----The Hermit Priest of the Old Santa Fe Trail A Remarkable Man Who Craved Solitude-His Romantic

Life and Tragic End.

And set without influence somewhere. Who What earth needs from earth's lowliest

-Meredith.

mid-continent sky, on his right, almost im- fact it was margly the portal to the vast mediately after the train emerges from the mountain region on the west, to be reached picturesque canyon of El Moro, and com- only by crossing the desert, supposed to be mences to descend the long, gradual, slope included within the new state's geographical to the quaint old Mexican village of Las limits, through which ran the trail to far-off

Its scarred and verdureless front looms up object. More prominently defined than any attracted much attention, for he was, to other individual elevation of the Taos range the denizens of that remote frontier town, as out over the lesser mountains beneath the appearance at the gates of Nuremburg moment the sun has crossed the meridian of once startled the good people of that staid its crest.

At its foot little grassy valleys stretch tism of centuries. eastwardly, which are cultivated by the The stranger who came so unexpectedly "Quien sabe?" quietly opens his little ditch ing novel. to let the tenantless water overflow his Matteo Boccalini, at the date of his ap-

of those strange people, the Aztecs, this artist, a head that was beautifully symstorm-beaten spur of the Rockies occupied metrical, with a classically molded face, Parnassus, perhaps, for not many miles re- | which he had a profusion, was long, black mote, on the banks of the classic Pecos, and lustrous as a rayen's wing. Yet the where lie the ruins of the once fortified heart-sorrows he had experienced were in-Cicuye, referred to so graphically in the delibly impressed upon his benevolent counltinerary of the historian of Coronado's tenance in deeply marked lines. He was a wonderful march in search of the seven lineal descendant of Trajano Boccalini, the cities of Cibola, is the reputed birthplace witty Italian satirist, author of the celeof their culture-hero, Montezuma (not to brated Ragguagli di Parnaso, who died in of their faith, for whose second advent, the that charming and most romantic island of Pueblos, the lineal descendants of the Az- Italy, situated in the Mediterranean, at the tecs, look for so hopefully with the rising entrance to the Bay of Naples, twenty miles

of every morning's sun. Upon the summit of the Rincon de Tecol- bright waters bear.

"No stream from its source drift backward for more than a generation to the plains of central Kansas, and learn of his advent into the state as I recall it. It was late in the spring of 1861, our civil devotce, one of his charge, a dark-haired, war had been inaugurated by the firing upon Sumter, and the loyal states were preparing No life can be pure in its purpose, and strong in its strife,

And all life not be purer and stronger republic. Kansas, at that time, so far as republic. Kansas, at that time, so far as most earthly and fleshly way. Poor Boccalini its agricultural possibilities were concerned, was not materially considered in that con-The tourist enroute to the Pacific coast, via nection; it was a remote, relatively un-the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railway, known territory. Its eastern portion, a narcannot fail observing a huge, relatively row belt contiguous to Missouri, it is true, isolated peak, cutting the incomparably clear had a bloody political history, beyond which

Santa Fe and Chihuahua. There arrived one morning in the busy little grandly in the beautifully serrated land- hamlet of Council Grove, during the month scape, of which it is the most conspicuous of May, a strange, mysterious person. He visible from the point of observation, the curious a personage as the Man in the Iron shadow of its irregular contour reaches far Mask, or the awkward Casper Hauser, whose and quiet town, heary with the conserva-

primitive Mexicans under a system of irri- to Council Grove in the spring of 1861, evigation as primitive as themselves-simple dently a priest, talked but little; it was an earth ditches, involving a very limited exceedingly difficult task to engage him in knowledge of engineering. Foaming little conversation, so profoundly did he seem imtorrents splash and sparkle in the sunshine, pressed with the idea of some impending as they course through fertile intervales, danger. He acted like a startled deer, ever whose sources are cool mountain springs on the alert for an expected enemy, and hidden in the dark recesses of the towering weeks rolled by before two or three of the range, which were, until the restless Gringo town's most reputable citizens could gain invaded the solitude of the charming re- his confidence sufficiently to learn from him gion at the advent of the iron trail, to erect something of his varied and romantic saw mills, filled with that most epicurean history. In a simple sketch, as this is inand games of all the tribe-the speckled tended to be only, nothing but a mere out-Now, the disciple of the line of his checkered life previous to his revered Walton valuely essays the streams advent in America can be presented, as it with elegant modern appliances for lazy was gathered, very reluctantly on his part methods of angling, retiring disgusted, as in detached fragments at odd moments in the listless native, answering his interroga- his erratic moods of communicativeness. It tory of "Where have they all gone?" with a certainly contains enough of pathos, suffercharacteristic shrug, and his ever ready ing and tragedy to form the web of a thrill-

