drag their slow lengths along from southeast to northwest, and die away at the great Salt Lake, by which the prophet of Mormon builded his busy hive.

Two main water-ways, the Rio Grande feeding into the Gulf of Mexico, and the Colorado into the Gulf of California, drain this vast area. Numberless minor streams aided by the snows of Colorado and Utah supply the central rivers. Climate is regulated by altitude. On the plateaus and mountains of 5500 feet and higher, the temperature is mild, the air invigorating. In the foothills and valleys below that level heat prevails, and becomes intense, as sea-level is approached. The fervor of the sun and lack of moisture have parched vast tracts of low-lying country into a gray, forbidding waste, where jack-rabbits, coyotes, rattlesnakes, Gila monsters, tarantulas, scorpions and lizards of all classes, size and colors, have their habitat, and upon which the chief forms of vegetation are yucca, loco, sagebrush, manzanita, palo verde, and an infinite variety of cacti, declining in size from the monumental Sahuaro to little pincushions strewn about in reckless profusion. But there are oases in these deserts beautiful in their greenery as Persian meadows, as rich in their fertility as the alluvial benches of the Nile.

It is a far cry from Arizona to the hills of Judea and many weary miles of land and sea lie between. Once the journey is made, however, a striking similarity between the two is immediately apparent. Tissot's "St. John Preaching in the Desert" might well be a scene at the foot of the Valpi mesa; Dore's "Hagar in the Wilderness" is a characteristic bit from the painted desert; Rubens' "Descent from the Cross" might have been sketched at one of the limestone prominences on which the Lagunas pasture their flocks; the paralytic waiting for the stirring of Bethesda's waters might be happened upon today at the border of Oraibi's well. The same high lights and deep shadows, the same stunted and somber-hued vegetation, the same hills and plains, scarred by deep fissures, the same solemn wildernesses, make the two widely-separated countries kindred in their physical expression. This similarity is often remarked by those who have traveled in both places. But another tie, stronger than that of external resemblance, binds the Judean hills to the wilds of Arizona and New Mexico; a likeness of human endeavor spent in the same cause, and with an identity of purpose makes them sisters in the higher, nobler life of the soul.

It was in the land of Israel that the faithful Eleven, after receiving the commission, to "teach all nations" inaugurated the missionary movement which renewed the face of the earth religious-

ly, socially, and politically. It was in Arizona and New Mexico, Israel's counterpart in the Western World, fifteen centuries after Peter spoke to the people of Jerusalem, that another missionary work was begun, which shall be forever memorable by reason of the heroic efforts of its promoters, and by reason of the results which it produced.

Less than twenty-nine years after the Genoese sailor touched at San Salvador, Cortez had completed the subjugation of the Aztec capital in Mexico. With this event, missionary work began in earnest on this continent. A devoted band of Spanish priests immediately set about the conversion of the native population, and before 1524 a church was built upon the site of the present cathedral in the City of Mexico. In 1527 the church in Mexico had expanded to such an extent that Clement VII decided to erect it into a bishopric, and on December 12th of that year Fray Juan de Zumarraga was appointed to the see. Henceforward, incredible advances were made by the newly established church until in 1539, forty-seven years after Columbus landed, it had spread beyond the present border of Mexico into the trackless wildernesses of Arizona and New Mexico.

The causes leading to the first missionary excursion into the present territory of the United States are full of romantic interest. Cabeza de Vaca and three companions, survivors of the expedition of Narvaez to the coast of Florida

in 1528, wandered on foot through southern swamps and savannas until foot-sore and bedraggled, they arrived about April, 1536, at Spanish settlements in Mexico.

