

The First Missionary in Canada Ennémond Massé

by
THE REV. C. J. MERSEREAU

On the twenty-fourth of June, 1604, the Feast of St. John the Baptist, Samuel de Champlain, Lieutenant and Pilot of the early explorers under DeMonts entered a harbor, the mouth of a beautiful river, and in honor of the feast day he named the river the Saint John. With simple ceremony he erected a cross. It was not until four years later that he went to Quebec, and laid the foundations of that city. The oldest known map of the Saint John Harbor shows what is described as "a pebbly point where there is a cross." That pebbly point is what became known as Sand Point and it is today one of the most busy parts of the Port of Saint John, New Brunswick, and the spot where the cross is believed to have been erected is now a portion of the site of an elevator in West Saint John.

Eight years after Champlain gave the river the name which it bears today came Ennémond Massé, the pioneer missionary, the first white man to live on the site of the City of Saint John, New Brunswick. He began his missionary endeavor at this location, he who has been called the Creator of the Missions of Canada, and Canada's First Missionary. "He was a man of many trades," says Ragueneau, "but in none so skillful as in that of saving souls." He was not to stay long on the Saint John, nor in Acadia, due to the triumph of the English. His sojourn there lasted but three years (1611-1614).

Father T. J. Campbell, S.J., in his *Pioneer Priests of North America* comments "The failure in Acadia was of course a disaster, but in one respect it may be regarded as providential, inasmuch as it drove Massé back to France, and made him virtually the Creator of a greater enterprise, the Missions of Canada."

This early Acadian mission was the first effort made in the evangelization of New France, since it was the first French colony. Other priests it is true had preceded Fathers Massé and Biard, but these secular priests, were mere transients, the young Nicolas Aubry of Paris, in 1604, Jessé Fleché of Langres in 1610, and another whose name Champlain forgets to give.

Father Massé kept alive the enthusiasm for the Canadian Missions when he returned to France and he was the first to volunteer when the Recollets appealed for help in 1625. He was for a time Superior of the only missionary who was left among the Hurons (Brébeuf), and he hastened back to Canada when the French resumed control of the country after the surrender to Kirk in 1629.

It was Father Massé who built at Quebec the first Jesuit residence "Notre-Dame-des-Anges," perhaps the oldest structure in Canada, for it was

built in 1637. It was he also who worked on the Indian Alphabet, and Champlain in his *Voyage of 1632* gives examples of native languages contributed by Father Massé. He was called “the useful Father” because he drew up the plans, surveyed the site, supervised the lumbering and directed the construction of the various buildings and churches. He was surnamed the Architect, the Mason, the Sawyer of wood, the “Jack of all Trades.” In a word, he was the most practical of men. On his going to Quebec in 1625 he “found crosses in abundance,” says Father Lalemant. “The vessels failing to come, famine assailed the French who were in this country. It was then that Father Ennémond Massé and Father Anne de Noue, his companion, sought roots to preserve their lives; and that they made themselves, the one a gardener and ploughman, and the other a fisherman and woodcutter in order to be able to subsist in this end of the world where the souls have cost Jesus Christ as dear a price as the souls of princes and monarchs.”

This residence at Sillery may be regarded as one of the most sacred places in Canada. Almost all the great Canadian Martyrs had said Mass in its chapel, and had come there to rest a little, then to bid goodbye to their friends before going forth to die.

Today a monument surmounted by a cross stands in front of the old Residence bearing the inscription “The inhabitants of Sillery have erected this monument to the memory of Father Ennémond Massé, S.J., the first Missionary of Canada who was buried in 1646 in the church of St. Michael on the Domain of St. Joseph of Sillery.”

Rochemontoux describes Father Massé the man (*Jesuites*, vol. 1, p. 24) “Of an impetuous and violent nature he had all he could do to restrain it. But by vigilance and perseverance, he conquered it so well that he no longer seemed to have any strong impulses or passions. Industrious, unwearying, of robust health, he was prepared for the hardships of a distant mission by a life of penitence and denial, frequently fasting, sleeping upon hard boards, accustoming his taste to everything and his body to extreme cold and heat. Although innocent as a child, he led the life of a penitential anchorite; in 1608, he was made an Associate to Father Coton, then confessor and preacher to the King. But this austere Apostle preferred a life of privation and sacrifice to that of the Court. He chose Canada.”