limited patch of corn, beans and onlons. pearance in Council Grove, was about 55 Maybe, in the sad and weird mythology years old. He possessed the eye of an an important place. Their Olympus, of and notwithstanding his age, his hair, of be confounded with the dynasty of sover- | Venice in 1613. Mattee was born about the eigns of that name), who was the Christ beginning of the present century in Capri. south of the beautiful city whose name the

lote, as this grand old sentinel of the range | His youth was passed on the island, in the is called by the Mexicans, an area compris- city of Capri, the seat of a bishopric. There ing several acres, there is a remarkable he received his early education, devoting cave. Around this natural grotto, at such himself to the church, and commencing those a great elevation, are clustered by the sim- theological studies which were soon to be ple natives the most cherished memories of the cause of his sufferings, his wanderings

noted for his eloquence, subtle philosophy, and the boldness of his political utterances; but, notwithstanding his pronounced views. the pope named him as one of his secretaries. under interrogation and discipline. He eloended to which he had been subjected, he self-imposed solitude, he lived with was assigned to duty in the purlieus of the Eternal City.

nature and warm passions caused his dis-He became enamored of a fair lustrous-eyed, bewitching creature of the "Land of the Vine." Alas! the too suscepof the "Radiant Maiden," and he fell in a was immediately and openly charged with the enormity of his crime, prosecuted and denounced. He was despoiled of his sacredotal functions and compelled to flee; came a wanderer upon the face of the earth, suppling with sorrow and despair for commundane pilgrimage.

For a short time after his unwarranted and sinful escapade he campaigned with the heroic Garibaldi; then he turned with ap-

Francesco," and, although so young, was inspiring as the gentle earnestness of a his sad pilgrimage throughout the south- a deep, dark rock-cut, he is amazed to find The college of the propagandists, however, mood, and his heart-feeling tones mingled found an humble class and his coveted cave refused to confirm him, and placed him sadly with the gentle soughing of the evening breeze in the dense foliage on the maxquently defended himself, and the charges gin of the placid Neosho that flowed near were not sustained. The severe discipline by. Thus, in the calm enjoyment of his

"The moss his bed, the cave his humble In a short time, Mattee Beccalini's sunny His food the fruits, his drink the crystal well."

Among the various languages necessary for the communication of ideas between the motley crowd comprising the civilization of the then remote region, there was none that tible young priest succumbed to the wiles Matteo Boccalini fidid not understand and speak fluently, so liberal had been his edu cation in that particular.

Once, when a stabbed and dving Mexican, the victim of some gambling quarrel among the drivers of the bull train to which he was attached, asked a service for the repose of his soul, Father Francesco hastened to the anxious man's side. There panions throughout the remainder of his be administered the last sacrament of the church to the expiring creature in his own language, who died with a resigned look upon his face, as he listened to the absolving words he could perfectly understand



not understand that:

The miserable savages looked upon him, Father Francesco was no more at ease with them in their skin lodges than he would have been in the gilded halls of the vati-

at the doors of its residents, as the latter there, forever. now does. Nor did he come to tell off his beads in the presence of the vulgar curious, but went upon the hillside beyond the town, to seek the solitude and retirement of a region, troubling no one; an enigma to the

o but few, with whom, when he felt and ecognized in them the quickened glow of a oul that believed in the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man, he would talk was good, true and beautiful.

had of earthly possessions so little that he could have vied with the Lowly Nazarene in the splendor of his poverty. Of crucifixes, who once occupied the sequestered spot. It is said of his birth, which has so happier days, he had preserved a few. His is sacred ground with them, upon which no often been sung by the muse, is historic as greatest solace was in half a dozen wellwell as picturesquely beautiful. It was thumbed small volumes, between whose covers none peered but himself. He was ever regular at his devotions, for, notwithstanding he had grievously sinned, as he declared, he was constantly striving to out-Capri, too, as fourists well remember, is live its horrid memory and to repair the injury he had done his Master's cause.