The story of this perilous journey has been vividly told by our own Lummis in that unique style of his, instinct with the smoke of the camp and the breath of the plains. In their aimless wandering reports had reached them through the Indians whom they met, of populous cities with many-storied houses and of mines of precious metal lying to the north and west of their path in the country now comprising Arizona and New Mexico. Relating the tales they had heard, the viceroy, Antonio de Mendoza, was stirred with the ambition to acquire this land, with its fabled wealth of Ophir, for his master, His Catholic Majesty, and the souls of its inhabitants for that other and greater Master, Christ the King. Casting about for a suitable agent to make the necessary reconnoissance, Fray Marcos de Nizza, of the Order of St. Francis the Seraph offered to undertake the task, and was promptly commissioned by the viceroy to penetrate the unknown country to the north, and to report whatever of interest to the cause of religion or of country that might be found. The priestly envoy was a Savoyard, a native of Nice, at that time belonging to the Duchy of Savoy. He had seen service in Peru with Pizzaro, and in Nicaragua with



Pedro de Alvarado, and was consequently no novice in the wild life of a pioneer. He had been a vice-commissary and provincial of his order, and we are told in the letters of obedience from his superiors that "he was a regular priest, pious, virtuous and devoted, a good theologian, and familiar with the sciences of cosmography and navigation."

Armed with the commission from Mendoza he started out from San Miguel de Culiacan, in Sinaloa, on March 7th, 1539, accompanied by Friar Onorato, Estevanico, a Moroccan negro, and a number of Indians. Estevanico was one of the survivors of the illfated Narvaez expedition, and had made the overland journey from Florida to Mexico with Cabeza de Vaca. No doubt he was selected to accompany De Nizza because of his familiarity with the rough life of a pioneer, and for the knowledge of making his way among Indians which he had gained on that remarkable trip. Onorato fell ill when the Rio del Fuerte was reached, and was sent back. The others of the party pushed forward, crossing the Rios Mayo and Yaqui, and reaching a place near the present Matapa in Sonora about the middle of April. From this point Estevanico was sent ahead to blaze the way.

Marcos de Nizza followed the route indicated by the negro and entered the territory of Arizona at the point where the San Pedro river crosses the line. Ascending the San Pedro, he branched

off near the present site of Benson, crossed the Gila and Salt rivers, and the White mountains, and probably reached the southern headwaters of the Little Colorado river. Here, when within two or three days' travel of the seven cities of Cibola as his destination was known to him, a terrified Indian met him, and related how Estevanico had reached the first of the cities, and had been murdered by its inhabitants. This news dashed the hopes of the good friar, and dissipated the splendid visions he had entertained during all his days of patient plodding. He determined, however, not to abandon the enterprise without viewing the city which he had traveled so far to see. His Indian followers in fear of Estevanico's assailants opposed any nearer approach to the Cibolan stronghold, and even threatened to murder the intrepid friar should he attempt it. In his extremity, Fray Marcos retired to a secluded spot, when he gave himself to prayer, and upon his return to the Indians he succeeded in inducing a few of them to accompany him to an eminence, where from afar he caught a fugitive view of the object of his desire, the terraced Indian pueblo of Hawiku, in the neighborhood of the present site of the pueblo of Zuni, New Mexico. Building a pile of rock in sight of the village, and raising a wooden cross, he took possession of the country for his Catholic Majesty, and gave it the name of the New

Kingdom of St. Francis. Then he turned his face homeward, and, footsore but cheerful, retraced the weary miles to Culiacan. Such is the story of the first European entry into Arizona,—a negro and a few Indians, led by a simple priest on a mission intended to open the way to the Cross, the words of the Master, "Go teach all nations," spoken by Galilee's distant sea, the impelling motive of it all. At first thought it seems to have been an inconsiderable enterprise; but upon further consideration we find it full of daring, hardship and distress. Consider what an undertaking it would be for one of us to strike out across country from Los Angeles today for Chihuahua, Mexico, or Denver, Colorado, or Yellowstone Park, Wyoming, or Baker City, Oregon, with Indians for companions and a burro for a Pullman. Who of us would not look upon it with dismay? Yet the distance from Los Angeles to each of these points is practically that from Culiacan to Zuni by the route Fray Marcos de Nizza traveled, approximately 775 miles. The trip to any of the points named could now be made in comfort even astride a burro, as compared with the journey accomplished by our hero. We could at least speak the language of the country: we would know what was before us; we would have no fear of attack from man or beast, yet who of us could be induced to undertake it? Friar Marcos ventured into a country, the desolation of which