These words “He chose Canada” should move us powerfully. Father Massé’s heart and soul were bound inextricably with this country which he loved so intensely. It is difficult to imagine how the Missionary movement would have fared without him. He was the cornerstone of the whole project, and he encouraged as well as personified the noble ideals which animated the Company of Jesus in Canada. In the *Relation of 1646* is a document found among his posthumous papers which begins with these words, “Mon cher Canada, which is so lovable and adorable in its crosses, whose conversion can only be undertaken by those who have on them the stigmata of the Cross.”

Father Ennémond Massé was born in Lyons in 1574 or 1575. There is some uncertainty about the date. Following a course of Philosophy at Tournon, he decided to enter the Society of Jesus.

Father Lalemant describes him at this period of his life:

Those who knew him most intimately remarked in him two or three notable characteristics. He had a vivacious, ready and ardent nature which was to him an exercise in virtue all the course of his life. This ardor gave him a fire, and an admirable promptness to his obedience and charity, and the falls that he incurred through frailty engendered in his soul a profound humility, and so great a contempt for himself that he esteemed himself less than a dog when nature caused him to commit some failing. He was born with the love of mortification, for from his early youth he treated his body harshly, especially when some little ebullition of anger would vex his heart.

Having heard mention of the labors of the great Saint Francis Xavier in the Indies, he had some thought of shedding his blood, or at least employing his life in some foreign country for the salvation of souls. This thought becomes changed into desire, this desire into resolution. This resolution increasing with age causes him to ask admission into our Society, into which he was received. But as his sight was extremely feeble there was talk of sending him away from the House of Probation. That terrifies him. He has recourse to His Blessed Mother, and entreats her with the simplicity of a child to give him a sign of her will that he should remain in the Society. He prays with ardor. He takes a Book, opens it, and reads without difficulty the smallest characters. That consoles and surprises him and effaces from the minds of his Superiors the thought of sending him away.

Father T. J. Campbell in his *Pioneer Priests of North America*, gives a fine résumé of the early life of Father Massé (*cf.* p. 52):

He entered the Society on August 25th, 1595 when he was twenty years old. He is said to have been naturally of a turbulent disposition, but in the novitiate he succeeded so well in keeping himself under control that he passed for having no temper at all. At first there was some difficulty about admitting him, because of his weak eyes, but he swept away that obstacle by falling on his knees and praying so fervently that his sight became perfect immediately. Although he studied Philosophy before becoming a Jesuit, he followed the abbreviated course of Theology in the Society. He was ordained Priest in 1603, and for the five following years filled the posts of Minister and Procurator in various houses. He was then sent as Socius (or Associate) to Father Coton who was Court Preacher and Confessor of Henry IV.

He must have been a man of good manners to have been assigned to such a place, but it was doubtless extremely distasteful to one who had been accustomed from youth to daily fasts, flagellations, and all sorts of penitential exercises. Even then, he was like a Father of the Desert in austerity. Besides, he had always been almost inordinately fond of self abasement, and when a novice it is said of him that while making the usual Novitiate pilgrimage he was so grieved at being hospitably received by a good-natured priest, that he began to pray for a change of disposition on the part of his host. The result was that he and his companion were unceremoniously thrown out of doors. Whether the other novice was consulted before this prayer was offered, we do not know,

nor is it certain that the good curé was fairly treated.

Father Lalemant describes this episode:

Now it happened to him in his pilgrimage that an Ecclesiastic of piety and rank received him and his companion also, with manifestations of extraordinary respect and love. He who sought only contempt and the Cross was at first filled with dread, imagining that the rebuffs of the world must be the mark of the union with God which he wished to have. He resumes his usual simplicity, has recourse to the Blessed Virgin, and entreats her to change this man's kindness into coldness, and his charity into repulsion, and that he would take this change for a sign of his continuance in the Society of her Son. This prayer, perhaps less discreet and less conformable to rule, than innocent, was heard by the Blessed Virgin. The words dry up in the man's mouth. His fire is changed to ice. He sends these pilgrims away by his agent without casting a glance at them. From that time, this good Novice held himself assured of his continuance in the service of his Lord and of his good Mistress, who made him a present most special and most rare, that of purity. The Fathers who most intimately visited and conversed with him, affirm that he never experienced any rebellion in the flesh.

While he was at Court there was a call for missionaries in the new colony of Acadia. At his request he was appointed for the work. That was in 1608; but it was not until January 26th, 1611, that he and Biard set sail on "The Grace of God" for America.

Father T. J. Campbell again, in his *Pioneer Priests of North America* (Vol. II, Chapter I) gives us concisely the historical background of Massé's early Acadia.