pilgrimage, he had tenaciously clung to,

On the evenings of Kunsas' incomparable Indian summer, during the early part of was living season he

He told his friends he could no longer tarry with them; he would go away to the heart, whose souls were attuned to his own, | live in solitude; from which he had

picious, and withal, not remarkable for their tude had always been eagerly sought for in every age. It was the inspiration of the

The next morning after the sudden appearance of the stranger, whose presence had so discomposed the usually calm priest, delicious morning in the month of "Autumn's Holocaust," when the breeze was billowing the russet-colored grass upon the virgin prairies, Father Francesco gathered up his few precious relics, and accepting He then came to Council Grove, as stated the escort of a caravan, just ready to start -came as the tramp has since come-un- for New Mexico, left Council Grove, his peralded and uninvited, but not to beg bread cave and the warm friends he had made

great plains, hurried to eternity.

This venerable Mexican, and old-time voyager of the almost obliterated Santa Fe memorable trip with the hermit priest from Council Grove more than twenty years previously. He said that the strange man would never ride either on horseback or it one of the wagons, despite the earnest invitation extended to him, each recurring morn ing by the master of the caravan, preferring to trudge along uncomplainingly day after day during the sunny hours beside the plod ding oxen through the alkali dust of the desert, and faltered not.

Neither at night would he partake of the shelter of the tent constantly offered, but self caught and cooked, the prairie dog,

their sacred faith. Thus reticent, shoughtful and devout, he marched with the caravan for many weeks, until at last the city of holy faith; the quaint old Spanish town of Santa Fe, was reached. There he parted company with his escort, and for nearly a year afterward Of the history of the remarkable man, of St. Peter's, where he took hely orders light, deft and sorrowfully tender as a wandered all over that portion of the terriwho, by his exemplary life, made such an at the early age of 21. Then, according to maiden whose pure young heart has just tory of New Mexico and into Arizona, still impression upon the untutered minds of a his sad story, began that life of stormy pas-To those who were fortunate, and they suitable abiding place in the recesses of were very few, to be invited to spend an the hills, and a people whose souls might hour with him, his vesper hymns, rendered, he made to situne with his. But he mis-"Father in his exquisite tenor velce, were as soul- erably failed in all that he desired during

young girl's prayer. His sometime west. Then, turning northward again, he Neapolitan songs and soft airs of his native slowly, and almost despairingly, retraced his let track, with the one he saw it from above isle were as sweet as the chant of the steps until he arrived at the sequestered angels he invoked when in a deeply religious Valley of the Sappillo, where he at last on the summit of the mighty mountain described at the opening of this chapter.

There, content after so many years of unsatisfied wandering, he commenced that life of religious ministrations, and exercised those unselfish acts of kindness and love, whose remembrance is imprinted so indelibly on the hearts of his devoted followers, for:

Through suffering he soothed, and through sickness he nursed." There again, under the constellations, which nowhere else shine more brilliantly where the strains of his mandolin and the rich notes of that magnicent voice, heard by the enchanted people who listened each evening at the doors of their rude adobe huts in the valley below the huge hill that cast its shadow over them.

Notwithstanding the hermit priest had found a class congenial to his soul's demands, his eccentricities still clung to him. His persistency in living apart from his hosen people enforced them to always speak of him as El Solitario (The Solitary Man.) He would visit among them to solace and turse the sick, and give absolution to the lying, which his and their religion so cautifully promises, but he would never reak bread within their hospitable doors, referring and insisting always upon a crust and a cup of cold water outside.

Nor would be sleep upon the soft woolen colchons which even the poorest of New Mexican homes afford, but, absorbed by deyout thoughts, wrapped himself in his coarse blanket and laid himself on the bare ground; or if it was stormy, in some out- latter date the success of railroads is re house with the sheep and goats. This, of course, was part of his self-imposed penance, rom which he never deviated, rigorous as it

face had been missed for more than a week by his devotees, a sorrowful party went out profession. o seek him. They found him dead on the rugged trail to his lonely home, his beads enfolded in his delicately shaped fingers and his countenance wearing a saint-like expression. A poisoned dagger in his heart, by the hand of an assassin, had accomplished the foul deed, which, for a whole lifetime, during every moment of the unhappy man's active and dreaming hours, was a continually disturbing fear.

his youth, the eccentric but holy Matteo Boccalini, Hermit Priest, and the El Solitario of the New Mexico mountains. A man of sorrow and grief, yet with as much repentance, and as many penances as sins; ne of those ethereal beings who might become physically unclean, but never spiritually impure.

