

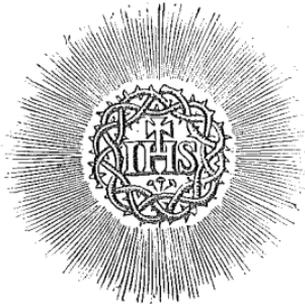
A. M. D. G.

WOODSTOCK LETTERS

A RECORD

*Of Current Events and Historical Notes connected with
the Colleges and Missions of the Soc. of Jesus
in North and South America.*

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WOODSTOCK COLLEGE

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FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

we arrived safely at the mission. The Hudson Bay Company, in this as in all its other dealings with us, acted with a spirit of real generosity, gratuitously offering us a helping hand in our misfortunes.

We reached home at night, and going at once to the chapel, we returned sincere thanks to God for our safe return. Nor was our return the only thing requiring grateful acknowledgment; for we found that in our absence Frs. Joset and Zerbinati had arrived; Fr. Zerbinati to be my assistant, Fr. Joset for the Cœur d'Alènes.

(To be continued.)

FATHER FRANCIS XAVIER WENINGER,

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND LABORS.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that very few men in the Church, at least in this country, have been, during the last thirty or forty years, so prominently before the Society and the world as the late Fr. Francis Xavier Weninger. Moreover, among the illustrious missionaries of the restored Society, it is equally doubtful whether any have been garnering the harvest for a longer period, or have scored equal successes with him, among civilized peoples. For Fr. Weninger entered the vineyard while yet little more than a youth; and it was only after the clearest warnings of his approaching end, that the ardent zeal which animated him was changed into an edifying readiness to surrender to his Master the important stewardship with which he had been entrusted. His life was a long one, full of excellent works and remarkable traits, of which anything more than a faint outline would be beyond our present purpose.

It would be interesting to trace Fr. Weninger's family history, and those religious and individual traits which so emphasized his zeal and marked his personality, did we but possess reliable data on that point. The presumption is, that he inherited much from the religious character of his people, especially of his parents, which enabled him, through the distracting vicissitudes of his American missions, to keep the lamp of his simple, childlike faith and the flame of his charity ever burning brilliantly. Fr. Weninger is himself the most trustworthy, and at the same time the most copious source of information upon this point, and his

testimony, for obvious reasons, is not at all extensive or satisfactory. Of his father he tells us very little more than that he was "*ein echt christlicher Hausvater.*" Barbara Weninger, his mother, was a lady of rank from Mandelstein; a fact which leads us to conjecture that, through his maternal connections at least, Fr. Weninger was probably descended from the old Catholic nobility of Austria. But again, of his mother, as of his father, he seems to say as little as possible. That she was a woman of exceptional piety is the sum of his reference to her many virtues. Yet, scanty as it is, even this allusion proves to us, what we had already conjectured, that the well grounded Catholicity which was, as it were, a predominant passion in Fr. Weninger, was, in no small measure, due to the faith and piety of his parents. We venture upon this statement from our own conviction of the source of that early spirit of devotion and zeal which we observe in their son.

Much of young Weninger's youth was passed in Vienna. The family residence, however, was not in that city. The family originally resided in Marburg, and, later on, removed to Gratz in Styria, and it was at Marburg that Francis Xavier Weninger was born on the eve of the feast of All Saints, 1805.

Of his school-days, his brother, Fr. Alexander Weninger, writes as follows: "Xavier was sent to the *gymnasium* of Marburg. He showed a very great desire to become a soldier, but was opposed by his father. For this reason, young Xavier was withdrawn from the *gymnasium* and sent to a friend of his father's who was the owner of a drug-store at Laybach. Under this man's training, Xavier was to learn the business of a druggist. Before he left home, his pious mother took him on a pilgrimage to a famous shrine of our Lady. There she recommended her son to the powerful protection of the Mother of God and made the offering of a chalice from the former chapel of the castle of Wildhaus (the Weninger home) praying the ever Blessed Virgin that she might give the priest for the chalice. The priest was to be her own child, young Xavier. Xavier began his apprenticeship in the drug-store, but his thirst for knowledge was so great, that he bethought himself of ways and means to continue his interrupted studies. By the advice and consent of his guardian, the druggist, he took up the classics in leisure hours and continued his college studies. The director of the *gymnasium* allowed him to study privately, but required that his examination should be public. The progress of his studies was so brilliant that the director warmly recommended him to Count Wurmbrand, *major-*

domo of the imperial court. The reason of this recommendation was the following: When the congress of emperors met at Laybach in 1821, the Empress Carolina Augusta, wife of Francis I., commanded her *major-domo* to enquire of the director of the *gymnasium* whether any youth distinguished himself in his studies. In consequence of this recommendation, Count Wurmbrand sent for the youth to learn from him the circumstances of his life and family. When the count heard that the boy's father was opposed to his studies, he asked Xavier whether he thought his father would persist in his opposition if the empress were to undertake the care of his education. The boy answered that he did not think so. This was decisive."⁽¹⁾ "Shortly after this," writes Fr. Weninger himself, "upon the adjournment of the imperial congress at Laybach, Count Wurmbrand, at the wish of the empress, desired me to accompany him to Vienna. The empress was eager to undertake my education and thus assure my father of the esteem in which she held him."

Fr. Weninger's account of his journey to Vienna with the royal party is characteristic, but too lengthy for insertion here. Upon his arrival at the capital, he was entered, under the patronage of the empress, at the Klinkowström Institute. It was here that he completed his classical studies. Upon the close of this preparatory training, he became, under the same imperial patronage, attached to the university of Vienna. He studied philosophy here for the two following years, being then little more than seventeen years old.

Fr. Weninger refers his first vocation to the priesthood to this period of his studies. He was convinced of a call to holy orders, and accordingly after his two years of philosophy, he began the study of dogmatic and moral theology. He received minor orders during his third year of theology, in the church of *Maria Stiegen*,⁽²⁾ from Monsignor Roman Zängerle, Prince-Bishop of Seckau. "From this time," he used to say, speaking of his ordination, "I always dressed as a clergyman, and never, even when subsequently professor at the university of Gratz, laid aside the clerical gown." He was only twenty years and eleven months old when he completed his course of divinity and entered upon the ampler studies required and pursued by aspirants to the degree of doctor in divinity. Hence it appears that he was dispensed

⁽¹⁾ According to another account, which appears to be from Fr. Xavier Weninger's own hand, his first interview with Count Wurmbrand took place by Xavier's own request, who had been asked by his father to lay certain documents before the empress.

⁽²⁾ *Maria ad Gradus*, to commemorate the fifteen steps which the Blessed Virgin mounted at the presentation in the temple.

from the canonical age when raised to the priesthood by his future diocesan, the prince-bishop of Gratz. Somewhat later, and after his "doctor's defence," he retired from Vienna to Gratz—a doctor of divinity, and not yet twenty-four years of age. Upon his arrival at Gratz, he was made prefect of studies in the episcopal seminary, and, a year later, became a fellow of the university and professor of dogmatic theology. It was in this city, and while laboring in this capacity, that he was first strongly drawn to the Society and became ultimately attached to it.