After the expeditions of Roberval and the Marquis de la Roche had failed, Pierre du Gast, the Sieur de Monts (a Huguenot) having acquired an ample fortune associated with himself some merchants of Rouen, St. Malo and Rochelle, and received from "the incomparable Henry IV" as Biard styles him, a grant of land from the 40° to 46° North latitude, besides trading privileges as far as the 54°. Its eastern boundary was the Atlantic, and its western the China Sea or Pacific. DeMonts left France in 1604, coasted along the shore of Norumbega (Maine) settled for a while on Ste. Croix Island (Dochet Island) and finally chose for the central seat of the Colony the Harbor of Port Royal or what is now Annapolis, in Nova Scotia.

Champlain who was with the expedition was opposed to the entire scheme; first, because the place was too near to the English settlements and consequently in constant danger of attack; and secondly, because the settlers were half Calvinist and half Catholic. He foresaw the strife that would ensue, and he sadly notes in his "Voyages" that the parson and the priest on board of his vessel not only spent their time in religious controversy, but came to blows on the deck, to the great amusement of the crew. Both of these tempestuous evangelists died shortly after landing, and the sailors buried them side by side, hoping that there at least they might be at peace. The Chaplain on Pontgravé's

ship was a priest from Paris named Aubry, who succeeded in losing himself for three weeks in the woods where he nearly perished. Nothing else is recorded of him. Two years of misery followed, and the associated merchants, finding they were getting nothing for their money but maps of rivers and bays, refused any further advances. Du Gast therefore abandoned the enterprise, without however, relinquishing his charter. He made over the seignery of Port Royal to Jean de Biencourt, commonly known as Poutrincourt, and retained the rest as his own.

Poutrincourt, to ensure the validity of the transaction applied in person to the King for the royal sanction. The easygoing monarch saw no reason to refuse the request, but intimated his desire to have the evangelization of the natives confided to Jesuit missionaries. As the grantee, however, though a Catholic had imbibed many Calvinist prejudices from his business friends, he regarded the Jesuits as ogres, and the royal suggestion made him uncomfortable. But instead of bluntly, telling the King his difficulties in the matter, he determined to evade the command as best he could. He began by dilatory tactics, and long after he was thought to have set out for America, he again appeared in Court. The King in anger ordered him to depart immediately, but in spite of that, the whole winter was consumed in preparation for the voyage. Evidently Henri IV was not a despot.

A year before that, Fathers Biard and Massé had been ordered to repair to Bordeaux, so as to be ready to set sail for America, but no one knew of any vessel about to leave; and although it was then near the close of 1608, there had been no intelligence of the failure of DeMonts in Acadia. There were no newspapers in those days. Another year slipped by, and not till winter set in did Poutrincourt receive his second order from the King.

On that occasion, Father Coton, who was the royal Confessor, heard the command, and made haste to ask about the missionaries, but Poutrincourt put him off with the assurance that it would be wise to wait another year, and when at the end of February 1610, he set sail, there were no Jesuits on board. In their stead, was a priest with the extraordinary name of Joshua Flesché, whose theological knowledge was rather of the Old than of the New Testament. Three weeks after his arrival he baptized a score of Indians whom Poutrincourt's son, Biencourt, evidently at his father's suggestion had instructed. The poor savages, however, knew nothing about what they were doing, were unable even to make the sign of the Cross, and were left undisturbed in their former habits of life. Thus one of those distinguished neophytes pointed with pride to the eight wives whom his curious Christian belief did not prevent him from retaining. Indeed, the prevalent impression among them was that baptism was merely an initiation ceremony which made them Normans. They called the Reverend Joshua, "Patriarch" and adopted the name for themselves; but when the news of the clergyman's singular performance reached France, his title did not prevent him from being roundly scored by the Sorbonne and he was recalled.

Lescarbot, in his letter in 1610 to the Queen gives the reasons why Poutrincourt does not want the Jesuits:

There are in that country some men of the church of good scholar ship (e.g.

Father Fleché) whom nothing but their religious zeal has taken there, and who will not fail to do all that piety requires in this respect. Now for the present; there is no need of any learned Doctors who may be more useful in combatting the vices and heresies at home. Besides, there is a certain class of men in whom we cannot have complete confidence, who are in the habit of censuring everything that is not in harmony with their maxims and wish to rule wherever they are. It is enough to be watched from abroad without having these fault-finders come near enough to record every movement of our hearts and souls, from whom even the greatest Kings cannot defend themselves. And then, what would be the use of so many such men over there at present, unless they wanted to devote themselves to the cultivation of the soil?