none but those who have seen can conceive. Mile after mile of dreary, waterless, treeless plain, his food, such as he could wheedle from the natives, his "rest a stone," and crafty savages his associates. On the deserts he crossed even now there is danger from thirst, from reptiles, and insects, from heat and from Indians. This very day we read of the ravages of the Yaquis in the land he traversed. Only yesterday we waited with bated breath for news of the next savage raid of the cruel Apache, through whose very lair Fray Marcos passed undaunted. On the return trip he had the added burden of disappointed hope to carry, and the added discomfort of excessive heat to bear. No sun on the American continent beats down with more pitiless ardor than that which scorched a large part of his course, and the refraction from the sand-dunes and bare rocks intensifies it immeasurably. Surely it is not too much to say that Marcos de Nizza performed a heroic feat when he returned to Culiacan after his journey, covering over 1500 miles, in an air line, a distance equal to that from Los Angeles to the Mississippi river, or from New York city to the Colorado line. Still he was not discouraged. Rather did his experience urge him to renewed effort. He made his report to the viceroy in September, 1539. It was in glowing terms, and told not of his hardships, but of the wonderful things he had seen and of the limitless possibili-

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ties in souls and in wealth, which he foresaw in the conquest of his New Kingdom of St. Francis. Mendoza was filled with enthusiasm at the report, and set about the organization of a military expedition for the exploration and subjugation of the newly discovered country. The governor of Culiacan, Francisco Coronado, who had talked with Fray Marcos on his return, volunteered to lead the enterprise, and was accordingly put at its head with the title of captain-general. He raised an army of 300 Spaniards and 800 Indians in the City of Mexico, and conducted it to Culiacan, which was made his temporary base. Leaving the main body of the army to follow at its leisure, and with the four Franciscan priests, Marcos de Nizza, Antonio Victoria, Juan de Padilla, and Juan de la Cruz, the lay brother Luis de Escalona, and an escort of picked men, he sallied forth, light of heart, and full of martial spirit. On the third day, Fray Antonio Victoria broke his leg, and was sent back. Coronado, with his party, followed practically the route blazed by Fray Marcos, and under the guidance of the friar, reached the Zuni pueblo, which had been described to him. It proved to be such an insignificant community in the light of popular anticipation that the soldiers turned upon Fray Marcos, deriding and abusing him for having led them on a wild-goose chase. The poor friar, wounded by the gibes of the soldiers

and fearful that he had unwittingly been the occasion of a tremendous blunder, asked and was granted permission to return to Mexico. He retraced his steps once more, and gave the rest of his life to work among the natives of Mexico, dying in the capital city March 25th, 1558.

Marcos de Nizza, probably the first white man to breathe the air of Arizona and New Mexico, is one of the historic figures of the world. That he had unbending will, untiring perseverance, fearlessness, hardiness, strenuousness. his pioneering in the wilds of Arizona established beyond dispute, but he had beside, as his superiors told of him, learning, sanctity, and zeal—the marks of the true priest of all times and places. He accomplished much, for it was no small thing to have pointed the way to that vast expanse of country comprising the sister territories of Arizona and New Mexico; and yet his name has not escaped slander. He has been persistently accused of exaggeration, lying and deceit in his report. It remained for truth-loving non-Catholic Americans to vindicate his honor; as Robert Louis Stevenson vindicated the memory of Damien. Charles F. Lummis, who we all know loves truth for its own sake, thrust his critical rapier through the long line of Marcos de Nizza's slanderers from Cortez down. He says, "Fray Marcos' statements were absolutely truthful." And George Parker Winship, Assistant

in American History at Harvard, defends the good friar's statements in detail in the fourteenth annual report of the Bureau of Ethnology.

It is but fair to state that it is a mooted question among historians as to whether Arizona was not penetrated in 1538 by Fray Juan de la Asumpcion, a year before the advent of Marcos de Nizza. On this question Bandelier says that, "while all the evidence presented does not come up to the requirements of historical certainty, the present condition of the case leads me to believe that the journey (*i. e.*, the journey of Fray de la Asumpcion into Arizona in 1538) was really made," and Dr. Elliott Coues says, "I believe Juan de la Asumpcion to have entered Arizona in 1538." Whatever the facts may be, Marcos de Nizza's expedition was the one which discovered the country for practical purposes, and in him we recognize at once the hero, priest and explorer. When Arizona, as a state, is called upon to place the statues of her heroes in the nation's Pantheon at Washington, surely Marcos de Nizza's figure will be her gift, and it will be a fitting companion-piece to the statue of that other explorer-priest, the gentle Jesuit, Pere Marquette.

