

FATHER EUSEBIO FRANCISCO KINO

(By FRANK C. LOCKWOOD)

In his remarkable volumes, *Kino's Historical Memoirs of Pimeria Alta*, Professor Herbert E. Bolton has disclosed in firm, clear outline one of the great characters in American history. The figure of Father Kino had loomed there in indistinct outline for two centuries; but it required the skill and devotion of a great modern scholar to reveal his truly monumental character. Father Kino now stands before us in solid reality as a religious genius, a saintly missionary, a mighty spiritual captain—the most potent individual and the most worthy in the civilization of the Southwest.

Father Kino was born near Trent, in the Austrian Tyrol, August 10th, 1644. He was well educated as a boy, and as a youth he attended the universities of Ingolstadt and Freiburg. He distinguished himself in mathematics, early attracted the attention of great scholars and nobles and was offered a professorship in the University of Ingolstadt. While a very young man he suffered an illness so serious that the doctors despaired of his life. But he was saved by what seemed an almost miraculous recovery; and so devout was his thanksgiving that he entered the Jesuit order and decided to become a foreign missionary. The opportunity came in 1678, when there was a call for missionaries in Mexico. After repeated delays, and a tedious and perilous voyage, he at last reached Vera Cruz, May 3rd, 1681.

Attempts had long been made to found permanent missions in California, but without success. In January, 1683, an expedition sailed with renewed determination to effect a settlement in California, and Father Kino accompanied this expedition, not only as Superior of the California mission, but, also, as royal astronomer, surveyor, and map-maker. As usual in these early Spanish attempts at colonization, the object was two-fold; to find and gather gems and precious metals, and to convert the Indians. A landing was made

at La Paz. A log church and log huts were erected. Father Kino devoted himself with loving and ardent heart to missionary work. He was optimistic and full of courage in the midst of many dangers and hardships. But the Indians grew hostile toward the Spaniards, and, to the great grief of the Fathers, the project was abandoned.

If the reader will consult an early map of Pimeria Alta, he will find marked on the upper waters of the San Miguel, Altar, Santa Cruz, and San Pedro rivers points that indicate a chain of settlements along these streams. Dolores, Remedios, St. Ignace, Imuris, Cocospera, Guevavi, Tumacacori, San Xavier, and Quiburi. At these places Father Kino established mission stations; and then, at each point where the natives had expressed a desire to have a father settled among them, he set them to building and roofing an adobe house, as soon as possible, for the permanent home of the priest. He also early taught them to plant and tend crops of wheat, maize, beans, and melons for the missions. As yet there were no domestic animals in this region; but, as soon as the natives at one of these mission stations were fully enlisted, Father Kino would supply the rancheria with flocks and herds—horses, cattle, and sheep produced on his ranch at Dolores from the animals that had been given him when he first settled there. He was a remarkable ranchman; and it was he who first introduced domestic animals and stock raising into Arizona. A dozen of these mission ranches soon came, thus, to be well stocked with horses and cattle, sheep and goats. The Indians at each station were taught how to cultivate their fields and care for the stock left with them; and they did this gladly against the time when a resident priest should come to occupy the mission.

Father Kino's economic policy was wise in the extreme. By stocking these ranches, and instructing the Indians in the art of agriculture, the converts were sure of a regular food supply, the missionaries as they came were sure of a good living, from the first, and, in addition to all this, these prosperous ranches served as bases of supply and safe gateways to nations and peoples still more remote. Some idea of the

success and extent of Father Kino's stock-raising enterprises may be gained from the fact that when the mission of San Xavier was fully established in 1700, he sent a herd of seven hundred head of cattle to the ranch there, where he had previously instructed the Indians to prepare corrals to receive them. He writes in his diary, April 24th, 1700: "Here at Guevavi there were also eighty-four head of sheep and goats, a good field of wheat, maize, and beans ready for harvest, and an earth-roofed adobe house for the father whom they hoped to receive." Two days later he is at San Xavier, and he writes, "We killed six beeves of the three hundred they were tending for me here, with forty head of sheep and goats, and a small drove of mares. They had also a good field of wheat which was beginning to head; and during the following days they planted for the church a large field of maize which they had previously cleared."

Having made ample provisions in flocks and herds, and in house, garden, and field for the material support of a missionary establishment, Father Kino's next thought was for the erection of a church. Since of all the mission churches of the Southwest none has been more beautiful and enduring than San Xavier del Bac, I cannot do better, to give an idea of Father Kino as a builder, than to let him tell in his own words how the original foundations of this church at Bac were laid.