Alluding to his entrance into the Society, Fr. Weninger used to say that even from his very earliest youth he felt a definite call to the religious life. How he finally entered the Society is indeed interesting. As far as he is himself our authority, he was not, either then or at any earlier period, living upon particularly intimate relations with Ours. On the contrary, the Benedictines, the Camaldolese, and, in a very special manner, the Franciscans, were the special object of his veneration. He thought at one time, as probably many Franciscans have thought since, that he ought to be a son of St. Francis. God, however, had other designs, as subsequent events have shown.

The instrument which Providence employed to guide Fr. Weninger at this period of his life was his confessor. This man, Fr. Sebastian Job, director and confessor of the empress, appears to have been remarkable in many respects; and this probably induced the ardent young *protégé* of the empress to surrender himself to his direction on his entrance at the Klinkowström Institute. He was wont, he tells us, to rely implicitly on the counsels of this good man; and these frequently served him very materially, at a later day, as practical hints for the direction of souls and the conduct of his extensive missions. It was natural, then, that he should have had recourse to such a director when he felt called to the religious life. This was, as we have intimated, towards the end of his first year of philosophy. He informed Job, as he familiarly refers to him, of his inclination to the life of the contemplative orders. But his confessor did not encourage his desire; and when the young philosopher still insisted that he felt definitely called by the Holy Spirit to devote his life to God in religion, the answer with which his director used to quiet his scruples was, that he was indeed called to the sacred ministry, but that he had no vocation to a religious life.

We are not sure, however, that the reason alleged in support of this conclusion will appear satisfactory to everybody. His reason was, in about so many words, the following:

"Your divinely appointed patroness, Her Majesty the empress, does not wish this; and you must obey her." How trivial soever this reason may have appeared to him, it shaped the young man's conduct for the time being, although his preference for the religious life was not thereby altered.

Some years later, when he met the Jesuits in Gratz, his old leaning towards the life of the counsels returned, and, under the returning impulse of grace, he again consulted his old director. "I am standing" he wrote to him from Gratz at this time, "in an open plain, where all around me is in confusion. Beside me rises a mighty tower, the Society of Jesus. Should you approve of the step, I will place myself within the shelter of this tower and thus put my salvation in security; if you should not approve, I shall remain at my post as a secular priest; but in that event, your letter will one day lie upon my corpse in the coffin." He must have strongly impressed his confessor this time; for the latter answered him without hesitation: "You are now a priest" (he had assured him previously that this was indeed his vocation), "but you never before said anything to me about becoming a Jesuit. If, then, you are convinced that, before God, nothing in the world but his greater honor and your own more certain salvation induces you to take this step, then let it be taken." "This," writes the missionary, "was enough for me, and I immediately notified my ordinary of the step I was about to take. He was very ill at the time, and upon hearing of my resolution, replied: 'I lose you with regret; by this choice you have, as it were, involved yourself in the uncertainty of a mist; but the haze will gradually disappear and you will behold round about you the broad expanse of a glorious land.' A veritable prophecy; when I consider the vast field to which obedience, later on, assigned me, in the mission of the United States."⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Some light will be thrown on this period by the following extract from an interesting document from the convent of the discalced Carmelite nuns of Gratz. It bears date August 29, 1888, and the seal of the convent:—"In the chapel of *Maria-Saal* in the convent of the Carmelites at Gratz, Fr. Francis Xavier Weninger, while yet a secular priest, said Mass every day for nearly a year. It was a long road from the priest's house to the convent, which he travelled every morning through fair weather and foul, rain and snow. He loved the Carmelites, and our Lady of *Maria-Saal* attracted him. After Mass, which he was wont to say with indescribable devotion and with many tears, he locked the door of the chapel, and made his thanksgiving, which used to last very long, with extraordinary devotion. Sometimes he gave conferences to the community, which were of heavenly beauty. Once, after the midnight Mass on Christmas day, he made a little address, during which he appeared like one in an ecstasy. The good sisters were allowed to ask his counsel and advice, for they had not much other instruction. He had great confidence in our Rev. Mother Francisca, who was then prioress. One day he spoke to her of his trouble; and she, as if filled with the spirit of prophecy, said to him with great decision: 'Reverend Father, what you ought to do is to enter the Society of Jesus.' These words made a deep impression on him

Fr. Weninger made his novitiate at Gratz, and, after his probation, repeated his philosophy, probably at the novitiate, for this was customary at Gratz. His *puncta ad gradum* he prepared at Sandez in Galicia, where he passed his *examen ad gradum*. He was sent immediately afterwards to Tarnopol, to lecture publicly at the lyceum in that city, and to devote his spare time to preaching and hearing confessions among the Germans. Later on, he was at Linz for some time, and in 1830 taught moral philosophy in the scholasticate of the Austrian Province. He began his third year of probation at Gratz in 1840. During this year, he was confessor to the Duchess de Berri, then residing at Frohsdorf with her son the Count de Chambord, whom she had accompanied into exile.

Speaking of this noble lady, I cannot refrain from translating what Fr. Weninger writes about his relations with the duchess and her unfortunate family. They are highly interesting when viewed in connection with the irreverent prominence which the Bourbons and their ministers occupied at the time of the attempted suppression of the Society. "One day," writes Fr. Weninger, "the duchess asked me: 'Do you know, Father, on what day it was that Charles X. was forced to leave France?' 'Yes,' I replied, 'it was on the feast of St. Ignatius.' At the same time I said to myself: Do you know on what day and in what year it was that Charles X. suppressed the Jesuit colleges in France? It was in the same year, on the 16th of June, the feast of the French Jesuit St. Francis Regis. The enemies of the Order, animated with a hatred of the Society, advisedly chose this solemnity of the saintly French Jesuit, upon which to submit to the king the document which was to effect the suppression of their schools. In my capacity of confessor to the duchess and to her daughter the Princess Marie, and to the Duchess d'Angoulême, I enjoyed a favorable opportunity of studying the character of the French aristocracy. Numbers of the Legitimist nobility continued to pay court to the duchess and to the Count de Chambord, and, on these occasions they were accompanied by their noble retinues. Among these occasional visitors I once met the grand-nephew of the notorious Count Choiseul, who, as minister of France under Louis XV., expelled the Jesuits from France, and he went away pondering them. The next day, when he came as usual to say Mass, he said: 'This is the last time I shall say Mass here, I am going to enter the Society of Jesus.' On leaving the convent and especially the chapel, he was deeply moved and burst into tears. Once, while he was a novice, he visited us and said he was *more than happy*—voluntarily he would never leave—'if they will only keep me as a domestic servant,' he added. The pulpit in our refectory is a constant memorial of him; for it is the pulpit from which he delivered his lectures; it was given to us as a present many years ago."

and conspired with the equally infamous Portuguese premier, Pombal, for the suppression of the whole Society. Did it ever occur to Minister Choiseul that the day would come when his own grand nephew would be compelled to journey to a foreign land, to present himself before the dethroned heirs of the crown of France, and that there he would kneel at the feet of a Jesuit to receive absolution? 'Pray for me,' said the Count de Chambord to me during a similar conversation upon the Jesuits, '*vous savez bien que notre affaire est commune.*' Noble, but unfortunate prince! Scion of the House of Bourbon, I thought to myself, you have even now deeply understood this world's history!"