We left Coronado with his army, two priests and a lay brother, in sight of one of the cities of Cibola. An hour's work placed him in possession of the pueblo, and he lost no time in preparing to push his conquest farther. He had heard

from the Indians of another group of pueblos in the province of Tusayan, about 100 miles to the northwest of Cibola. This group is the one at present known as Moqui. He sent Pedro de Tobar with an escort of seventeen men and Fray Juan de Padilla, to add this province to his conquest. They completed their task and heard from the Indians of a great river about seventy miles to the westward. This news was reported to Coronado, who at once detailed Captain Cardenas with a small force to verify the report. In due time Cardenas reached the mighty river, and for the first time in history, in the year 1540, white men stood on the brink of that marvelous chasm, the Grand Canyon of Arizona. Who can describe the swell of astonishment that must have swept the souls of these men as they peered into the depths of that colossal gorge, yawning agape twelve miles across and over 6000 feet deep, with its temples and pinnacles and minarets thousands of feet high, its mighty embrasures and battlements and buttresses, set as on the ramparts of the New Jerusalem, its mystery of color, vermilion and orange and yellow and brown; its sea of tenuous light purple and golden and blue, and over all a silence, brooding as darkness brooded over the face of the deep when all the world was young. This stupendous work of Nature, still incomprehensible to the human mind, must have been to these ardent Spaniards,



coming upon it from the glare of the desert, as the visions of the City of God were to the Prophets—the Apocalypse to John the Beloved. What wonder that they and the companions, to whom they told their wonderful experience, were fired anew by the desire for exploration. It is probable that Fray Juan de Padilla, whose course we shall now follow, did not accompany the party to the Grand Canyon. He remained with the main body of the expedition caring for its spiritual wants, and laboring with zeal among the natives.

Rumors of a land with extensive cities and abounding in gold, lying to the eastward, became rife in Coronado's camp. An Indian, from the plains tribes, whom the Spaniards nick-named El Turco, gave currency to these reports, and as they passed from mouth to mouth, they gained in definiteness, until the Spanish soldiers, including Coronado, were aflame with eagerness to push on to the conquest of the land of gold and plenty, which they called Quivira. The expedition changed its headquarters from Zuni to Acoma, and later at the suggestion of Fernando Alvarado, who made a reconnaissance to Pecos, a little to the south and east of the present Santa Fe, it moved on to a point at or near the present site of Bernalillo. Here the winter months were spent, Fray Padilla constantly working with the natives, and small exploring parties visiting the pueblos up and down the

Rio Grande. With the breaking up of winter, the soldiers became impatient to push on to the fabled land of Quivira. The start was made, and full of visions of treasure, they set out to the eastward, traveling through New Mexico, Indian Territory, and Kansas, into the latter of which it is thought they penetrated as far as the Republican Fork of the Kansas river. Some believed that they reached the Missouri river, and Coronado with a small party is supposed to have explored as far north as Nebraska. Quivira, like the mirage in the desert, was always a few days ahead, until at length Coronado was led to a group of poverty-stricken Indian tepees, which were pointed out to him as the place of his golden dream. Disgusted and disheartened at the sight of the reality, he returned to Bernalillo, and prepared to abandon the exploration of the north and to strike back to Mexico with the whole party. Fray Padilla followed the explorers through all their wanderings. His anxiety for souls, and for the expansion of the Church, keeping pace with the adventurers' lust for treasure and conquest. All these toilsome miles to the plains of Kansas he trudged afoot, borne up by the thought that but a few leagues ahead he would come upon Quivira, where a multitude of souls might be brought to the light of the true faith. When upon the return to Bernalillo, it was determined to abandon the expedition and set out for