April 28th, 1700, he writes: "On the twenty-eighth we began the foundations of a very large and capacious church and house of San Xavier del Bac, all the many people working with much pleasure and zeal, some in digging for the foundations, others in hauling many and very good tezontle from a little hill which was about a quarter of a league away. For the mortar for these foundations it was not necessary to haul water, because by means of the irrigation ditches we very easily conducted the water where we wished, and that house, with its great court and garden nearby, will be able to have throughout the year all the water it may need, running to any place or workroom one may please, and one of the greatest and best fields in all Nueva Biscaya."

Father Kino was a tireless traveler. For the most part, he made his journeys over these arid and savage deserts on horse-back or mule-back, and usually he was attended by a pack-train of forty or fifty, or even a larger number of horses and mules from his own well-stocked ranches. Sometimes he was given a small military escort—a captain or a lieutenant and a few soldiers; sometimes one or two of his fellow priests would go along with him; but frequently he had no other companions than his Indian servants. Often he took entirely untrodden routes, and they sometimes led into very wild and dangerous places. The secret of successful travel on the parched deserts of southwestern Arizona is to know where the water holes are, and to be within striking distance of a new one before the old one is allowed to slip beyond reach. However urgent the journey may be, a good siesta for the servants in some spot where there is pasturage for the animals and water for both man and beast is a thing much to be desired.

For example, Kino writes on a certain day—October 11th—that he despatched the servants with the relay “that they might go on to take their siesta and wait for me wherever they should come across good pasturage for the pack animals. We arrived before sunset at the Tank of La Luna and because this watering-place is among some rocks so high that the pack animals cannot ascend to drink water, we determined to eat a morsel of supper there, and then travel, and we did travel, three hours more by night, in order to reach the watering-place of Carrizal with more ease the following day. On the 12th, arising more than two hours before dawn, and setting out from the stopping place at the rising of the morning star, after thirteen leagues of very good roads, we arrived at ten o'clock at the good watering place of El Carrizal. I said mass; we breakfasted, and after eating dinner we took a very good siesta; and after eight leagues journey farther we arrived at eight o'clock at night at the rancheria and ranch of San Marzelo.”

It is Kino's celerity, and endurance that amaze me. On various expeditions, for a month or more at a time he would average from twenty-five to thirty-five miles a day over

rough, and often unknown desert country, When fifty-one years of age, in fifty-three days, he rode at least fifteen hundred miles. Two years later, he made a trip into Arizona as far as the Gila River between September 24th and October 29th. On this journey he traveled one thousand miles, covering stages of thirteen, fourteen, fifteen and sixteen leagues in steady succession, day after day. One of the most remarkable single day rides that he records was made May 3rd, 1700; when, between sunrise and midnight he traveled more than seventy-five miles, in response to a call from a brother priest, to save the life of a poor delinquent whom the soldiers had captured and who, on the morning of May 4th, they were determined to beat to death.

We must credit Father Kino with the discovery that California is not an island but a peninsula, and that it could be reached from Mexico by land. He had been taught that this was true, in his university days; but in America the contrary was held, and he long believed with everyone else that California was a great island. When he visited the Gila in 1699, the Yuma Indians presented him with certain lovely blue shells that must have come from the South Sea. He had seen these shells on the western shore of California—the South Sea of that age. His curiosity was aroused; these blue shells gave him the clue to the land passage to California. While on his memorable visit to San Xavier del Bac, in the spring of 1700, his thought again turned with intense interest to the possibility of reaching California overland. He had recently received from a distant chief of the Cocomicopa the gift of "A Holy Cross, with a string of twenty blue shells." North, East, and West, to the farthest boundaries of Pimeria Alta, he sent messengers to invite the chief men of the tribes he had visited to meet him at Bac, that he might inquire with the utmost exactness whether these blue shells could have been brought in any other way than overland from the South Sea. Within a week, the chiefs began to arrive from various directions. They all assured him that the shells must have been brought from lands more distant than they knew. There is a strange and solemn charm in Kino's account of the long

night talks there in the remote silence of the starlit Arizona desert with these ruling men of the Pima, gathered from far and wide; for his discourse had quite as much to do with the heavenly highways as it did with a land route to the Pacific. "Also at night we had long talks, in the first place in regard to our holy faith, and in regard to the peace, and quietude, and love, and happiness of Christians, and they promised, as we requested of them, to carry these good news and teachings to other rancherias and nations much farther on." He now made frequent and extended exploring tours to the Colorado and around the head of the Gulf, until he finally established beyond question that California was a peninsula that could be reached from the east by land.