Father Campbell, S.J., supplies further information:

Notwithstanding the supplies brought by Poutrincourt the colony soon lapsed into its condition of semi-starvation, and it was thought advisable for young Biencourt to cross the water. He left Port Royal at the end of July, 1610. Shortly before he arrived in France Henry IV was assassinated. In consequence, all interest in the distant colony had declined, and Biencourt could find no one to assist him but two Calvinist merchants who agreed to supply him with a cargo. Hearing of his arrival, the Queen Mother, Marie de Medicis, sent orders to him to take back with him the Jesuit Missionaries who for more than two years had been waiting to cross the ocean. That angered the Calvinist merchants, who immediately cancelled their agreement "Any other priests, yes; but Jesuits, no." For such representatives of the cloth they had what Biard describes as "Une antipathie insociable."

Here enters the fairy god-mother in the person of the Marquise de Guercheville, a great dame of the Court. Indignant that the Orders, both of the dead king and of the Queen Regent should be flouted by two little shopkeepers, she went around among her rich friends and begged enough to buy out the entire Cargo.

Father Biard in his first letter to his Provincial in France (June 10th, 1611), describes the affair, "Madame de la Guercheville, a lady of great virtue, recognizing the expediency of this plan (i.e. paying the merchants for their cargo) and deeming it inconsistent with real piety to allow a godly work to be checked for such a trifle, and thus that Satan should be permitted to triumph, determined to try to raise the sum of money required, and she did so with such diligence and success, through the pious generosity of several Noblemen and Ladies of the Court, that she soon collected four thousand livres and sent them to Dieppe."

Father Campbell, S.J., continues the story thus:

Madame de Guercheville then made the two missionaries part owners, and ordered the vessel to hoist sail and be off; and, at last, on the twenty-first of January, 1611, Biard was able to write to the Father General Aquaviva, "Midnight has just struck. To-morrow at the point of day we set sail." They did not sail, however, until five days later. Appropriately the ship was called "The Grace of God" which intimated what they most sorely needed. The weather was dirty, the ship was small, and the voyage endless. It was mid-winter, the worst season for sailing, and the little vessel, of only sixty tons burden, tossed with thirty-six persons aboard on the seas at the most severe time of the year. The voyage was a long one, as the vessel did not make the usual course in starting out, and for six weeks the cold was so intense that all on board suffered severely. Father Biard writes of his companion, "Good Father Massé suffered a great deal. He was ill about forty days, eating very little and seldom leaving his bed; yet, notwithstanding all that, he wanted to fast. After Easter he continued to improve, thank God, more and more." Champlain who had set sail some time afterwards found them struggling in the icebergs in the Gulf. They reached land at Canso on May 5th and there celebrated Mass. Resuming, the ship coasted along the south and west shore of Nova Scotia, entered the Bay of Fundy and reached Port Royal on the twenty-second of May, the Feast of Pentecost, after a cruise of over four months, in which they were severely buffeted by fierce gales on the north Atlantic. There they were welcomed by Poutrincourt and his followers who had been reduced to considerable straits during the winter. Every one was down to starvation fare. A number of colonists had even been sent off to live among the Indians. But now that they arrived with the cargo everything seemed bright but, unfortunately, all hopes of a betterment vanished because the small ship's supplies were altogether inadequate for the number. There were now fifty-nine colonists to feed.

Father Massé three weeks after his arrival in Port Royal writes to Father Aquaviva, the General of the Jesuits in Rome. The letter is dated June 10th, 1611:

My Very Reverend Father,
The peace of Christ be with you.

If Your Reverence read with pleasure my letter of October 13th, I felt a great deal more in receiving yours of December 7th, especially as I am the first of the Society to receive from Your Reverence the first letter which you have ever sent to Canada. I take this event as a happy omen, and accept it as coming from heaven, to incite me to run with ardor in the race in order to merit and receive the reward of this heavenly vocation, and to sacrifice myself more promptly and more completely for the salvation of these people.

I admit to you that I said then freely to God: "Here I am; if you choose what is weak and despicable in this world to overthrow and destroy that which is strong, you will find all this in Ennemond. Here I am; send me, and make my tongue and my words intelligible, so that I may not be a barbarian to those who will hear me."

Your prayers, I am sure, will not be in vain, as our arrival here upon the most holy day of Pentecost seems to presage. We are weak in Jesus Christ, but, I

hope, we shall live in Him by the power of God. It is my earnest entreaty that Your Reverence, by your prayers and holy sacrifices, may prevail upon the Lord to accomplish all these things in us.

The unworthy son in Jesus Christ of the Society of Jesus,

Ennémond Massé.