Mexico, he and Fray Juan de la Cruz and Brother Escalona, of all the party opposed this course. The hardships which he had endured, far from disheartening him, fixed him all the firmer in the determination to devote his energy to the redemption of the savages. He asked, therefore, that he and his companions in religion might be left to pursue their holy calling in the boundless wilds of the north. The request was granted, and after assigning him a negro, a Portuguese soldier named Do Campo and some Mexican Indians as companions, and a few sheep, mules and a horse, Coronado and his adventurous band bade him farewell, and started on the homeward march. Left practically alone in this savage country, with his ships burned behind him as it were, with nearly a thousand miles between him and the first vestige of civilization, his thoughts rested not on the loneliness of his condition, but on the great work of salvation before him. Juan de la Cruz decided to remain at Bernalillo to instruct the Indians and baptize those of them of good disposition, and those who might be in danger of death. Brother Escalona went to Pecos. But Fray Padilla's heart was with the roaming tribes of the plains in the land of Quivira. Not content to remain with the pueblos, he set out with Do Campo, two Mexican Indians, and some guides for the land he had wearily traveled months before. The mere suggestion of this project is

bewildering, but to him in his great self-abnegation, it was duty. With a heart full of his work, he started out with his attendants, and after incredible hardships, reached his destination. No great time elapsed until this servant of God moistened the sands of the western prairies with his martyr blood. Treacherous savages came upon him, but even with murder staring him in the face, his thoughts were not of self, but of those about him. Calling out to his companions, he bade them flee, and in utter abandonment he submitted himself to his barbarous assailants, and gave up his noble soul to its Master. His was the first martyr blood shed in the great west—probably the first on the American continent. It was poured out gladly, unselfishly, and from it has sprung a harvest of Christian flowers, whose fragrance is with us still.

Years after his death, in October, 1599, another Spaniard, Onate, with a band of soldiers and two Franciscan priests, ventured toward the land of Quivira, the priests to search for the body of their martyred brother. It is said that it was brought back, and the Indians of Isleta, thirteen miles south of Albuquerque, have a tradition which persists to the present day that the sacred remains of Padilla rest beneath the chapel of their pueblo, and they firmly maintain that at regular intervals of about 25 years the incorrupt body in its cottonwood casket rises to the surface from the

depth of the grave. This phenomenon, if it be not a miracle, is said to have occurred no later than about five years ago, and one old Indian of the pueblo asserts that he has twice witnessed the resurrection. The Indians, it is said, expect this phenomenon at stated periods, and prepare themselves for the event, and after its occurrence they reverently return their treasure to its resting-place, with all the solemnities of the Church. However this may be, it is true that Padilla's life was the real miracle. Fearless, kindly, self-sacrificing, resourceful, this Andalusian priest was a fit prototype, as he was the proto-martyr of the Catholic Church in the United States.

Father Juan de la Cruz and the lay brother, Luis de Escalona, also laid down their lives for their flocks. They were murdered by the Indians, and with their disappearance from present American territory, the last vestige of Coronado's ill-starred expedition was removed. The reports which Coronado and his men carried into Mexico put a check to any further exploration to the north, and it was not until 1581, forty years after Coronado's undertaking, that white men again ventured into New Mexico. In that year two Franciscan priests and a lay brother, with an escort of twelve soldiers, came to the province of the Tiguas in New Mexico, for the purpose of spreading the Gospel. The soldiers went back unnerved at the sight

of so many Indians; but the religious remained, and one by one were massacred.

Next, in 1582, came Espejo, who visited New Mexico and the pueblos of Moqui, and tramped about a large part of Arizona. With him was Fray Bernardino Beltran. Then came Onate in 1596, bringing eight priests and two lay brothers. This was the first expedition to accomplish anything of permanence. Towns and missions were founded, more priests were sent for, the Indians were reduced to submission, explorations were made to Zuni and Moqui, and the Colorado river was traced to its mouth. In 1605 or 1606 Onate founded the present city of Santa Fe, and by 1608 the missionaries had reported upward of 8000 baptisms. "In 1617," says Lummis, "three years before Plymouth Rock, there were already eleven churches in use in New Mexico." On June 10th, 1626, the missions of New Mexico were erected into a Franciscan province, and the first custodio, Fray Alfonso de Benavides, in a memorial sent to the King of Spain in 1626, and published in Brussels in 1631, reports upwards of 40,000 converts, and what may surprise our present day educators who imagine that education was discovered in Boston harbor, he mentions over a dozen schools in full operation among the Indians of New Mexico. The progress of the Church was astounding until in the year 1680, practically all the pueblo Indians of New

