

and soldiers, and presents of cloth and trinkets for the Indians. These journeys were long and tedious, and the travelers were often in imminent peril from hostile Indians, who came yearly to the buffalo range through which it passed on hunting expeditions. There is a story that a party of priests was chased by one of these predatory bands and crossed a river barely ahead of their pursuers. In their extremity they prayed to be delivered from their foes, and behold, before the Indians came to the stream a tremendous rise came roaring down the valley, effectually cutting off pursuit. The pious churchmen in gratitude named the river "Brazos a Dios," the arm of God. The river is now the Colorado. By some transposition the names of the thundering Brazos and the muddy red Colorado were interchanged and so remain to this day.

#### Stories of Lost Treasures.

There are of course stories of lost treasures along the route. One night in East Texas a white woman living a few miles above the crossing on the Attoyac was roused by a wounded Mexican asking for shelter. He told of an attack by robbers upon an escort conveying a bag of gold, in which the guard was overpowered and slain except himself, who had fled wounded, but not before the treasure was flung into the water. He told the woman that when he had recovered he would go back and reclaim the gold, which, he said, was thrown into a deep pond and not into the river. He died, however, leaving the mystery of its location unrevealed, and furnishing an incentive to scores of treasure hunters to dig for it in the neighborhood of the reported encounter.

The missions in East Texas were kept up for about fifty years, and served the double purpose of evangelizing the Indians and keeping a sharp watch upon the encroachments of the French in Louisiana, thus, in the phrase of the time, "serving both majesties," i. e., his holiness the pope and his majesty the king. As has been said, three of these missions were abandoned in 1727, leaving those at Nacogdoches, Los Ais (San Augustine) and Adaes near Robeline, La. The latter was the capital of the province where the governor resided with a guard of from twenty-five to fifty soldiers and the civil officials of his administration. Thus a small population grew up there occupying farms and ranches in the neighborhood. The president superior of the missions was also located there and traveled thence to the other stations. There seem to have been two or three priests at each mission. They were successful in maintaining

the friendship of the Indians which continued steadfast during the entire period. As a religious enterprise, however, they were a failure, the report of an inspection in 1766 stating that there is no evidence of a single able-bodied Indian convert, their activities having been confined to baptising a few children upon their death beds.

#### Missions Abandoned.

When Spain acquired Louisiana in 1762 the political reason for keeping up the mission stations ceased to exist, and ten years later they were abandoned, the plant at Adaes was dismantled and the inhabitants forced to remove to San Antonio. The journey of these refugees back to their former homes in East Texas forms one of the most romantic episodes in the history of this country. Led by Gil Antonio Y'Barbo, the most prominent of the Adaes settlers, they overcame the opposition of a reluctant government and were established for a while on the banks of the Trinity. Dislodged there by a triple misfortune of a flood, a disastrous fire and an Indian raid, they picked up their belongings, and without asking for further permission fled to the ruins of the Nacogdoches mission. There they established themselves, and later received a tardy recognition by the government. Thus the East Texas country was peopled again and the King's highway entered upon a new phase of life. Y'Barbo granted tracts of land to his followers along its course, the boundaries of many of these calling for the old road, so that we can locate its course exactly along a great part of the way.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century American immigrants began to drift across the Sabine and settle along the road; and after the independence from Mexico and the planting of American colonies in the interior, wheeled vehicles began to travel across the country. This necessitated a considerable change in the road as the old mule trail was in many places inaccessible. Thus the old San Antonio road came into being, traversing the same course, but often differing widely in location. The course of the King's highway has been located, however, partly by the land surveys of which it forms the boundary and partly by reliable tradition; and there are places still to be seen at the ford of some stream or the rise of some hill where the deep furrow worn into the soil by the beat of countless hoofs may yet be recognized.