Kino was a great Christian statesman. His supreme interest was the welfare of the Pima Indians. His heart and soul continually burned with zeal for their conversion and protection. A chief curse that followed the reduction of the Indian tribes under the Spanish was forced employment in the mines. Before Kino entered upon his work in Pimeria Alta, he went to the Capital and obtained from the Royal Audiencia the provision that during five years no native should be taken out and compelled to work, from places where he should go for their conversion. The Indians in all the chief villages that he visited were eager to have settled missionaries; and the way had been prepared everywhere for all material necessities, yet Kino's attempts to secure the desired missionaries repeatedly came to naught. These failures and rebuffs were the chief sorrow and anxiety of this life. Those in authority were suspicious of the loyalty and goodness of his Pima converts; and there was constant hostility to his plans for them. The charge was persistent that the Pimas were guilty of the depredations and murders that the evil Apaches were forever committing. Patiently, repeatedly, Father Kino was able to show that the Pimas were innocent and that the Apaches were the malefactors; but the powers of darkness seemed to prevail against the good priest and his Pima children, for never was he able to supply the needed workers for this field so ripe for the harvest. But he

was made happy at last; there came a dramatic vindication of the loyalty and worth of his beloved converts. Their devotion and valor was the means of saving the civilized settlements from wide-spread devastation and slaughter. It happened this way:

In February, 1697, the Apaches had made a raid on Cocospera, in which they killed two Indian women, sacked and burned the village, the church, and the house of the father, and carried off all the stock to the hills. When Kino heard that the Spanish garrison intended to march inland to punish the marauders, he was able to get word to his friendly Pimas on the San Pedro to arm themselves and be prepared to go with the soldiers against the common enemy. A month later, the Apaches descended at dawn on the rancharia of Santa Cruz, on the San Pedro River. They sacked and burned the rancharia, and killed three cattle and three mares that Kino had on the ranch there. But now Kino's friend El Core, the great chief of the Sobaipuris, to whom Kino had sent his message a month before, fell upon the Apaches and administered a crushing and memorable defeat, killing or wounding three hundred, and compelling as many more to make terms with the Spanish soldiers. Kino was prompt to use this convincing evidence of the trustworthiness of the Pimas as a lever to secure more missionaries for his people. While in this instance it was necessary for Kino, in order to help preserve any semblance of civilization, to encourage his Indian allies to make war, he habitually took every means possible to bring about peace between warring nations. He acted as mediator between the Yumas and the Maricopas; and when he reached the outskirts of some new or unknown tribe, he never failed to send them little gifts and friendly messages.

After all, Father Kino was first and foremost a missionary priest. However noble and distinguished his various activities, they were all directed toward a single end—the winning of these benighted Indians to the luminous Cross of Christ. He devoted himself lovingly and ardently to the work of his mission. He delighted to win and teach and defend and care

for these children of his heart. Wise in the things of this world, he went on the theory that the straightest road to the souls of these destitute heathen was through their stomachs; so he took gifts of maize and *pinole* to strange Indians when he went among them. He invariably gave presents to Indians who came from a distance to visit him and to inquire about Christianity. In his earliest mission work, he would have the natives leave their boys with him over night. By thus having the boys under his own roof, he was easily able to get them to take the first steps in civilized and church life. They were taught to speak Spanish, to wear clothes, to perform very simple household duties, to sing, and to recite the prayers of the church. Troops of Indian boys would follow him about, and he would let them ride behind him on his horse. Sometimes they would even cry to stay with him. In his diary, of October, 1700, Kino gives us this attractive picture of the manner in which he was received by the Cocomaricopa and Yuma Indians:

“All were very affable, docile and friendly people, the Cocomaricopa as well as those of the Rio Colorado; for although they are of a different language, there are always among them many Pimas and others who speak the Pima language very well. They brought us many of their eatables, and we spoke the Word of God both to the Pimas and, through an interpreter, to the Cocomaricopas of this place and from the Rio Colorado, all of whom were rejoiced to hear it”. “During today’s march the boys kept throwing great quantities of grass to the mules and horses, delighted that they ate it and did not eat boys, as they had been made to believe was the case the year before, when we entered in February, being then very much afraid of us and fleeing from us, but now having lost that fear entirely. In the afternoon, after going seven leagues more, we reached the rancheria of San Mateo del Balki, where they received us with divers of their dishes and with fish.”