In 1841, after his tertianship, Fr. Weninger was sent to Innsbruck in the Tyrol, to replace the prefect of studies in the *gymnasium* at that place. He was afterwards recalled to Gratz for ministerial duties; but in 1843 was sent back to Innsbruck to lecture on theology to Ours. He remained there for the next seven years, during which time he was successively professor of scripture and Hebrew, and lecturer in ecclesiastical history. Besides these occupations, he was constantly preaching and hearing confessions. He heard, he says, twenty thousand confessions every year; and, in addition to his professorship and the confessional morning and evening, he occupied three pulpits, namely:—that of the students in the *gymnasium*, the one in our church, and that of the city parish church. He also accepted many invitations for festival and occasional sermons, gave a retreat to the people every year, conducted for seven successive years the spiritual exercises for the clergy of the diocese of Brixen, and was employed in missions among the people during the vacations.

With the revolution of 1848 the position of the Society in Austria and Germany became very embarrassing, and the usefulness of its members at home was practically impeded. Many of the Austrian and Swiss fathers were, for this reason, forced to leave their country. They accordingly placed themselves at the disposal of foreign provincials, and, before the political *status* of their own country had regained its normal quiet, many of them had become affiliated, temporarily or permanently, to other provinces of the Society.

Among the Austrian fathers who were unwilling to endure the inactivity occasioned by political persecution was Fr. Weninger. Almost immediately upon the first indications of the revolutionary storm, he wrote to Very Rev. Fr. Roothaan, offering to travel to any part of the world to which His Reverence might see fit to send him; and a few

months later, he was sent to America. He left Innsbruck on June 20, the eve of the feast of St. Aloysius, 1848, accompanied by Fr. Genelli and Dr. Fick; the latter had been professor at the Klinkowström Institute, and instructor of Francis Joseph I. Fr. Weninger writes of this voyage to America: "I travelled in my ecclesiastical dress, although an effort had been made to dissuade me. 'I am unable,' I said, 'to conceal my sacerdotal appearance, and to dress otherwise will not screen my character; I will travel as I am.' In fact, I met no opposition even in Paris, where the revolution of July, 1848, was at its height. The Pantheon was planted with cannon, and soldiers were guarding the place against the mob. As I was eager to visit our fathers in the Rue des Postes, I approached the sentinel; and when he ordered me back I said to him: *Je suis un prêtre; je dois y aller.* He scanned me from head to foot and finally said: *Passsez.*"

While at Paris, Fr. Weninger visited Montmartre, and went afterwards from Paris to Havre, whence he sailed, on the feast of St. John the Baptist, for this country. The voyage lasted twelve days. He said Mass every day and preached once in German to those on board, of whom only two, who were Spaniards bound for Paraguay, were Catholics. He experienced some difficulty, on this account, in selecting a theme upon which to address such a miscellaneous audience at their own request. When he manifested his indecision on this point, a New York Jew suggested that "The Destiny of Man" would prove an interesting and popular subject. He spoke with so much earnestness and confidence on this subject, that a gentleman who had been previously boasting of his infidelity approached him and said: "I thank you, Reverend Sir; as long as I live, I shall never forget that sermon."

He landed in New York on the feast of St. James the Apostle, and proceeded at once, with Fr. Genelli, to Fordham. While resting there, he preached his first sermon in America, at Williamsburg, in the church of the Most Holy Trinity. After celebrating the feast of St. Ignatius at Fordham, he proceeded, by way of Niagara Falls and Buffalo, to St. Louis, to confer with the superior of the Missouri Mission, about his future labors in America.

Fr. Weninger's career from this date approaches as closely to the received notion of an apostolate as perhaps any which our generation will be permitted to witness. In fact, it is its apostolic magnitude that fairly discourages us when we seek to give an adequate outline of it. Hence we shall not enter at length upon the details of this remarkable career.

Many of our readers possibly have been contemporaries of Fr. Weninger, and therefore well acquainted with even the minor details of most, if not all, of his life on the mission. To these, of course, our cursory glance at it will prove unsatisfactory; but the extent of the theme and our limits oblige us to summarize, and therefore to leave much unsaid which would indeed prove both interesting and edifying. But for those who are not familiar with the missionary life of Fr. Weninger, it may help their appreciation of it, to group his labors and travels into four distinct epochs, extending over a period of forty years, and embracing, first, his labors from 1848, about which time he gave his first American mission, to the commencement of our late civil war; secondly, those between 1860 and 1864; thirdly, the work which he accomplished from 1864 until his sacerdotal jubilee in 1878, an epoch of extensive and laborious missionary excursions in this country; and finally, his labors from 1878 until 1888, the time of his saintly death, years marked by the energy of his declining strength. We do not, of course, place any particular emphasis upon this classification of his mission work; for these dates do not indicate interruptions or changes in the character of his labors, but are meant simply to help us to form a proportionate appreciation of the extensive character of his apostolate. Moreover, it is to be understood that we had not, in submitting this grouping, the remotest idea of retracing in detail each long year of travel and preaching and shriving in which Fr. Weninger was almost incessantly engaged. It will amply satisfy our aim if we shall have submitted even a general idea of the extent of his missions; to which we hope to add some notion of his method of conducting these exercises, and an estimate, at least, of the great literary labor which went hand in hand with these apostolic exertions in the ministry.

His beginnings were, as prudence would suggest, modest and tentative. He wished to proceed gradually at first, as it were to inure himself to the labors of his later and more extensive apostleship. We said above that he became attached to the Missouri Mission in July, 1848. Until late that year, in accordance with the instruction of his superiors, and with a view to his preparation for the missions, he taught theology at Cincinnati, and, as at Innsbruck, diversified his professorial duties by preaching to the German congregations of the city, hearing confessions and studying English. In the winter of 1848, he opened his first mission in the church of the Holy Family, Oldenburg, Indiana, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. It was

continued for ten days and a half, and was attended by all the Catholics within a circuit of nearly twenty miles. His success in this first endeavor was eminent, and it was a powerful earnest of the fruit which was to attend his future endeavors. During the two following years, he devoted his time almost exclusively to the state of Ohio, giving also one or two small missions in Kentucky and Indiana. Between 1850 and 1860, he had traversed and retraversed the states of Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, the Dominion of Canada, and the states of New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Louisiana and Texas.

The year 1850, the first, we may call it, of his apostolic tours, opened auspiciously. It began with three great missionary successes in Cincinnati and its vicinity. Fourteen thousand approached the Holy Table, the vast majority of whom, the missionary tells us, prepared themselves for this great religious event by a general confession. This excellent beginning was followed by equally effective missions in the interior of the state. Hundreds were reconciled to God. It was, we are assured, a common thing during these missions to hear confessions of twenty and thirty years. At Wiseoak,⁽¹⁾ in Ohio, we are told, an old lady of seventy years of age walked seventy miles to attend the mission.

