

PIONEERS OF THE CROSS IN CANADA

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Pioneers of the cross in Canada by Dean Harris

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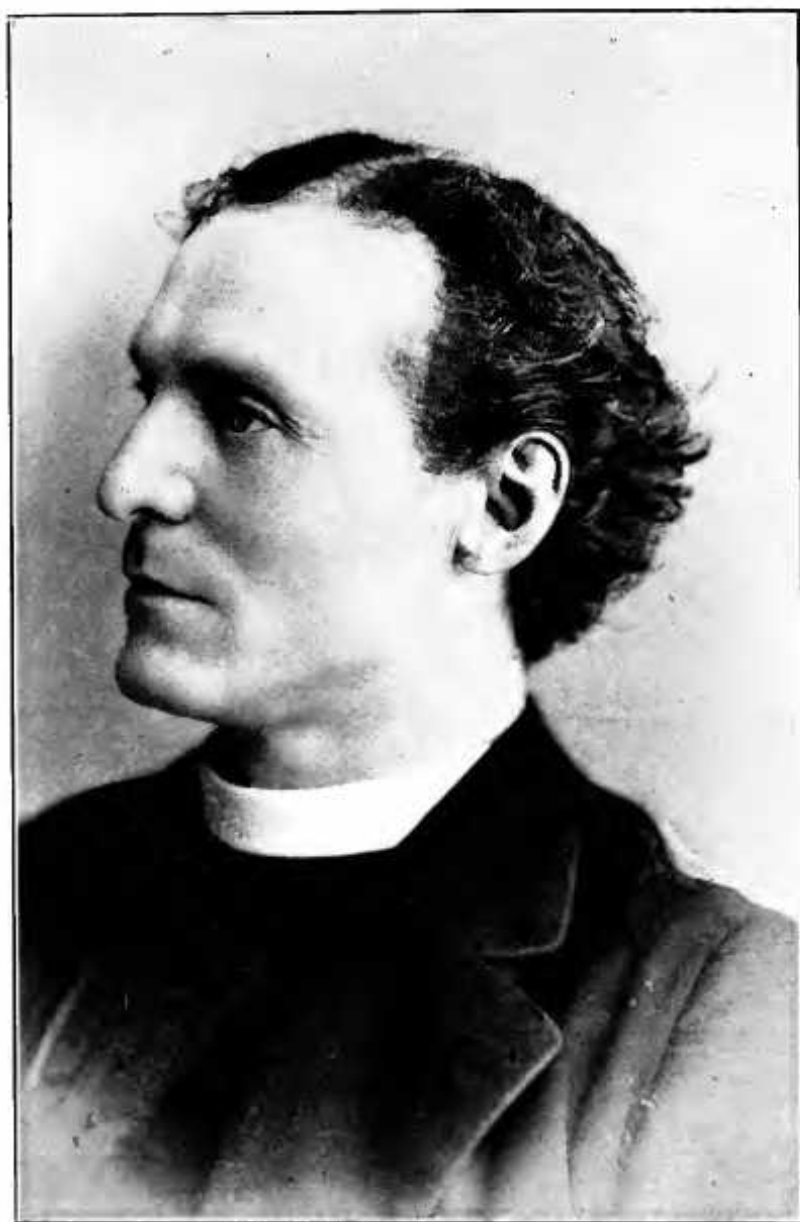
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DEAN HARRIS

**PIONEERS OF THE
CROSS IN CANADA**



Very cordially yours
W. R. Harris

PIONEERS OF THE CROSS IN CANADA

BY

DEAN HARRIS

AUTHOR OF "DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE TROPICS,"
"BY PATH AND TRAIL," ETC., ETC.