Mexico and Arizona were Christianized. In that year a great uprising occurred, involving all the pueblos. Time is lacking to discuss its causes. It is sufficient to say that those usually assigned, the exactions of the padres, have no foundation in fact. The rebellion was well planned and mercilessly executed, and in a short time swept the Spanish work of eighty years, civil and ecclesiastical, off the face of the earth. In it eighteen priests were massacred, and innumerable churches, chapels and schools were destroyed. It was not until 1695 that order was restored, and effective missionary work resumed. From this time until 1821, the year of Mexican independence, the Church kept pace with the civil power, doing its work effectually and well. We have lists of 292 priests who labored in Arizona and New Mexico, from Marcos de Nizza's entry until 1821, and of these thirty-six are known to have been martyred.

Among them all, besides those of Marcos de Nizza and Juan de Padilla, two figures loom against the historic canvas in striking outline. These are Eusebio Kino, the Jesuit, and Francisco Garces, the Franciscan, both of whom labored principally in Arizona. Father Kino was the first Jesuit in Arizona, and the first priest to engage in active missionary work in the southern part of the territory. In the northern part, among the Moquis, the Franciscans labored faithfully, one being martyred at

Oraiba, and another at Valpi, the village now famous for its snake dance, in the great revolt of 1680. Father Kino was a native of Trent, in the Austrian Tyrol, his true name being Eusebius Kuhn, which, to suit the genius of the Spanish tongue was changed to Kino. He was a man of more than ordinary learning, even for a Jesuit. So pronounced was his gift in the science of mathematics that he was offered this chair by the Duke of Bavaria in the University of Ingolstadt. His zeal for souls was a passion, and preferring to indulge it, he declined all worldly advancement, and asked to be sent on the mission to the New World. His superiors gratified his desire, and in 1680 assigned him to Mexico. Here he took up the work of conversion of the Indians in Sonora, and in 1691, with Father Juan Maria de Salvatierra, he crossed into what is now Arizona, and founded the missions of Guevavi and San Xavier del Bac.

He made the mission of Dolores in Sonora his headquarters, and from this point made a number of missionary trips into Arizona. In 1694 he penetrated as far as the Gila river. He made a thorough examination of the great ruins known as Casa Grande, which even to-day are the largest and most interesting remnant of the civilization which had passed away before Marcos de Nizza's first entrada in 1539. In this great ruin he had the happiness to offer up the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Altogether



he is known to have made three trips as far as the Gila, and in 1699 he went to the westward to a point on the Colorado river, near the present site of Yuma, naming the stream Rio de los Martires, river of the martyrs. In all his journeyings, the spiritual welfare of the Indians was his prime motive, his ruling passion. He preached to them, aided them in their difficulties, loved them with the love of a true Christian pastor. The hardships that he underwent must have been excessive, as one who has crossed the territory on the Southern Pacific Railroad will readily realize. Dangers beset his every step through this forbidding region, yet he performed his work unconscious of them, or at least ignoring them, and after twenty-nine years of labor amid such surroundings, in his seventieth year, he rendered his faithful soul to its Creator. He is justly called the Apostle of the Pimas, and the fruit of his work among them survives to this day. Near the site of the mission of San Xavier del Bac, which he founded, his successors, the Franciscans, in the year 1783, began the erection of the present church of San Xavier del Bac, which, as Lummis says in the July *Land of Sunshine*, "is beyond cavil, the finest mission edifice in the United States." Father Kino was in many respects the most lovable character in the long line of missionaries in Arizona and New Mexico. Full of charity and zeal and self-sacrifice, he became

all things to his beloved savage children. The land that knew the touch of his faithful hand, the love of his gentle heart, shall be blessed forevermore.