For years after his departure from Council Grove the Hermit Priest's cave was an object of much interest. Until within a very short period, when the quarrymen tore down its last vestige, upon its time-worn walls could be traced, rudely carved, his name, Matteo Boccalini, a cross, "Jesu Maria" and 'Capri," all so dear to the lonely and sad nan's heart.

PARADOX OF A RAILROAD.

It is Twenty Miles Long Going One Way, but Only Sixteen Going Back. It is twenty miles from Honesdale to Carbondale, both towns in Pennsylvania. From Carbondale to Honesdale it is sixteen miles. That is what they will tell the inquiring traveler who has occasion to take the Delaware & Hudson cars at Honesdale to make the trip between the two towns for the first time, relates a correspondent of the New York Sun. The information will be puzzling to him, but it will be true.

Another thing will puzzle him still more. The car he enters is elaborately fitted and furnished, but is less than half the size of the ordinary passenger car. It moves out rom the covered station on the coal piers t few yards and stops. If the traveler looks ahead out of the car window he will see the narrow track leading straight up the side of a high hill, at an angle of nearly forty-five degrees. The top of the hill is about an eighth of a mile away. There is no locomotive power anywhere to be seen Up this bill the car is hauled by a cable Once at the top the car continues on its way down the other side. Down this grade the ar runs by gravity until it reaches the foot of another hill, when it is whisked to the top in the same manner as the first one. In this way the grand summit of the mountain range that divides the Lackawanna from the Lackawaxen valley is surmounted, eight of the long planes being ascended be

fore the summit is reached. The ride from Fairview summit on to Carondale is over an uninterrupted declining grade. The road curves abruptly around projecting hills; clings, high in the air, to he sides of rocky ledges, and spans deep chasms by airy trestles. On their ride lown the mountain the trains are frequently run a mile a minute. The runner, with his hand on the brake, controls the train. He can send it along at the speed of the wind, or bring it to a standstill at his will.

At one point on the down-mountain trip he traveler will see a track running parallel with the one he is on, a rod or two to his left, but perhaps twenty feet below "This is some rival road," is the first

hought of the stranger. A few seconds later, after a dash through



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SPECIALISTS

his train speeding along on that same paralhim on the hillside. This is the Shepherd's Crook. Long coal trains rounding this crook find their head and rear ends so near

together that one could easily toss a piece of coal from a rear car into a front one. From Honesdale to Carbondale is twenty miles. From Carbondale to Honesdale is sixteen miles. This paradox in distance is due to the fact that the railroad follows another course in coming from Carbondale to Honesdale, and the way is four miles shorter. This railroad over the Moosic mountain was the first of any length to be put in operation in this country. completed in 1829 and was intended wholly for the transportation of coal from the Delaware & Hudson mines at Carbondale to the head of the company's canal at Honesdale, the canal taking it to tidewater at Rondout It was impossible to use a locomotive road and it was impossible to get the empty coal cars back to Carbondale over the same track. So there had to be a "light" track and a

This gravity railroad occupies a unique place in railroad history, for it was on its original rails, on August 9, 1829, that the first locomotive ever placed on a railroad on the American continent was run. The locomotive was intended to draw the coal cars from the foot of the last plane on the loaded track over a long, level stretch of road to the piers, but was too heavy for the trestles and was abandoned after the trial trip. The ocomotive not only made the initial trip in this country, but it demonstrated the practicability of steam as a motive power on railroads more than a month before Stevenson's locomotive, the Rocket, was run on the Liverpool & Manchester railroad, from which corded by all railroad historians. Dr. Otis Avery of Honesdale is the last survivor of the first locomotive trip. He is one of the three persons who were on the locomotive One day, after his familiar and beloved with Horatio Allen, the engineer who ran it and at 90 is still actively engaged in his

'loaded" track.

EDUCATIONAL NOTES.