Towards the close of 1850, Fr. Weninger was invited by the archbishop of St. Louis to extend the field of his labors further west. Accepting His Grace's invitation, he terminated, that year, in St. Louis, a series of fourteen or fifteen missions—a long series at a time when the western states were not what they are for travellers at the present day, a network of convenient railroads. We find him, early in the following year, in the environs of St. Louis, at a place called New Bremen, which, in his diary, he dignifies with the distinguished title of 'Sister city to St. Louis.' This locality has since been metamorphosed into an indifferently elegant *fau-bourg* of the great western metropolis. From New Bremen the missionary returned by way of St. Louis to Cincinnati. On his way, he retired to Florissant for his annual retreat; and while there he preached his first English sermon. There is some humor in his allusion to this event. "Before I left Florissant," he writes, "I mustered up courage enough to preach, in the neighboring church, my first English sermon, and that to a very *obscure* audience."—They were negroes!

After conducting a series of jubilee exercises in Cincinnati, he journeyed northward as far as Chicago, giving mis-

(1) Whiteoak (?)

sions at Cleveland, Shelby, Liverpool, French Creek, Avon and Sheffield. It was at the instance of Bishop Van de Velde of the Society, that he inaugurated the good work of the missions in the great 'City of the Lakes.' From Chicago he was invited to Milwaukee; for the Rt. Rev. Dr. Henni desired very much that Fr. Weninger should, for some time, make the diocese of Milwaukee the scene of his apostolate. To comply with this wish, he conducted four successive missions in the city of Milwaukee, thence proceeded to Port Washington, Manitowoc and Greenbay. At Greenbay he met FF. Anderledy and Brunner, Swiss exiles, employed upon the missions of the Missouri Province. Fr. Anderledy was, we think, recalled soon after to Germany, and Fr. Brunner was afterwards sent to Bombay. Retracing his steps southward, Fr. Weninger opened a new mission in Milwaukee, and others, successively, at Burlington City, Wheatland and Waterford (Wisconsin), in Chicago and Quincy (Illinois), at Washington and Hermann (Missouri), and finished the year's work with three remarkable missions in St. Louis.

The earlier months of 1852 were spent in Louisiana and elsewhere in the South. He preached the mission exercises this year in New Orleans, Carrollton and Mobile, among both the whites and the negroes. At a small place on the lower Mississippi, he baptized about this time fifty negroes who had been under the previous instruction of a pious creole lady. On his homeward journey in June, he opened an extensive mission at Evansville, Indiana, and then sped northward to his last year's field in Wisconsin. On his re-entrance into the state, he gave missions at Kenosha and at thirteen smaller stations throughout the diocese. He returned to Cincinnati for his annual retreat, and there closed the year 1852, in his favorite St. Philomena's church, "*mit Predigt*" as he says, "*und mit einem hochfeierlichen Te Deum.*"

The year 1853 witnessed the same round of exercises, this time in northern Ohio and in the state of Iowa. Fr. Weninger preached, this year, upwards of twenty-two missions, conducted the spiritual exercises for the clergy of the diocese of Milwaukee, delivered an eloquent oration at the laying of the corner-stone of the Milwaukee cathedral, and inaugurated the labors of 1854, in St. Louis, with a very remarkable New Year's sermon.

It was during the missions of 1853 that the phenomenon of the "cross in the heavens"⁽¹⁾ was witnessed for the first time. It appeared at the little town of Guttenberg, Ohio, on the upper Mississippi. The mission, which began on Rosary

(1) Cf. Crétineau-Joly, Histoire de la Comp. de Jésus, vol. vi, c. 8.

Sunday, had closed on Friday, October 20, and was followed in the afternoon by the erection of the mission cross. Hardly had the sacred emblem of our faith been raised aloft in the procession which was to conduct it to its position in front of the village church, when a large white cross appeared in the blue heavens. "It was" writes Fr. Weninger in his allusion to the strange event, "probably one hundred feet long and twenty-five wide, and constructed of beams about two feet in breadth. Everybody could see it until the mission cross was planted, it being definitely outlined in the heavens for about a quarter of an hour. It then gradually vanished in streams of light. On either side of the cross were visible at the same time two gigantic palm-branches of equal brilliancy with the cross."

We omitted to mention that, in leaving Cincinnati this year, Fr. Weninger, who had become peculiarly distasteful to the Know Nothings and German atheists, found it hard to decide whether to quit the town during the riots, so as not to unnecessarily provoke his enemies by remaining in the city, or to open new missions and reconcile more souls to their Redeemer.

The year 1854 marks a sojourn in the East for our missionary. His time was occupied mainly in conducting extensive missions in Buffalo, Rochester, New York City, Syracuse, Albany, Toronto and elsewhere. He received, he estimates, upwards of one hundred heretics into the Church, and preached very nearly one thousand times in German, French or English.

1855 and 1856 were one long series of small missions, mostly in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Minnesota. We find the indefatigable traveller in 1857, back again in the East, where he opened missions in New York City, and later, in Patterson, N. J. From this place, he ran down to Richmond, Va. From Richmond he was summoned to Boston; thence back to New York State, where he conducted new missions at Stratonport, Forest Meadow and Poughkeepsie. He had not yet been to Pennsylvania. This year, however, he was asked for there, and accordingly preached missions at Goshoppen, Little York and Conewago. Later on, after giving a retreat to the clergy of the archdiocese of New York, preaching to large audiences in Washington, D. C., and, finally, conducting missions in Wisconsin, at Racine and Milwaukee, he hastened back to Pennsylvania, where he gave other missions in Philadelphia and its vicinity, and then returned to Cincinnati, his "American Home" as he used to call it, to close the exercises of the year with a popular mission in the church of St. Augustin.

We next find our missionary in Texas, the field of his labors for 1859. In this state, then but thinly peopled, he erected his mission cross in Galveston and Houston, and gave missions at Victoria, Powderhorn, San Antonio, Castroville, D'Haunis, Fredericksburg, New Brownsfield and Austin. Thence travelling north and east to New York, he preached to the Catholics of Troy, Carrollton and Rockport (Indiana); and gave missions in Brooklyn (Long Island) and at Rondout on the Hudson.