After Father Kino, the Jesuits administered the missions of Sonora and Arizona until in 1767, the Spanish government issued an order of expulsion against them, and after stealing their property under the popular guise of confiscation, it was thoughtful enough to supply the places made vacant with the Franciscan Fathers. A band of fourteen Franciscans left Queretaro on August 5th, 1767, bound for the missions made desolate by the order of the unscrupulous government. They traveled overland to the port of San Blas, where they took ship, and after suffering the horrors of wreck, arrived in a dilapidated condition at the port of Guaymas, whence they traveled afoot to the various missions assigned them in Sonora and Arizona.

Fray Francisco Garces, born in the Kingdom of Aragon, April 12th, 1738, was appointed to the mission of San Xavier del Bac, the scene of Father Kino's labors in Arizona. He took residence there in June, 1768, and immediately began his apostolic work among the natives. Two months after his arrival he made a visitation to the surrounding rancherias, penetrating as far as the Gila river. In 1770, he made another trip to the Gila, following the river a considerable distance and baptizing

many natives. In 1771 he again visited the Gila, extending his trip to the Indians on the Colorado river, and spending two months and a half away from his mission of San Xavier. These various excursions among the Indians encouraged him to formulate a plan for the establishment of a group of new missions along the Gila and Colorado rivers, after the type of the Sonora and California foundations. He also undertook the opening of overland communication between the Mexican and the Californian missions, as well as between the missions of New Mexico and those of Sonora and California. Under the existing conditions, these three groups of missions were isolated one from the other, and all from the mother country. It was his vast project to establish a line of new missions which would bring them all into close relation, and thus unify their work, make it more effective and form of the three distinct groups one body working with a common purpose, and as a harmonious whole. With this end in view, under the auspices of the government, he started out on January 8, 1774, from the presidio of Tubac, with a military expedition in command of Captain Anza, in the direction of the Colorado river. They crossed this river near the present Yuma, traversed the great California desert, and arrived at the San Gabriel mission on March 22nd, where Fray Garces had the happiness of meeting your great California pioneer

and priest, Father Junipero Serra. Father Garces returned to the Colorado river, where he explored up and down its course for many leagues, finally returning to San Xavier del Bac, July 10th, 1774. On October 21st, 1775, the redoubtable priest, under orders of the Mexican viceroy, Bucareli, undertook an extensive journey, in order, as his letters of instruction read, "to examine the country, treat with the neighboring natives, and investigate the animus and adaptability of the natives for the catechism and vassalage of our sovereign." On this trip the good father kept a minute journal of his daily travel, which forms a story of adventure as thrilling in its details as the records of Marco Polo's travels in China, or Henry M. Stanley's in Darkest Africa. He traveled from Tubac to the Gila, down the Gila to Yuma, down the Colorado to the gulf, and back up the Colorado to Fort Mojave, and from Mojave across the desert to San Gabriel mission. From San Gabriel he struck out to the north, crossing the Tehachapi range, and penetrating to Bakersfield, Kern river and Tulare lake, whence he returned to Fort Mojave, crossed the Colorado about that point, passed through Kingman and Hackberry in Arizona, turned to the north and struck the lateral canyons entering into the Grand Canyon. He passed Cataract canyon, north of Williams, and struck the Grand Canyon, which he named Puerto de Bucareli near

the point which travelers now visit. With only a glance at this mighty gorge, with its valley of Jehosaphat in the center and the Judgment Seat of God rising 6000 feet from its depths, the traveler turned his face to the eastward, and set out for the Moqui pueblos. Crossing the glaring sands of the Painted Desert, he arrived at Oraibi, the first of the villages, in July. Scant courtesy awaited him there, and his stay among them was for only four days. It is interesting to read the note in his diary under date of July 4th, 1776, the day when the Liberty bell in Philadelphia was ringing out the glad tidings that America was free. While on one side of the continent a new nation was feeling the gladness of her first breath of life, this humble friar in the loneliness of an Indian village, set in the midst of the desert, was writing these words:

“July 4th—As soon as day broke I heard singing and dancing in the streets. The rout passed by the place where I was, and then only did I see that some of the Indians were painted red, with feathers and other decorations on the head, beating the sound of the dance on a kind of drum, with two small sticks, to which the flutes played an accompaniment, and many persons kept time to the music, as well through the streets as on the house-tops. I observed that in some places the processions paused. The sun having now risen, I saw coming nigh unto me a great multi-

tude of people, the sight of which caused me some fear of losing my life. There came forward four Indians, who appeared to be principals, of whom the tallest one asked me, with a grimace, 'For what hast thou come here? Get thee gone without delay,—back to thy land.' I made them a sign to be seated, but they would not. I arose with the Santo Christo in my hand, and partly in Yuma, and partly in Yavapai, and partly in Castillian, with the aid of signs, which are the best language to use with Indians, I explained to them my route, naming the nations whom I had seen, those who had kissed El Christo; I told them that all these had been good to me, that I also loved the Moquis, and for that reason I came to say to them that God is in the sky, and that this Senor, whom they saw on the cross, was the image of God, Jesu Christo, who is good. To this responded an old man in Castillian language, and making a wry face: 'No, no.' Then I said, 'Fetch my mule.' After a little the Yavapai youth appeared with her, and having arranged my things, I mounted on her back, showing by my smiling face, how highly I appreciated their pueblo and their fashions."

Shaking the dust of this ungrateful town from his feet, he turned back to Mojave, followed the Rio Colorado down to Yuma, went up the Gila, and arrived at San Xavier on September 17th, 1776. During all that wonderful trip he never lost sight of his mission,—the

conversion of the Indians. He preached to them through interpreters, made peace between various tribes, baptized the dying, conquered the headstrong. The hardships he underwent are inconceivable. Hunger and thirst, heat and cold, sleepless nights and anxious days, were his constant portion. The diary of his trip was done into English by Dr. Elliott Coues, and was issued with copious notes only a few months ago. It was the last work of this eminent author, who died on Christmas day of last year. Every student of the history of the Southwest should familiarize himself with this work; and while in its notes the author does not show an understanding of Catholic doctrine, his work otherwise is beyond criticism, and his appreciation of Fray Garces is unbounded. He says of him:

“Garces, like the Saviour, so loved his fellow-men that he was ready to die for them. This is true religion of whatever sect or denomination, called by whatever name.”

Garces did not accomplish his pet project of establishing communication between the missions of New Mexico, Arizona and California, owing to the unreliability of the Mexican officials. They favored his work, but at critical periods withheld promised assistance.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Don Hugo O’Conor—it would not be complete without the Irish—inspector-general of the Mexican army,

wrote Father Garces on December 13th, 1775, that the project of moving troops to the Gila and Colorado rivers had his approval, and that its execution was left in his hands. In the meantime, however, O'Connor was appointed to the governorship of Campeche, and his successor evidently overlooked the needs of the friars. Father Garces, upon his return to San Xavier, devoted himself to the offices of his ministry among the Indians, and there, in 1781, in a general uprising, he was clubbed to death by his faithless children. Thus with the martyr's palm in his hand, the life of this noble missionary went out.

Of all the missionaries of the west he was the most forceful, aggressive and energetic, and withal the most kindly, self-sacrificing and devoted. He knew no fear. The fiber of his heart was of soldier stuff, but unlike the soldier who ventures in phalanx and with sword in hand, he bearded the savage alone, armed with no other weapon than the image of his crucified Lord. Like Sir Galahad, "his strength was as the strength of ten, because his heart was pure."

After him a line of heroic spirits took up his work and propagated it with heart and hand and brain, even unto the present day, till we, the children of their travail, can look back to a spiritual ancestry flowing with the blood of martyrs and saints, and the ancestry of kings has nothing nobler, purer, holier.



Some of you have known, as I have, the saintly Salpointe, gone to his eternal rest; the gentle Bourgade, the modest Gerard, and the energetic Ferrari and Artuis, who are even now working in the footsteps of Nizza, Padilla, Kino and Garces. We have personal knowledge of their daily hardships, of their cheerful labors, and of the sanctity of their devoted lives.

Of these and of the early workers in the vineyard we may say, as Paul said of himself, that they were "in journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren; in labor and painfulness, in many watchings, in hunger and thirst, in many fastings, in cold and nakedness."

It was the prototypes of such as these that John saw in his Apocalyptic vision. "I saw," he says, "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and people and tongues, standing before the Throne and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. They shall no more hunger nor thirst; neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the Throne, shall rule them, and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

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