Hon, John W. Fester has given \$1,000 to the Indiana State university as a fund, the interest of which shall be given annually to the student producing the best essay of the political history of the United States. uring every moment of the unhappy man's citive and dreaming hours, was a continuity disturbing fear.

Thus passed away, as he had predicted in his youth, the eccentric but holy Matteo his youth, the eccentric but he El Solitario.

The political history of the United States.

Orlando F. Lewis, formerly an instructor in Tutts college, now resident in Munich, has recently been elected to a fellowship in Germanic languages at the University of Pennsylvania for the coming academic year. He will return to this country early harmanic languages. in August.

There are this year 438 candidates for de-

There are this year 485 candidates for degrees in Cornell university. A graduating glass of 438 is worth meditating. It would be a good nucleus for a regiment. Four good average "colleges" could be carved out of it. Indeed there are more men ready to take degrees from Cornell university the 16th of this mouth than there were students in all classes in the same university in 1881.

A New South Wales counters

A New South Wales country school teacher recently gave a boy a question in compound proportion for home work, which happened to include the circumstance of men working ten hours a day in order to complete a certain work." Next morning complete a certain work." Next morning the unsuspecting teacher, in looking over the little pack of exercises, found "Jim's" sum unattempted, and the following letter inclosed in the page: "Sur: I refuse to let Jim do his sum you give him last nite has it looks to me to be a slur at 8-hour sistum enny sum not more than 8 hours he is welcum to do but not more. Yours truly, Abram Blank, Sen."

Abram Blank, Senr."

President Frank Pierrpont Grayes of the University of Wyoming, who has been elected president of the University of Washington, is a graduate of Columbia university. After his graduation he became instructor of Greek in the Drisler school, New YorkCity and then instructor of Greek in Columbia. In 1891 he went to Tufts college, Massachusetts, where he served live year as professor in Greek. In June. college, Massachusetts, where he served live years as professor in Greek. In June, 1896, he was elected president of the State University of Wyoming. His work there has been extremely successful. In two years he has succeeded in nearly doubling the attendance at the state university. He is very popular with the people of the state.

em to my friends as being all they at ited." Thos. GHLARD, Eigin, Ill.



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THE GREAT WAR ATLAS.



"A POISONED DAGG ER IN HIS HEART."

the humble and beloved curious individual | and eventually his tragic death. sacrilege would for a moment be brooked.

Near its narrow entrance a spring of there that the Roman emperor, Tiberius, clear, cold water gushes out of the in-durated rock, which, after flowing for a the ruins of the twelve gorgeous palaces he short distance over the rounded pebbles in crected during that period are still visible. its deeply-worn bed, tumbles down the preripitous side of the mountain in a diminutive cascade, joining the streams in the valley Nymphs, or the Bluo Grotto. Matteo deon their restless way to the sea. A few scat- clared it was there that, during his youth, tered pinions cast a graceful shade over a in the calm recesses and sequestered nooks delightfully romantic remembrance among portion of the generally bald, blear level of that delightful underground retreat, he the very limited number now living there try, Our Lady of Guadalupe. On certain Trail," and a year after his departure from seem, by some mysterious means its rich the devotees to the memory of the cave's applicable one, "El Solitario," (the solitary once boly occupant, long since hastened by mau), in contradistinction to "El Hermito the hand of an assassin to the unknown (the hermit), which he never was in the beyond, assemble there under the stars, strict interpretation of the term. and in a most devout spirit perform certain

large number of the degraded primitive New sions and sorrowful pilgrimages, culminat-Mexicans, but fragmentary leaves have been ing in his assassination forty years after-obtainable. To intelligently understand wards in the far off Occident.

famous for a cavern called the Grotto of the

the limited plain, and at regular distances first learned to love the companionship of who knew of the vagaries of the remarkably apart, in the form of a circle, are twelve his own thoughts, a desire for solitude, and strange man; these were sometimes his conrude crosses, typical of the number of the that, to him, indescribable neace which a fidants and friends, within a limited de-Apostles. They were erected years ago by life apart from the "madding crowd" as gree. It was a rudely constructed mandolin, the humble Mexicans living in the hamlets sures. It was this strange characteristic, which, during all the years of his erratic below. in memory of the deeply religious absence of that love of gregariousness comman who made his home in this spot, and mon to man, which earned for him in Coun- until its exterior presented a confused mass whose name is revered only a degree less cil Grove haif a century later the sobriquet of scratches and dents, indicative of hard than that of the tutelary saint of the coun-

feast days, particularly in mid-summer, that place, among his devoted adherents in tones had bee preserved in their original large fires are kept burning at night, and the mountains of New Mexico, the more purity and depth. When but 18 the youthful Matteo left his ceremonies, with a zeal possible only to the native island, under the patronage of the jecting ledge at the mouth of his rocky

