COMMUNICATED.

THE CATHOLIC ALMANAC FOR 1839.

This interesting work will be very gratifying to its readers, being more valuable than any of its predecessors. The evidences it affords of the steady progress of our holy religion in these United States are truly satisfactory.

The first Catholic Almanac in the United States, was published in New York A. D. 1817, by Mr. Field: it consisted of 163 pages; it promised in its title page, to give a full account of the churches, colleges, seminaries, benevolent institutions, &c. both of the United States and the Canadas, together with lists of the clergymen in the various diocesses. In the latter respect it was peculiarly deficient, some being entirely omitted, and others imperfectly noticed. No other appeared until 1822 when W. Creagh of N. York produced one of 136 pages, which, though containing much useful matter, wss too limited in its notices of our institutions, and very inaccurate, in its list of the clergy. A still longer interval occurred than in the former case. The present series was commenced, A, D. 1833, in the city of Baltimore. It has continued now six years, and we hope it may continue many more, constantly increasing as heretofore, in interest and instruction for the reader.

As it is impossible that it can be compiled either so completely, or exactly as is desirable, we think that some observations published in our papers, which may correct the few, almost unavoidable inaccuracies, of so difficult an undertaking, would tend to increase its usefulness, and render more acceptable to Catholics at large, a work so deserving.

The neecssity of a Catholic Almanac, was so much felt, that two were undertaken simultaneously, one published by J. Myers, Baltimore, the other by F. Lucas of the same city.

In the present number of the almanac, there is a notice of one of our western missionaries, page 151, in which it is said, that as early as the year 1803 or 1804, only two missionaries, viz. the Rev. Mr. Olivier, and the Rev. G. Richard had come to share the labours of the Rev. Mr. Badin; and that 200 priests are now scattered over the same tract of country, which 34 years ago was served only by three. For a correct view of our missionary origin, it is necessary to observe, that before the patriarch of Kentucky had been sent to that mission, Bishop Flaget was stationed in Vincennes, as early as the year 1792, and was succeeded by the Rev. Mr. Rivet, 1796; that the Rev. Mr. Levadoux in 1792 had been sent to the Mississippi, and stationed in Cahokias and Prairie du Rocher. In April 1793, he visited M. Flaget, in Vincennes, both of these gentlemen were Sulpicians, and had been sent by M. Emery, their superior in France, to Bishop Carroll, for the missions of the Illinois. A year later, the Reverend Mr. Richard also a Sulpician, was sent to the same mission, which was truly at that time, "the Far, Far West." But it should be noticed, that even before these, the Rev. Mr. Le Duc had been sent on this mission in 1789, by Bishop Carroll, as soon as he was appointed archbishop of Baltimore, for at this period the missions named were fast passing from the jurisdiction of Quebec, to that of Baltimore. Moreover it is worthy of note, that the Rev. Messrs. Gibant, Janin, Lassar, and some others who had come from Quebec, some before, some after the time of M. Le Duc, were found from 1793 to 1803 serving on the Mississippi, and at the same period Detroit and Michigan were supplied with Priests from Quebec.

As it could not be expected, that the estimable editors of the Almanac, could give in that simple note p. 151, a full account of the early missions of the entire west, we therefore thought it proper to make these few observations respecting them, so as to prevent false impressions from settling on the minds of many unacquainted with this portion of our ecclesiastical history.

It is a true and very consoling fact, that from Detroit to N. Orleans, exclusive of the Diocese of Mobile, there are now more than 250 Priests. The Mississippi was visited under the French many long years before the Ohio, and it was also first visited by missionaries when it passed into the hands of the Americans. The great eastern tributary of the Father of waters had next to witness the progress of our holy religion and its spreading establishments. Those dwelling on the great western tributary will not have long to wait, before they witness the same progress on their side. To account for the rapid advancement of the good cause in our immense valley, we ought not to view it as is too frequently done from the Ohio side only. Quebec prepared the way previous to the American revolution, by sending missionaries, via Detroit and the Lakes, to Vincennes and Kaskaskias; New Orleans from the south sent missionaries to Arkansas and St. Louis. Many zealous missionaries visited those places, which after the American revolution passed under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Baltimore, who became naturally more immediately solicitous to aid Kentucky and Ohio, which were nearer to him, and as they had not received so much assistance from Quebec and Orleans, as the flourishing territory, out of which so many states since that time have been formed.

A list of Catholic missionaries in the great valley, who were settled amongst the most savage tribes or

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earliest settlements, would comprise more than a hundred names. Among them the later ones extend to the epoch of the revolution, and still later to the establishment of the see of Baltimore, A. D. 1789. Some of the old people of Kaskaskias, St. Genevieve, Prairie du Rocher, and St. Louis, not to mention the more northern points, nor the southern Orleans, &c. still remember some of their old friends the French missionaries, during and after the revolution. A remarkable instance of this may be found in Father Meurin, who spent his life in the duties of the Western mission; first in Peoria, the old St. Louis, [see Peck's Statistics] to which place he came from Quebec A. D. 1734; in 1749 his mission was in Vincennes; thence he visited Cahokias, St. Genevieve, Kaskaskias, and Prairie du Rocher, where he died, A. D. 1776, after 42 years labor on the mission. His name is still in veneration throughout the scenes of his last labors. Mr. Gibant mentioned above, occupies some interesting pages in the history of Kentucky, [see Butler's History, pp. 62-65] and received the public thanks of Virginia; he died only in 1797. Messrs. Paget, de St. Piere, La Valiniere, Father Bernard, and Didier of St. Louis, are names known in our valley since the peace of 1783, and with those missionaries quoted above, range from 1792 to the present century; as to New Orleans, although it is truly part of the great valley, as well as Detroit, yet we shall only remark, at present, that a brother of the Rev. Mr. Olivier, who first accompanied him to Kaskaskias, left him to labor in the mission of Louisiana.

Reminiscences of the primitive apostles of our valley could supply occasionally for our Catholic papers most interesting and edifying paragraphs. We might name for instance, Father Marquete the Jesuit, who first discovered the Mississippi, A. D. 1673, and whose former mission extended beyond the western extremity of Lake Superior; Father Piret, another Jesuit, who spent 34 years in the Illinois mission, M. Bergier a Priest of the Seminary of Foreign missions, and a western missionary for 25 years, M. Beucher of the same Seminary, missionary of the West 32 years. M. Erbori 31 years and M. Davion 41 years. Of Father Marett there are interesting details in the collection of "Lettres Edifiantes," he served the Illinois mission from Peoria to Kaskaskia 28 years. There are many others, some of whom fell by the hands of savages, both in the west and in Canada, victims to their zeal for the spread of truth. There are some names recorded of men, who for a time labored in the West, but ended their days elsewhere; of this number was the celebrated Father Ralles who was killed in Maine after he had laboured in the west. M. De Cice, a name so distinguished in France, spent from 1670 to 1675 in the Illinois mission; being recalled to Europe, he was from thence sent as Vicar-apostolic to the East Indies, and was in Japan in 1713.

The history of the western missions in the valley during the 17th century until the last epoch, previous to the establishment of our Diocesses, for which event first Messrs. Flaget and Levadoux, next Badin and Richard prepared the way, [begun by the erection of the see of Bardstown] might be procured for some of the ensuing numbers of the Catholic Almanac; nor ought it to be long delayed. In order to make it more exact, recourse should be had to one or all of the three still living Patriarchs of the West, namely: Bishop Flaget, the most ancient missionary; Mr. Badin, the first Priest ordained by Bishop Carroll, though many years later than the two former in his mission to the west, and Mr. Olivier the oldest of our day.

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