Texas, in 1859, was a difficult and, in some sense, a perilous mission. The settlers there were mostly Americans, and, as a rule, "shouting Methodists" of a very belligerent type. At Galveston and elsewhere through the state, they annoyed Fr. Weninger considerably. Texas is full of mixed marriages, contracted, in a multitude of instances, with a frivolity that is almost incredible. After marriage, many often see their mistake and are grieved for the step and its results. This was the case in Galveston; and many poor creatures came to confession, where their duty as Catholic wives and mothers was strongly impressed upon them. This sacramental instruction, when its effect began to tell upon the community, was misconstrued; and it was published abroad that this Jesuit preached in the confessional that it were preferable that Catholic mothers should put their children into boiling water and pull their skin off over their ears rather than suffer them to be baptized in the Protestant church. This procedure the newspaper men, and prominently among them a certain Möhling, declared was such as to call for an apology or an explanation. This Möhling, who by the way had once been a novice in some religious congregation or order, emulating the conduct of Luther, had apostatized some years before, and like the quondam monk, "*er nahm sich ein Weib.*"

"I answered these calumnies" writes Fr. Weninger, "by setting forth in a pamphlet upon this matter of the confessional, what every Catholic should know, namely, that I not only could not reveal to their sinful curiosity but not even to the pope himself anything that I hear in the confessional. I further reminded Möhling, in the course of my exposition, that it would be well for him to come to confession to me and that then he would learn for himself how I preached or conversed in the confessional. I avoided in my reply anything more of a personal character than to recall to this vituperative and uxorious apostate the saying of the German poet Arndt:

Ein solcher Wurm erstickt in seinem eigenen Gestank.

But I took advantage of this opportunity to explain to

the Protestants of Galveston some other points which, because they were misunderstood, served to intensify the hatred which Protestants foster against Catholics. On the following Sunday, I placed a copy of my pamphlet at the door of the Methodist meeting-house and distributed a thousand copies *gratis* among the Protestants. The effect was wonderful. They were dumfounded and had to hang their heads in shame. Poor Möhling, in particular, little thought that what he so shamefully enlarged upon when I landed in Galveston—namely, that I had come to Texas to bury all the Methodists—was to be first verified at his own cost. For his Methodist wife died the day after the mission. She was all the Methodism Möhling had or cared for, and he felt her taking-off all the more because, when she was dying, she bitterly reproached him for having so shamefully slandered me. He naturally held his tongue for a while after all this. Later on, however, he managed to keep alive the persecution which followed me through Texas, by circulating among the ignorant rangers the falsehood that my object in visiting the state was to separate Catholic wives from their Protestant husbands."

One of Fr. Weninger's busiest years was 1860. Most of this year he spent in Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, Illinois and Wisconsin. We have no record of his missions in 1861, the first year of the war. His diary, however, for this year is full of reflections upon the issues involved in this struggle. But these, although very interesting as an index of his sentiments, are hardly within our present scope.

In 1862, he conducted a number of miscellaneous retreats and a few missions. In the following year, 1863, he writes: "I have to thank God, in an especial manner, that the war has not interfered in any way with my missionary work. The extent of the United States renders it feasible for me to prosecute my labors in sections which the tumult of war is not likely to invade." Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, northern Kentucky, Indiana, New York, Iowa and Minnesota were once more the region of his travels and the scene of his missionary toil. It was this year also that, at Monroe, a little town in southern Michigan, the phenomenon of the "cross in the heavens" was repeated. The occasion was a similar one—the erection of the mission cross—the circumstances were almost identical with those at Guttenberg, and the cross equally observable.

During the year 1864, if we are not misinformed, Fr. Weninger must have preached about forty-five missions in Wisconsin, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky and Indiana; during this same interval he gave a number

of retreats, delivered the German address at the consecration of the cathedral in Buffalo and published his well known work, "Easter in Heaven."

Here ends the second epoch in Fr. Weninger's missionary career. His subsequent labors are similar, in the nature of the work pursued, but more arduous and covering a broader area. Between 1865 and 1869, Fr. Weninger had conducted, in various sections of this country, upwards of ninety-five missions, besides giving retreats here and there to every description of pious Christians. In 1866, he attended the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore as theologian to the archbishop of Cincinnati. During the same and the following year, he was engaged upon some rather lengthy apostolic processes for the examination of miracles, wrought through his own instrumentality, by the application of the relics of St. Peter Claver.⁽¹⁾ In 1868, besides the time devoted to missionary travel and labor, he secured leisure enough to publish his work on "Papal Infallibility."

His apostolic energy urged him, in 1869, to the outermost limits of the Far West — to the Pacific coast—out to California, Oregon, Nevada, Washington Territory and Vancouver's Island.⁽²⁾

In 1871, on his return trip to the East, he gave missions at Tomales, Santa Clara and Placerville, in the California gold regions; reached Omaha on the 15th of May; and proceeded thence to Cincinnati to superintend the printing of a Latin manuscript. On the 9th of July, began in Minnesota what he terms "*ein Cyclus von vielen Missionen*," and returned, in Christmas week, to his "American Capharnaum," as he styles Cincinnati.

Until Easter, 1872, he remained in the vicinity of Cincinnati, hard at work. After the Paschal festivities he proceeded to Lebanon, Pennsylvania, and thence to Baltimore. From Baltimore he visited Woodstock. He makes a reflection or two upon the occasion of this visit. "I went from Baltimore," he writes, "to pay a visit to our scholastics at Woodstock, about seventeen (?) miles from the city. This college, entirely devoted to the studies and literary training of our scholastics, is buried in the deepest solitude, that the young men may, wholly undisturbed, devote themselves to

⁽¹⁾ See previous volume, p. 106.

⁽²⁾ The missionary's own account of this period has already found place in the WOODSTOCK LETTERS. In vol. i. (p. 181), he gives the account of his journey from Cincinnati to San Francisco; in vol. ii. (p. 31), an account of his work among the German Catholics in San Francisco; in the same volume (p. 142), he recounts his experiences with the Chinese; and in three other letters (vol. ii. p. 218, vol. iii. p. 112 and p. 200), his labors in Oregon and Washington Ty.

study. There are more Jesuits gathered together here in one college than I have ever seen in Europe. They number about one hundred and twenty and are mainly scholastics from our provinces in the United States. They study here with the greatest ardor. It is a great spiritual consolation to see so many of the young sons of St. Ignatius gathered together in one place preparing themselves for future combat in the front ranks of the Church's conflict. While there I could not help asking myself, what must the devil think of all this, when, like a hell-hound, he looks at this cage of young lions whose teeth are now growing and will soon be ready to bite him."

From Woodstock, Fr. Weninger travelled as far west as St. Joe, Missouri, where he closed this year's labors. Ohio, Florida, New York and New Jersey were the field of his labors for 1873. He spent 1874 in Louisiana, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Illinois, Nebraska and Kansas. He went over the same ground in 1875, adding to it the states of Ohio, Indiana and Texas. From Texas, where he closed the missions of 1875 and opened the series of 1876, he ran northwards into the Alleghanies; thence west to Michigan; thence to Greenbay, Wisconsin; back again to Chicago; then eastward to New York; and westward, once more, to Cincinnati. He spent half of the following year in the South and the other half in the North, mostly in Wisconsin and Michigan. It was in this year that Fr. Weninger published his reply to Mr. Thompson, Secretary of the Navy, against the secretary's work "The Papacy and Civil Power." 1878 was another full year of missions, and was the year of Fr. Weninger's sacerdotal jubilee. This event he commemorated at St. Xavier's, Cincinnati. In his diary, he refers with pleasure and a grateful heart to the solemnity of this occasion. During the festivities, he received a costly stole from the negroes of Savannah, a congratulatory note from Cardinal Franzelin, who used to serve his Mass when he was at Innsbruck, and the papal blessing of His Holiness, Leo XIII.