"HIS VESP ER HYMN." pealing looks toward America, the haven | which was a thing of joy to the holy man for all who are oppressed; crossed the who had performed the sacred office. scean, and in a few weeks began his event- One day late in the month of October, now ful journey on this continent. Never again nearly thirty-four years ago, the hermit was he to behold the place of his birth; the priest saw walking through the streets of chalky outlines of fair, beautiful Capri, the little village a dark-visaged person, clad which so gloriously begems the blue Medi- in clerical garb, and whom Boccalini beerranean. The phospherescent bay of lieved to be the lover of the woman he Naples, the sky, sunshine and vine-clad hills had wronged in his youth, and that the of dear old Italy were never more to stir his stranger, if it were he whom he suspected, once impulsive nature or quicken into life could never be persuaded to think that his now deadened heart.

Mattee was not wholly to be blamed for the Years rolled on; youth passed by and mid- life he had blasted le age was upon the homeless man, when, after having roamed wearily from place to place, visiting one Indian tribe here, and mountains of New Mexico, seek another another there, in the vain hope of discover- cave, rear again the blessed cross, emblem

ng some clan, or people near unto nature's; of his Master's suffering, and once who would receive him in the simplicity of somewhat straved. among the Kaws, or Kansas, whose reservatribe, a dirty, despicable race, very susreverence of any religion, did not take kindly to the weary old man, who had entered their midst with the purest intentions;

So sweet is zealous contemplation. the meek and humble pilgrim, as an intruder: said he was "Bad Medicine."

vorld, and a subject for the idle gossip. There for five months he lived, accessible

The Hermit Priest, as he was now called, devotional mementoes and other religious rinkets, sweetly suggestive of better and

He possessed one article of property that tinges his sojourn at Council Grove with a

which his cave near Council Grove, the Hermit Priest, seated on a procarnest believers in that ancient and widely good bishop, who love i him, to perfect his and isolated retreat, would sweep the strings disseminated faith—the Catholic religion. education in Rome, beneath the very shadow of his treasured instrument with a touch as

his severe and plous penance, he arrived. He frequently, when in a communicative mood, had talked much to them of the deion was in the lovely valley of the Neosho, lights of absolute solitude. It was, he ar few miles below Council Grove. But that | gued, the nurse of enthusiasm; that enthusiasm was the parent of genius; that soli-

dominant religion of every nation; that their founders were men, who, seeking the quiet his pious zeal, his abstinence and self-denial and seclusion of the desert, and by subordimade them fear to approach him. They did nating the flesh to the spirit, had visions of the beyond. The veil hiding the better world had been lifted for them, and that When holy and devout religious men are at their beads 'tis hard to draw them their teachings had come down to us through the acons, elevating man above the brute.

The caravan, under the protection of which the frightened prelate went westward, was owned by a Mexican Don, brother-in-law to Kit Carson. He still resides near the spot natural cave, in the limestone rock of the where the ill-fated Italian, was, a year or two after his wearisome journey across th

trail, when I last visited him at his hospitable home in the mountains, fourteen years ago, entertained me by relating some of the in tenderest strains of everything that more prominent characteristics of his strange companion du voyage, during that

> as constantly and persistently refused, pre ferring to roll himself up in a single coars wrap, seeking some quiet spot removed from the corral of wagons, where for an hour or two, under the scintillating stars, he would tell off his beads, or, accompanied by his mandolin, chant some sad refrain to the Virgin, until long after the camp had gone to sleep. For his subsistence he himground squirrel, rattlesnake and gopher only occasionally, when hard pressed, would he accept a meal, which was constantly proffered by the Mexican teamsters, beggins the Hermit Priest to share with them, for in their love for the church, to which they were so devoted, be seemed to their simple minds a most zealous but humble exponen of their religious testets and visible form of

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