On the same day Father Biard writes to Father Baltazar the Provincial of the Jesuits in Paris:

But now that we have arrived in good health by the grace of God, it is time we were casting our eyes over the country, and were giving some consideration to the condition in which we find Christianity here. Its whole foundation consists, after God, in this little settlement, of a family of about twenty persons. Messire Jessé Flesché commonly called the Patriarch has had charge of it; and in the year that he has lived here, has baptized about one hundred savages. The trouble is, he has not been able to instruct them as he would have wished, because he did not know the language, and had nothing with which to support them; for he who would minister to their souls, must at the same time nourish their bodies. This worthy man has shown great friendliness toward us, and thanked God for our coming; for he had made up his mind some time ago to return to France at the first opportunity, which he is now quite free to do without regret at abandoning a vine which he has planted.

They have not succeeded in translating into the native language the common Creed or Symbol, the Lord's Prayer, the Commandments of God, the Sacraments, and other principles quite necessary to the making of a Christian.

Father Campbell further states:

In June 1611, Poutrincourt started back to France with all the colonists except twenty-two. That had to be done, otherwise the whole party would have starved to death in the winter time. The missionaries then set to work to study the language but it was a hopeless task. The Indians had no abstract ideas whatever, and when it came to explain the meaning of holiness, sacraments, faith, law, temptation and the like, complete failure resulted. What added to the trouble was that the wily savages amused themselves by putting foul expressions in the mouths of their questioners, and moreover, always insisted on being fed as a reward for their pedagogical labors. The missionaries realized that all their learning would avail them nothing in the conversion of the savages unless they could acquire a knowledge of the Indian language, and so they continued to apply themselves to the task. Together, Fathers Biard and Massé passed the dreary and unfruitful years in Acadia. Both underwent the same hardships, but a differentiating note between the two men shows itself occasionally. Their different characters are revealed. Thus, to learn the language Massé took the quickest though the hardest method. He went off to the mouth of the St. John river and lived with the Indians. But in doing so he misjudged his powers of endurance. Accustomed to hardships though he was, the life was too much for his strength. He fell sick, and became almost blind because of the anemic state to which he was reduced. But his strength of will

sustained him and perhaps also, his good humor stood him in good stead. For when apparently at the point of death, the Indian who had built him another cabin to die in, asked him to write a letter to the Commandant at Port Royal to explain the situation, otherwise the savages would be accused of murdering him. Massé refused. "If I do that," he said, "somebody might kill me and would then go off to Port Royal, with my certificate of acquittal in his hands." "Well, then," said the Indian, "pray to Jesus to cure you." "I am doing so," replied the priest, "and I am not going to die."

Father Riard relates that Father Massé desired most intensely to live with the Indians.

Father Ennemond Massé, as he was full of courage desired that this enterprise (living with the Indians) should fall to him; also he was judged more suitable for it by the common voice of the settlement on account of his industry and practical ingenuity, ready to find a remedy for every inconvenience. He went away, then, with Louis Membertou and his family beyond French Bay (Bay of Fundy) to the St. John river and began his novitiate in this nomadic life, truly a very hard and trying ordeal.

Father Massé came to the St. John harbor in the summer of 1611, with a young Frenchman to act as his server at Mass. The Indian village was then on what is now Navy Island, and on the mainland near at hand. This area in West Saint John is now almost obliterated since piers have been erected. The missionary made his home in the wigwam of Louis Membertou, whose father was the most remarkable Chieftain Acadia ever produced, and was also the first convert there to Christianity, when it is said he was over a hundred years old. In 1534 he welcomed the great explorer Jacques Cartier to the shores of New Brunswick, and this was 1611 and he was still alive at Port Royal. Father Biard describes him as the greatest, most renowned, and most formidable savage in the memory of man, of splendid physique, taller and larger limbed than is usual among the Indians.

On June 24th, 1610, he had been baptized with nineteen of his family at Port Royal. The church records there relate "Membertou, a great Sagamore, over one hundred years old has been baptized by Messire Jessé Fleché, a priest, and named Henry by Monsieur de Poutrincourt after the late King." Bertrand writing to the Sieur de la Tronchaie, on that very day states "He promises to have the others baptized, or else make war upon them." Father Biard writes (June 10th, 1611) "Membertou as the one who has associated most with Monsieur de Poutrincourt for a long time is also the most zealous and shows the greatest faith, but even he complains of not understanding us well enough. He would like to become a preacher if he were properly taught."

Father Massé the pioneer white resident at Saint John saw much more of the country than that which lay in the immediate vicinity. His idea, was that, to learn the usages, habits, disposition and general life of the Indians, he should go with them in their journeys over mountains and through valleys in the interior and

share their canoe voyages on the water. In this way he must have explored a large part of the country along the lower St. John, and it is probable that these excursions frequently extended as far as the settlements at what is now Fredericton.