A few days later, Father Kino makes this very human note concerning the reception of his party by the Yuma Indians of another village. “They received us very affectionately, even

giving the dog which was with us water and *pinole* in a little basket, with all kindness, as if he were a person, wondering that he was so tame and faithful, a thing never before seen by them."

Father Kino was much pleased with everything that showed intelligent interest in the Catholic faith, and progress in its forms of worship—such as the repeating of the prayers, the reciting of the litanies, and the decorating of the crude little churches for the feast days. His heart was particularly touched by the story of a little Indian girl who knelt before a picture of the Virgin, and begged that she might hold the Christ child. The very first and simplest acts of church instruction and Christian ministrations that the early padres sought to impress upon the natives were the symbolism of the Cross and the rite of baptism. Wherever the Fathers went, they were zealous to baptize young infants and the sick or aged who were about to die. Father Kino relates how in one place he taught the natives the method of baptism for dying persons when there was no priest within reach. He baptized four thousand five hundred converts during his twenty-four years of missionary work in America; and he states that he could have baptized three times as many if the church could have provided suitable care and instruction for the converts afterwards. The first step in the christianizing of a settlement was to gather the Indians into a pueblo. Next crops were planted for the mission; and stock was brought in. Then followed "talks and instruction in Christian doctrine and in life somewhat civilized." Finally an adobe house was built for the priest, and a church was begun. Thus christianity and civilization came hand in hand to make the desert blossom as the rose.

The very earliest introduction of formal Christian worship on Arizona soil that we have record of was after this manner. On December 24th, 1690, Father Salvatierra came to Father Kino at Dolores as visitor to the Pima Missions. While he was visiting a station south of the present Arizona line with Kino, some of the chief men from the lower valley of the Santa Cruz—about Bac, and Tubac—came carrying crosses,

and at the same time earnestly requested them to visit their rancherias. So urgent and sincere was the invitation that the father visitor did not find it in his heart to decline. They accordingly turned northward, crossed the Arizona line, and descending the river, came to Tumacacori, where they found a large company of Sobaipuris gathered from far and wide—some of them having come from fifty or sixty miles inland. They had prepared a shelter of green boughs for the crowd to gather under for the saying of mass. There was a bower for the priests to sleep under, also; and another one to serve as a kitchen. "These tabernacles became the first Christian places of worship in honor of the true God in Southern Arizona." The people were instructed in some of the simplest forms and doctrines of the church, some infants were baptized, and some adults, who it was feared, might not survive until another visit could be made, and the Indians were given assurance that fathers would come to settle among them as soon as possible.

Commenting on Kino's belief that California could be entered by land, a distinguished officer of the Catholic Church wrote to him as follows: "If you accomplish this we must erect to you a rich and famous statue". I have longed to find some picture or statue of Kino, but I have been unable to find trace of any likeness of him. What could be a finer tribute to this greatest of all Arizona pioneers than the erection, even at this late day, of an idealized statue of him at San Xavier, which he founded, or in Tucson.

He was almost seventy years old at the time of his death. His conversation was constantly of the sweet names of Jesus and Mary. In season and out of season, he made earnest intercession for the heathen; and he was incessant in watchings and fastings, insomuch that he was cruel to himself, though to all others he was kind and compassionate. Says Father Velarde: "After supper, when he saw us already in bed, he would enter the church; and even though I sat up the whole night reading, I never heard him come out to get the sleep of which he was very sparing. The discovery of lands and the conversion of souls had purified him." He was austere in all

his habits; he drank no wine; he used tobacco in no form; he had for a couch only the saddle-blankets from his horse, and, for cover, only two rough Indian blankets. He wore coarse linen, and at his death possessed almost no wardrobe, for he gave everything he could as alms to needy Indians.

“He died as he had lived, with extreme humility and poverty. In token of this, during his last illness, he did not undress. His deathbed, as his bed had always been, consisted of two calf-skins as a mattress, two blankets such as the Indians use for covers, and a pack-saddle for a pillow. Nor did the entreaties of Father Augustin move him to anything else. He died in the house of the father, where he had gone to dedicate a finely made chapel in his pueblo of Santa Magdalena, consecrated to San Francisco Xavier. When he was singing the mass of the dedication he felt indisposed, and it seems that the Holy Apostle, to whom he was ever devoted, was calling him, in order that, being buried in the chapel, he might accompany him, as we believe, in Glory.”