From 1878 to 1885, about the time when he deemed it prudent to cease his travels, on account of his failing health and his advanced age, for he was getting on towards seventy-five, his missions were not so extended, although his work was, in many instances, equally burdensome with the labors of his younger days. He confined himself mainly to the middle, and a few of the western and north-western states, and to some favorite places in the East. Thus, in 1879, he was occupied in New York, Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, Arkansas and Indiana. In 1880, he gave missions in Wash-

ington, D. C., Indianapolis, Chillicothe, Chicago and some smaller towns; and, in 1881, was in Springfield, Illinois; whence he travelled east to Long Island, back again to Hanover, Missouri, and thence to Eskanaba, Michigan. This year, he informs us, he conducted the retreat for the clergy of the diocese of Alton, then went east to Pittsburg and New York, and returned to Cincinnati towards the end of the year.

In the beginning of his diary for 1882, he quotes from Holy Writ, "The years of man are seventy, and when they are full, eighty." Upon which he makes this reflection, "Can I not, even after my death, continue to preach and to carry on the apostolic labor to which God has destined me? Can I not, in other words, through the mouths of other ministers of the sanctuary, through their proclamation of the Word of God, contribute something to the spread of the truth, something to the interest of the great God and to the salvation of souls? The press will supply the means." "Inflamed by these hopes" he continues, "I arrived at the conclusion, to hand over to my brothers in the holy office a printed series of my discourses and sermons." Seven volumes of this series made their appearance in 1882, namely: Sunday Sermons, Feast-day Sermons, Conferences for Married Men and Young Men, Conferences for Married Women and Young Ladies, May Sermons, Lenten Sermons, and Sermons on the Most Blessed Sacrament. He seems to have set much store upon this work, and ceases not, in his diary, to thank God for its successful progress. With the aid of the younger men of the province, he was able later to publish an English translation of the same series. Three other volumes appeared some years afterwards, namely: "The Mission," "The Renewal of the Mission" and "Practical Hints." We mention these works in this connection because they are, in a measure, part of what may be called the missionary's field-work. He wrote, however, much more at which we may glance later on.

During the last months of 1882, Fr. Weninger was at work once more in Indiana and Missouri and, during his tour through the former state, he was requested by the Franciscans of Oldenburg to preside at their local celebration of the six hundredth anniversary of the birth of their founder. In 1883, he pursued his missionary course, for the last time, in the north-west. The same year, he attended the provincial congregation in St. Louis, and exerted himself even more than in previous years for the religious improvement of the negroes of the United States and for the promotion of the canonization of Blessed Peter Claver. In 1884, he

attended the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, as theologian to the bishop of Marquette; and in 1885, at the advanced age of eighty years, and after a mission or two in Wisconsin and Michigan, he practically ended his missionary excursions.

This hurried review gives us, in a very garbled form, it is true, a general idea of the extent of Fr. Weninger's missionary labors, and with it we should conclude, were it not that we had promised to add a word about the manner in which Fr. Weninger conducted his missions, and another on his literary labors.

In describing his mission-methods, we shall confine ourselves to the missionary's own exposition. "The principal thing to be noted" he tells us, "is that the missions which I conducted are not to be confounded with the retreats. In the latter, one simply delivers sermons or gives instructions for three, five or eight days, twice a day, and in the meantime allows the people to prepare for confession, without preparing the different classes of people according to their various states of life. I myself gave such retreats in Europe in the places in which I was teaching. It is true that by these retreats much good is often accomplished, but they do not result in such a thorough regeneration of a congregation, that each class of the parishioners may profit. This regeneration consists rather in a thorough instruction of each portion of the congregation: married men and married women, young men and young women, and children. For this purpose, instructions adapted to these particular states, separate confessions for the different classes, and general Communion at stated times, are of immeasurable utility. In the first place, there is in an invitation to a sermon meant for a particular state in life, something specially attractive, which induces the members of these respective classes to come willingly to these separate conferences. This is especially so in the case of young men and married men who have neglected the practice of their religion or who have almost given it up. In the second place, you can never, in the presence of one class of hearers, recall to the consideration of one state, at least fully and circumstantially and with a view to their fulfilment, any or all of their specific duties, without inviting the criticism of the other classes of the congregation. In the third place, this parcelling-out of the congregation provides also for the practicability and certainty of confession. The missionary is enabled, in this way, to place before a whole class the points upon which these particular members of the parish are to examine and accuse themselves, and the confessor

will thus perhaps rid himself of much of his otherwise superfluous labor. Besides, with this method, there is much less dissipation of mind and more earnestness displayed by all classes." Fr. Weninger enlarges considerably upon the excellency of this method. "By it" he continues, "the missionary holds the reins of the whole mission in his own hands." "However," he remarks, "I do not give this plan as a rule for other missionaries; it will overtax the ordinary strength of most preachers. What surprises me, although it was the holy will of God, is that God gave me the strength necessary to carry out such a plan for thirty-seven years.

"As regards the number of times one is to preach, I myself gave ordinarily two set sermons, one of these class-conferences and an address, thus preaching four times a day. When, as was frequently the case, the congregation was a mixed one, of English, German or French, I had to preach eight times a day, or upwards of sixty times in eight days. If it happened that all three nationalities were present in large numbers in a congregation, the leading points had to be put before each nationality. Then, of course, each sermon is considerably shorter, the three taking an hour and a half. Such a mission, in the three languages, is very taxing upon the missionary, but the effect is far greater than when a special mission is given to each nationality.

"What relates to the matter of the sermons, the instructions to the various conditions of exercitants, the address, the solemnities to be observed, together with the whole conduct of the mission, I have embraced in my three volumes entitled respectively: 'The Mission,' 'The Renewal of the Mission,' and 'Practical Hints.' The solicitude to be exerted for the continuance of the fruit of the mission after the mission has closed, and the practical working of its effects, I have minutely dwelt upon in the 'Practical Hints.' To this end, the erection of sodalities for the various classes in the parish, the visiting of the mission cross, and, above all, a care to provide fitting books for family reading and in keeping with the mission, books that will prove useful for home reading and self-instruction, help very efficaciously. There is no dearth of good books I know, but I speak here of the spread of those books which suit precisely the chief need of the faithful now-a-days and particularly in America.

"For, first of all, the faithful everywhere, but especially in America, should clearly understand, and be in a condition to instruct others, that there is but one religion revealed by God and that there is but one church founded by Christ, viz: the first Christian Church, the Roman Catholic Church,

which is the only saving Church. They should know, in this way, that there are not as many kinds of churches as there are Christian denominations that believe in Christ, but that those only are, in the full meaning of the word, Christian, who recognize themselves as children of that church which Christ founded. Furthermore, every Catholic should also be in a condition to give a satisfactory answer and explanation to every objection brought against the teaching of the Church. To aid them in this, I wrote the work entitled: 'Catholicity, Protestantism and Infidelity.'