Father Massé, as we have said, repaired at once to the mouth of the St. John to engage in missionary work among Membertou's people, while Father Biard remained at Port Royal, except when he accompanied Biencourt on his exploration trips about the Bay of Fundy. Early in the month of October on their way to Kennebunk, Maine, seventy leagues away, Biencourt and Father Biard went a short distance up the Saint John River with some armed men to exact submission from Captain Merveille and his company of St. Malo, France, who had erected a trading post on an island called Emenenic that year (1611). Father Massé replaced Father Biard at Port Royal.

While we were away no one had remained at the settlement of Port Royal except Father Ennémond Massé and a young Parisian called Valentin Pageau. The Father lived very austere in the manner of a Hermit, seeing no one, except occasionally two or three Frenchmen, who were cultivating the land two leagues away and perchance some savage who was passing by. Shortly after his return, Father Biard fell ill of a light but slow and chronic malady which gave to Father Ennémond an occasion for charity.

Father Biard also relates an amazing occurrence on the occasion of the visit to Captain Merveille, and his company of traders. (Father Biard calls them "Malouins" because they came from St. Malo.)

We were still one league and a half from the island when the twilight ended, and night came on. The stars had already begun to appear, when suddenly towards the northward a part of the heavens became blood red; and this light spreading little by little in vivid streaks and flashes, moved directly over the settlement of the Malouins and there stopped. The red glow was so brilliant that the whole river was tinged and made luminous by it. This apparition lasted about five minutes and as soon as it disappeared another came of the same form, direction and appearance. Our savages when they saw this wonder, cried out in their language, "Gara, gara, maredo" – "We shall have war, there will be blood." We arrived opposite the settlement when the night had already closed in, and there was nothing we could do except to fire a salute from the falconet, which they answered with one from the swivel gun. When morning came and the usual prayers were said, two Malouins presented themselves upon the bank and signified to us that we could disembark without being molested; which we did. It was learned that their captains were not there but had gone away up the river three days before, and no one knew when they would return. Meanwhile Father Biard went away to prepare his altar and celebrate Holy Mass.

This is the first religious service on the St. John River or the first of which we have record. Father Massé had no doubt been offering the Holy Sacrifice of

the Mass at the mouth of the St. John River, but this is the first account that we possess of Mass along the river.

What was the phenomenon that Father Biard witnessed? Was it a display of Northern Lights of extreme brilliancy? It seems to have been something more than Aurora Borealis because the description is most extraordinary. We do not know whether Father Massé saw anything in the sky that night.

The location of the first Mass was at Emenenic, now Caton's Island on the Long Reach of the St. John River, about fifteen miles from the river mouth. At Westfield Beach a broad vista opens to the right unexpectedly, when the traveller thinks the course lies only straight ahead. This is the Long Reach of the English sailors and the Longue Vue of the French colonists. Caton's Island (Isle au Garce to the French, and Emenenic to the Indians), is the largest island of the Long Reach, which is one of the most magnificent sections of the river with its lake-like expansion with high hills on either side. At times it becomes the elusive blue of an April sky, at other times the brilliant blue of the Mediterranean. It was a beautiful screen upon which to film Father Biard's marvel of the sky.

In August 1911 the New Brunswick Historical Society unveiled a memorial stone tablet hearing the following inscription:

1611-1911
The first European Settlement in New Brunswick
was established on this island
called Emenenic
in 1611
by Captain Merveille and others
from St. Malo, France.

The Island was named Caton's Island after the two Caton brothers who arrived from Philadelphia in 1765.

The Indians at Saint John doubtless gave Father Massé the best they had, but that was poor enough. Scant as had been the accommodations at Port Royal, they were luxurious as compared with those of the Indian camps. "It was," says the Relation of Father Biard, "a life without order and without daily fare, without bread, without salt, and often without anything, always moving on and changing, in the air and in bad weather; for rest and quiet, odious cries and songs; for medicine, hunger and hard work." Father Massé suffered many discomforts, and was prostrated by sickness, but he continued to live among the Indians for several months, after which he returned to Port Royal. Father Biard had gone out to search for him, for no one had heard from him for four months, and he was just returning unsuccessful in his quest when Father Massé arrived, happy to have suffered a good deal, and at least to have helped some dying people and babies go to heaven.

Father Biard is always the secretary, writing copious accounts of his experiences in Acadie, but Father Massé never takes up the pen except to send a short letter to his Superior General, immediately upon arriving at Port Royal.