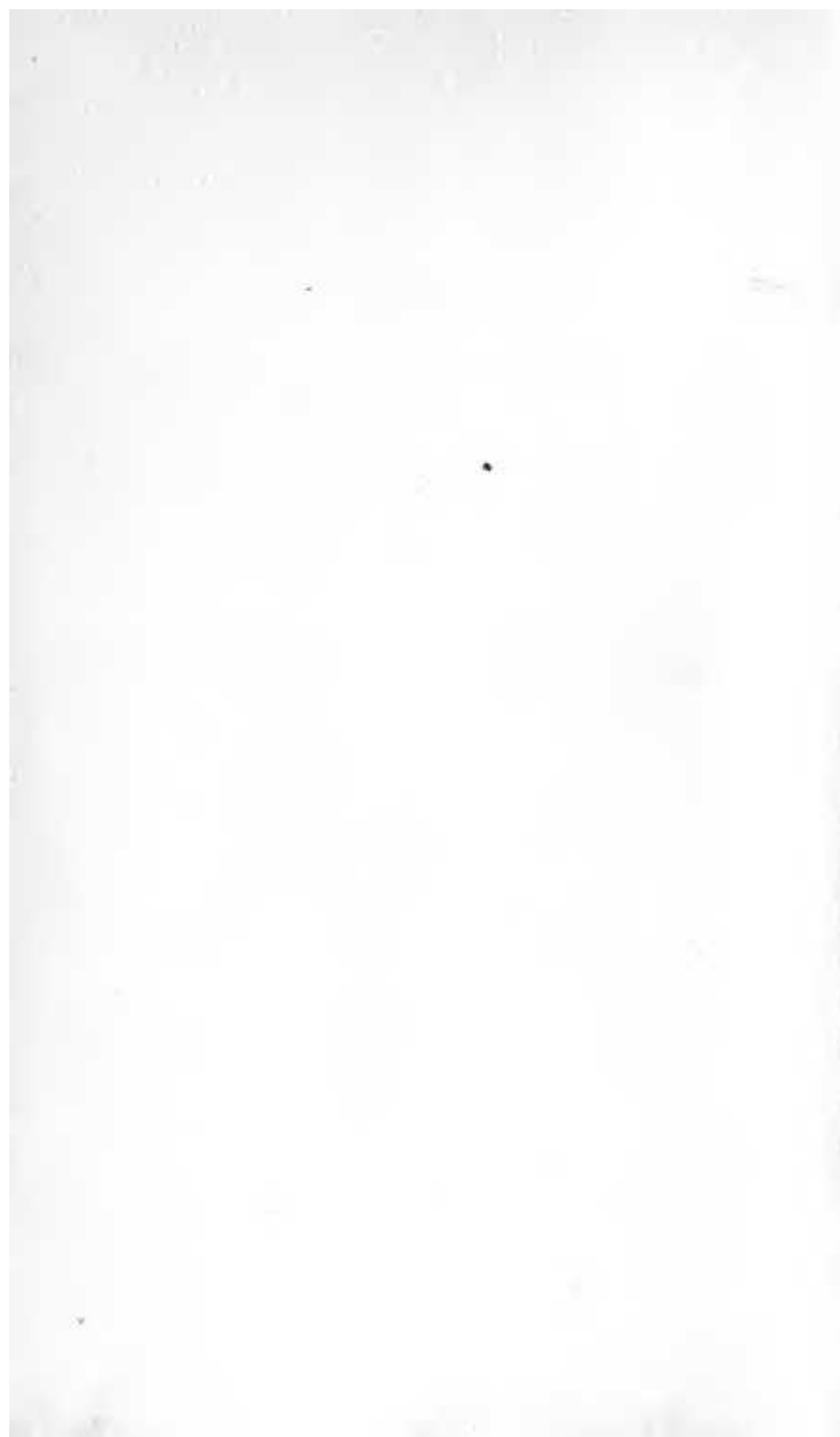


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PARKYN W. MURRAY, ESQ.

THIS BOOK
IS
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED
BY
HIS FRIEND

DEAN HARRIS



PREFACE.

The narrative of the lives and experiences of the Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries with the tribes of Canada in the seventeenth century is a Christian epic of tragic fascination. Of the many missions organized in this memorable century and among those which in a special manner invite our admiration, the missions to the Hurons of the Georgian and Nottawasaga Bays occupy a unique position.

The predatory and sanguinary raids of the Iroquois, with their accumulated horrors, which practically annihilated the Hurons; the devotion of the priests to their fugitive converts and the heroic courage of the noble band of priestly martyrs have given to the Huron nation and the Huron region a prominent place in our history. In this land and among the tribes which peopled its forests were witnessed the most perfect examples of faith and charity and a self-effacement and abnegation which invite the respect and admiration of even disinterested men.

The sources of information on the condition of the tribes and the devotion of the French missionaries are pure and undefiled. From the letters written by the missionaries and martyred priests we obtain a most accurate information on the habits, manners, and customs of the Canadian tribes.

These edifying letters—The Relations of the Jesuits—are translated into English by the scholarly Reuben G. Thwaites and the Burrows' edition is now within

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reach of all students of the early missions and of the history of aboriginal Canada. However, for the average reader, this great work is too expensive and voluminous. Father Martin's admirable translation of Bresani's "Relation Abrégée" and Camille de Rochemonteix's excellent volumes—"Les Jesuites et la Nouvelle France"—are in French and almost unknown to the English reader. My own effort published twenty years ago was brief and incomplete and the edition long ago sold out.

The brilliant stylist Parkman while giving us a fascinating and, on the whole, a very accurate narrative of the missions fails in his appreciation of the piety of the priests. He meant to be fair and just, but his New England training unfitted him for an accurate appreciation of the disinterestedness and divine lives of these saintly men. The self-denial of the fathers, their religious zeal, their painful fasts and vigils, their entire abnegation and their asceticism amid the horrors of their surroundings evoked the pity and almost the contempt of the Harvard historian.

Having but an imperfect knowledge of the supernatural or spiritual life and "perceiving not the things that are of the Spirit of God," the penances, fasts and spiritual exaltation of the missionaries were "foolishness" to him, and "he could not understand."—I Cor., ii, 14. Because of this want of understanding, his superb "Jesuits in North America" fails to accredit itself to Catholic readers.

It appeared to me useful and opportune at this memorable period of our history to record in partial fullness and in a popular form the lives and missionary work of these brave and saintly men.

I have tried in this essay to be historically accurate; have arranged and put together the bits of information

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I found scattered here and there among the old and, comparatively unknown, writers; have brushed the dust and mildew from valuable leaves of ancient chronicle and I now submit the work for the instruction and I trust the edification of my readers.