"Secondly, all the faithful should be so instructed in the doctrines of the Catholic Church that they can, in turn, teach every one that the doctrine which they, as children of the Catholic Church, are obliged to believe, was taught from the earliest days of Christianity, and is in keeping with the teachings of Holy Writ and the tradition of the Fathers.

"Thirdly, every Catholic should be intimately persuaded, that to attain to salvation, it will not alone suffice that our faith be orthodox, but our lives also must be conformed to Christ, and we must constantly advance in his knowledge and love. Now, next to a thorough grounding in the doctrine of the Church, nothing more effectually conduces to this than the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was to foster this devotion that I wrote the 'Sacred Heart Mission Book.'

"Fourthly, Catholics must believe without any admixture of error in their faith; hence they should admit the infallible teaching authority of the head of the Church. In fact, fundamental instruction upon this point has become a matter of paramount importance for Catholics since the definition of the Vatican Council. The young, in particular, need this instruction, that the silly raillery of the enemy may not lead them into error. To supply a copious source of instruction for all upon this doctrine, I published 'The Infallibility of the Pope in defining Matters of Faith.'

"Fifthly, the whole tendency of Catholic life is directed heavenwards. What is heaven? The answer to this important question I have given in my 'Easter in Heaven.'

"Sixthly, are there any of the faithful who have already secured for themselves the blessedness of paradise? Yes; the saints have secured the happiness of heaven for all eternity. Who are the saints and what were they? I have answered this question in my 'Lives of the Saints.' Here, to a short account of their lives, I have in each instance appended a brief exhortation to their imitation and indicated methods of actually profiting by their example.

"In addition to these works I published a series of three catechisms for ordinary and for more advanced students of the Catholic doctrine.

"These seven works constitute a small house-library; and, when giving missions, I have exerted myself, as I always do, so far as to prevail upon the families attending the mission exercises to secure all these works. I withdraw from my labors with the reflection: 'What more, dear people, can I do for all of you or any one of you, than I have done; what greater solicitude am I capable of exhibiting for the future welfare of any and of all of you?'"

It is clear from this summary of the mission-methods of Fr. Weninger, that they involved a considerable amount of original literary labor on the part of the missionary himself. That Fr. Weninger did not shrink from such a labor is, we fancy, amply evinced by his extensive writings in German, English, French and Latin. In these he found his pastime; and if we may be permitted to so express it, he set as much store upon the writings which he had accumulated, the fruits of a rich experience and much thought, as a miser sets upon his gold and silver. This became singularly evident during the conflagration which destroyed our church in Cincinnati in 1882. It is amusing to hear him depict his anxiety for his papers which he considered lost in this fire.

"I occupied" he says, "a room behind the high altar in the church, and, in this apartment, actually lived under the roof of the church itself, at the side of Christ, and facing the Most Blessed Sacrament. As it was then Holy Week—a season during which I was wont, for years back, to repair to St. Paul's Church to preach, to be present at the ceremonies of Holy Week, and to celebrate the feast of the Resurrection after the German fashion—I was not in my room the night the church caught fire. Between 1 and 2 o'clock on Maundy Thursday night, the fire alarm was turned on and I heard the cry that St. Xavier's was in flames. I ran to the window of the presbytery, which was upon an eminence overlooking the city, and thence saw St. Xavier's, at a distance, encompassed in flames. The thought that, in my room in the church, all the writings which I had brought from Europe to America were locked away, created in me the sensation that I was myself in the fire. Half of me—the laboriously gathered results of years of study and experience—appeared in the heat of the bright flames to be paralyzed for the future. But I was soon able to make an act of resignation. I thought of Fr. Lancicius who, while he was offering our Lord all that he possessed, heard the

voice of Jesus from the consecrated host asking him: 'And thy writings also?' Lancicius answered: 'Lord, thou knowest what they cost me, yet, if thou dost so will it, take them also.' After this reflection, I offered all my writings in like manner to the Lord, if it should be his will that they be consumed. Meanwhile, the flames, as their fury relaxed momentarily, suggested to me the sweet words of the Psalmist: '*bonorum meorum non indiges, Domine.*' On the following day, Good Friday, I was celebrant during the ceremonies at St. Paul's, and was, for this cause, detained in the church most of the forenoon. I learned meanwhile, that everything within reach of the flames had been destroyed, and it was directly behind the high altar, and separated only by a partition, that my room was situated. The college was not very far from St. Paul's, but as I had been accustomed for years to make the Three Hours' Agony of Christ upon the cross, I did not wish to visit the fire until this duty was discharged. After the three hours, I hastened to the church, and on reaching the college door, inquired whether anything from my room had been preserved. I was told that nobody knew; that nobody had heard anything about it; and, furthermore, that no one could enter the room, as I had carried the key away with me. I then went over to the scene of the fire. The stairway leading to my room was destroyed, and the door, which remained untouched, was inaccessible except to good climbers. The man whom I sent up to open the door called down to me: 'What do you want out of your room, Father?' 'I want all that is left in it,' I answered. He then replied: 'Everything is here; the fire did not enter the room.' And, in fact, not a page in my bookcase or anywhere in the room had been harmed. I had among my effects a 'Christkindchen' (a statue of the little child Christ). It was of wax from Bethlehem, and a souvenir of a Franciscan convent in Vienna. Even this, together with a little music box for the crib, remained untouched, while the organ with its pipes was consumed in the fire and the clock dropped like wax from the tower. As I forthwith employed a number of men to carry down all my manuscripts, how thankful I felt to divine Providence! I fancied I heard these words of our Lord: 'You presented these writings to me; I have taken care of them for you.' *Vere quam bonus Israel Deus!* It is in circumstances like this that man feels, as it were palpably, with how much truth St. Paul says of Christ that he is 'the incarnate benevolence of God.'"

Fr. Weninger was, it is very well known, a student, and, like most students, was very fond of his own productions.

In this particular instance, however, it may be pretty justly conjectured that the work which he was desirous of prosecuting after his death through some of these writings (he was engaged at the time upon his sermon series) had much, if not everything, to do with his anxiety on this occasion.