Father Massé leaves the task of scribe to Father Biard while he attends to the more practical work of missionary activity. It is unfortunate that he did not give us a detailed account of his many and varied labors. Instead he relegates the task to his amanuensis, Father Biard.

An interesting episode, the cure of Chief Membertou's son is related by Father Biard. "We put upon the sufferer a bone taken from the precious relics of the glorified St. Lawrence (O'Toole) Archbishop of Dublin in Ireland which M. de la Place the estimable Abbé d'Eu... kindly gave us for our protection during the voyage to these lands. So we placed some of these holy relics upon the sick man, at the same time offering our vows to him, and he improved." Influenced by this example, Membertou the father of the one who had recovered, was very strongly confirmed in the faith.

On January 31st, 1612, Father Biard describes the spiritual ministrations in Acadia. "On Sundays and holydays we celebrate Solemn Mass and Vespers; we preach and sometimes have processions, the boys of our children of the forest carrying before us, when they are present here, the tapers and censers and other sacred utensils. For thus, little by little, they become accustomed to our ceremonies. Our procession was, however, a more solemn one on the day of Corpus Christi when we carried about the Blessed Sacrament."

These days in Acadia were days of great hardship and discouragement and opposition and Father Lalemant describes them thus:

It is not credible how much these two poor Fathers suffered in this new world. Acorns were for several months their food; those who were bound to protect them covered them with insults. They were imprisoned and slandered by those very persons to whom they were rendering all the duties of love and charity. One of the principal among those who treated them ill, dying afterwards without the assistance of any priest, said, with regret and grief, that he was paying severely for the torments that he had caused these poor Fathers to suffer.

Father Campbell, S.J., continues:

Winter came again, the winter of 1612.1613, and with it, starvation. The Colonists lost what little energy they possessed, possibly because they were unfitted for the work, or possibly because their physical strength was gone, though they were a shiftless lot at best, and contented themselves with passing their time mostly in their huts lounging about the fire. To Father Massé, practical as he was, this sloth was intolerable and he determined to build a boat and go out to hunt for food himself. He knew nothing at all of the trade of shipbuilding, but he was a handy man with tools and he set to work. He could induce only one man to help him. The rest looked on and laughed at his clumsy efforts; but little by little the craft took shape, and was sufficiently calked with shreds of cordage, soaked with gum which he scraped from the trees and was finally launched, and succeeded in keeping afloat. Biard, of course, toiled with

him, though he good-humoredly wrote "I could only give the boat my benediction." Such was only one of the many instances of the lack of energy and initiative that characterized those Acadian colonists who had come out to found an empire. They were sitting idly on the sea shore, without a boat, in which to go out on the water, except, perhaps, some wretched canoe which they had bought from the Indians. They were starving although there was plenty of game in the woods, if they would only hunt for it.

The two Missionaries embarked in their miserable craft and went up and down the shore in search of food. They soon returned, not only with a plentiful supply of roots and acorns, but with an abundance of fish, which there was no difficulty in catching. Their boat-load was welcome, for there was not a morsel of food left in the colony's storehouse.

In France, Poutrincourt was at his wits' end to find backers for his ill fated scheme at Port Royal and he bethought himself of the pious Marquise de Guercheville. She again consented to furnish money, but this time very wisely insisted on having some of the profits, and she went so far as to propose to purchase the whole of the Acadian grant. She addressed herself to De Monts, who forthwith made over to her the whole of Acadia, of all the country from Florida to Labrador, and going west, as far as she could find land. She was thus known on paper as the greatest landlady that America has ever known.

Despite a new supply of provisions arriving as a result of Madame de Guercheville's intervention, it was partly rifled en route by the agent du Thet, and was squandered by the imprudent Biencourt, who seemed to think that a whole fleet was going to supply him with provisions. He rapidly bartered off all that he had, for fur pelts, with the result that the unfortunate colony was again struggling with starvation.

Madame de Guercheville's patience was exhausted. The Missionaries had informed her, that it was impossible to do anything with Biencourt, and very little with the French, on account of the Calvinist leaven in the Colony. They urged a distinctly Catholic settlement. The Marquise fitted out another ship, but unfortunately handed it over to another plunderer, La Saussaye, bidding him to call at Port Royal to take the Jesuits and to look for some other place to found a colony.

There were forty people in La Saussaye's expedition, including a priest, Father Quentin, and a Brother, Du Thet. They had horses and goats and tents and plenty of provisions on board, so that the prospects were bright when the vessel left Honfleur, France, on March 12th, 1613.