Fr. Weninger's fondness for his papers leads us to say a word of his books. We have had occasion already to mention some of his literary productions. To review all he wrote, and in detail, were simply out of the question. It would be taxing patience even to name all his books, pamphlets, brochures, replies and explanations. Moreover, his works are comparatively recent, or at least so close at hand to everybody, that it would be, if not a useless task, at least a presumption, to seek to create an opinion where everybody is enabled to form his own judgment. We are loth, however, to omit stating in connection with his writings that many have been loud in their commendation of the missionary's books. For, to pass by Dr. Brownson's great admiration of his "Photographic Views, or Religious and Moral Truths reflected in the Universe," his work on "Catholicity, Protestantism and Infidelity" is very highly valued at home and abroad. Shortly after its appearance in this country, it was published in Europe, in French, Italian and Hungarian. His "Sunday and Feastday Sermons," together with the "Mission Book," were also reprinted in Bohemian. Upon his Latin work "*Summa Doctrinæ Christianæ*," Gregory XVI. congratulated Fr. Weninger in these very flattering terms: "*Purissimis fidei Catholicæ principiis juventutem erudire satagis.*" In return for a copy of his "Catholicity, Protestantism and Infidelity," Pius IX. sent the apostolic benediction. "*Ut autem*" the pontiff wrote upon the occasion, "*alacrius procedas ad convertendam istam gentem (Americanam), omnibus tuis consiliis, tentaminibus, conatibusque apostolicam impertimur benedictionem.*" The same Holy Father, upon the publication of the work on "Papal Infallibility," addressed the author in these other highly encouraging words: "You have benefitted the Church more through this book, than you could ever be in a condition to aid her by all your missions in America."⁽¹⁾

Suffice it to say that, during his travels and missions in America and Europe, Fr. Weninger published, in book or

⁽¹⁾ After quoting these words of approbation, Fr. Weninger adds: "Certain it is that, should God require me to renounce either the merits gained by my sermons or those gained by my books, I should exclaim without hesitation: 'Leave me those of my books, I renounce those of my sermons.'" v. Fr. Weninger on the Pacific Coast—WOODSTOCK LETTERS, Vol. ii, p. 39.

pamphlet form, upwards of forty different works in German; sixteen in English, either translations or original works; three in Latin and eight in French; besides composing some very generally commended pieces of sacred music.

This illustrious workman in God's vineyard had quoted the holy writings very appropriately when he said with the sacred writer: "The years of man on earth are seventy, and, when they are full, eighty." His own years were full in 1885. After this time he hardly ever went abroad, being engaged almost continuously at home, in prayer and in the compilation, we understand, of a popular exposition of sacred scripture.

Before concluding this sketch we must say a word of Fr. Weninger's domestic life. The presumption probably is that one who was so incessantly abroad had lost the habit and ways, at least, if not the spirit of community life. But those with whom his odd moments at home were spent, are unanimous in declaring that, even in very minor details of routine life in the community, Fr. Weninger rarely, and never unnecessarily, failed to set a salutary example to all. Many will bear further testimony that, during the last months of his life at St. Xavier's, he illustrated many of the most difficult virtues of the unswerving rule of strict community life. If any proof were needed, much could be gathered from the opinion entertained of his conduct by one under whose obedience he spent many of the last days of his life. I shall therefore conclude this review of Fr. Weninger's long and useful life with a quotation from this authority, the more willingly that, in it some things touching the missionary's individuality are alluded to, which cannot but edify all of us. "Work and prayer," writes this father, "were Fr. Weninger's predominant traits of character. Last Holy Week, he was, as usual, at St. Paul's Church, and a few days previous, he came to my room with a sermon on the Blessed Sacrament, written for the occasion,—written by a man who had spent *forty years* in preaching and writing sermons!—If I understood his diary aright, he says there that he never paid a visit or took a walk simply for pleasure's sake, and hence always found time for work. His obedience too was remarkable. It was the aim of his life to have his will in conformity with the will of his superior. When I recalled the saying that, 'chastity is the virtue of the young, obedience the virtue of the old,' and when I considered the unusual life he had led in the Society, it was to me edifying indeed, to see his anxiety to do precisely as I wished him. Last winter he travelled to Windsor, Canada,

for the benefit of a colored congregation there; at Christmas and Easter he was at St. Paul's Church; the rest of the time he spent with us, constantly occupied with his last work: 'Popular Commentaries on the Holy Scriptures.' On Sunday, June 17, he said his last Mass. Every succeeding day he received Holy Communion. He had received extreme unction about one month previously. His sufferings were great, and once when I was with him, he said as much, but remarked with earnestness that God honored him by sending him such trials. He had other trials which he bore with equal heroism, always showing himself a man of well-trying, solid virtue. After his illness became serious, I attended to his mail myself. Besides letters from different states, he received one from Australia, and one from Ceylon—all containing requests for prayers or relics or miracles. His pious death followed shortly after, and his funeral services were conducted quietly and privately, as is the custom of the Society, but with becoming veneration for the memory of the saintly departed. After the office for the dead, his remains were conveyed, by order of Rev. Fr. Provincial, to the novitiate cemetery at Florissant. On the 4th of July, the pastor of St. Paul's Church held a solemn requiem service for the repose of his soul. The singers and musicians who attended gave their services gratuitously, in honor of the illustrious dead, and, after the service, rendered a part of Fr. Weninger's *Te Deum*—a part which, because they never succeeded perfectly in giving it his interpretation, they had rehearsed over and over again under his own direction. The difficult passage was the words: 'In te Domine speravi, non confundar in æternum.' I trust that, by this time, he realizes fully the meaning of those words. He was a man who would not hear of merit; he worked for God."

We could introduce other documents of an equally laudable character, even from those outside the Society and in some instances alien to the Church, but recourse to so copious a commendation of the man and his works is better suited to the profuseness of a biography than to the limited character of a sketch. Besides, we have said enough, we think, to show that Fr. Weninger was a holy Jesuit, a hard worker and a great student. He was over and above, it is true, a distinguished missionary, a widely known writer and one of the most highly esteemed members of our Order in the United States. But from our standpoint, his missionary success will be looked upon as an accident, his literary reputation as rather an outward tribute, and his renown as a Jesuit, an ephemeral destiny. For us, his piety, his learning, his untiring zeal—the active expression of his-

toric and true Jesuitism—made him what he was and what every member of our Order who will emulate his example can become—a true Jesuit.

INDIAN TRADITIONS

AMONG THE OSAGES.

In reading the *Catholic World* for December, 1884,⁽¹⁾ I was very much amused by an account there given of Chinese traditions regarding the origin of the human family. I cannot help thinking that an account of the traditions of our western aborigines will be equally interesting; for in my estimation they can stand side by side with those of the Chinese. As my duties during the last thirty-four years of missionary life have familiarized me with the Osages more than with any other tribe, I shall limit myself to an account of their genealogy, and their social and religious traditions. Of course the poor untutored Indians of North America cannot be compared, to any advantage, with the learned mandarins of China, yet an examination into their myths and traditions will not be less interesting on that account.

In giving the origin of the human family, the Chinese account above mentioned supposes man already existing, and represents him playing short-hand tricks, as it were, with the sun and moon; but it does not tell us whence the first man came. The Osage traditions on this subject give us more satisfaction, for they tell us clearly how the first Osage man and woman came into this world, how they became the parents of a large progeny of children and grandchildren, and how from them the Osage nation was formed. Their tradition takes for granted that other nations also came into existence about the same time, but were living far apart, and unknown to them for a long while. And here I must first acknowledge that the Osages, as well as almost all other aboriginal nations, have a great many different traditions concerning their origin, but the one about which I am going to speak is, in my judgment, the best of all and most generally accepted. I learned it from one of the most intelligent Osage Wha-conta-cki, that is to say doctors, or, as they call them, medicine men. The Osage language not

⁽¹⁾ This account was written in July, 1885.