When they reached Port Royal, to their amazement they found only five persons, among them Fathers Biard and Massé. The rest were away in the woods. La Saussaye waited five days, but as no one else appeared he took the two priests on board and sailed away over the Bay of Fundy, intending to settle at the mouth of the Penobscot in Maine. "But God disposed otherwise," says Father Biard, and because of fog lasting two days they landed at a place called Mt. Desert Island. The mission had barely been established a few months when Argall, the Governor of Virginia, attacked the settlement. Both Biard and Massé did their best to restrain the English marauders, in the havoc they were making of the colony and with some measure of success. They were courteously treated

by Argall, and it was their protest that prevented his putting all the Frenchmen in an open boat, and setting them adrift on the high seas, to go to what was certain death. Instead of the thirty, fourteen Frenchmen were stowed away in a miserable old shallop, and the rest were carried off to Virginia. Father Massé was put into the shallop, while Father Biard went with the English to Virginia along with Father Quentin eventually to be shipped to England and thence allowed to return to France. Brother Du Thet was killed in the fight.

Before starting out in the shallop one of the crew asked for a priest to go with them, and when Argall inquired which one they wanted, they all clamored for Massé, an evident sign of his popularity, against that of his companion. On that day, he and Biard said goodbye to each other, not knowing if they should ever meet again. The shallop sailed away, with the Commander La Saussaye, who had been in hiding up the coast, as one of the company.

It coasted along the shore, and into the open sea, destitute of sailors, provisions or equipment until it had the good fortune to meet with two French ships and the party was enabled to get to France. Father Massé and his companion were “in the plight of two beggars, all in rags,” says Jerome Lalemant, when they reached France.

This settlement, then, in Maine, known as Saint-Sauveur was short-lived, since the English attacked it only a few months after its founding. Brother Du Thet was killed in the siege and is buried in an unmarked grave there, known to this day as Jesuit Meadow, not far from the fashionable sea-side resort of Bar Harbor, Maine. Fathers Massé, Biard and Quentin eventually reached their homeland, France.

Fathers Massé and Biard, then, met with many discouragements during their stay in Acadia, chiefly through the opposition of Biencourt at Port Royal. Nevertheless the missionaries learned the native language and made many long trips of exploration. One of Biard’s trips extended as far as the mouth of the Kennebec in Maine. The Indians themselves, the Abenakis, an Algonquin tribe, were always on the move with their semi-annual journeys, each winter to hunt, and each summer to fish.

Father Massé returned to Canada, going to Quebec in 1625, in company with Charles Lalemant and Jean de Brébeuf. During the English occupation of Canada, from 1629 to 1631, he returned to France, but came to Quebec again with Brébeuf in 1633, dying at Sillery at the age of seventy-two, after having been fifty years in the Jesuit Order. He consecrated the last thirteen years of his life to the instruction of the Algonquins and Hurons.

After the death of Father Massé, a paper which none but himself had seen in his lifetime was found. It contained his private rules of life, and these show his humble resolve to serve his Divine Master in Canada by taking up the Cross “So great a blessing, so lofty an employ, so sublime a vocation.” He set himself the following rules to which he adhered strictly:

1. Never to lie down except on the bare ground, i.e., without sheets,

without mattress, without straw bed; one nevertheless must have some of these in his room that he may be seen only by the eyes from which one cannot hide oneself.

2. To wear no linen, save about the neck.
3. Never to say Holy Mass without being clad in a hairshirt; that armor will make thee remember the Passion of thy Master of whom this Sacrifice is the great memorial.
4. To take the discipline every day.
5. Whenever thou shalt dine without having previously made thine examination of conscience, no matter how circumstances may hinder thee, thou shalt eat only a dessert, as one may do at the collation on days of fasting.
6. Thou shalt never give to thy taste that which it might crave as a delight.
7. Thou shalt fast three times in the week, but so that none may perceive it, save that one who must have knowledge thereof. As thou usually takest thy meal only at the second table, thou canst easily conceal these little mortifications.

Father Jerome Lalemant's tribute to his memory in the Relation of 1646, has these words:

If his purity was great, his charity was not less; it made him a wood sawyer, and ship's carpenter, along with Father Biard, his companion. They made planks and built a shallop or boat, in order to go fishing for cod so as to succor the settlement in which they were, which was under the pressure of extreme necessity. This good Father plied all sorts of trades, but especially that by which one gains Paradise. He has run so well that he has carried off the prize or the Crown; he has navigated so prosperously that he has at last arrived, in spite of all the storms, at the port of a glorious eternity.

Such was the first white man who lived at Saint John nearly a century and three quarters before the founding (1784) by the United Empire Loyalists of the city which exists to-day.

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