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Montreal, March-April 1953

The Precursor

The Precursor

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VOL. XIX, No. 8

MONTREAL

March-April 1953

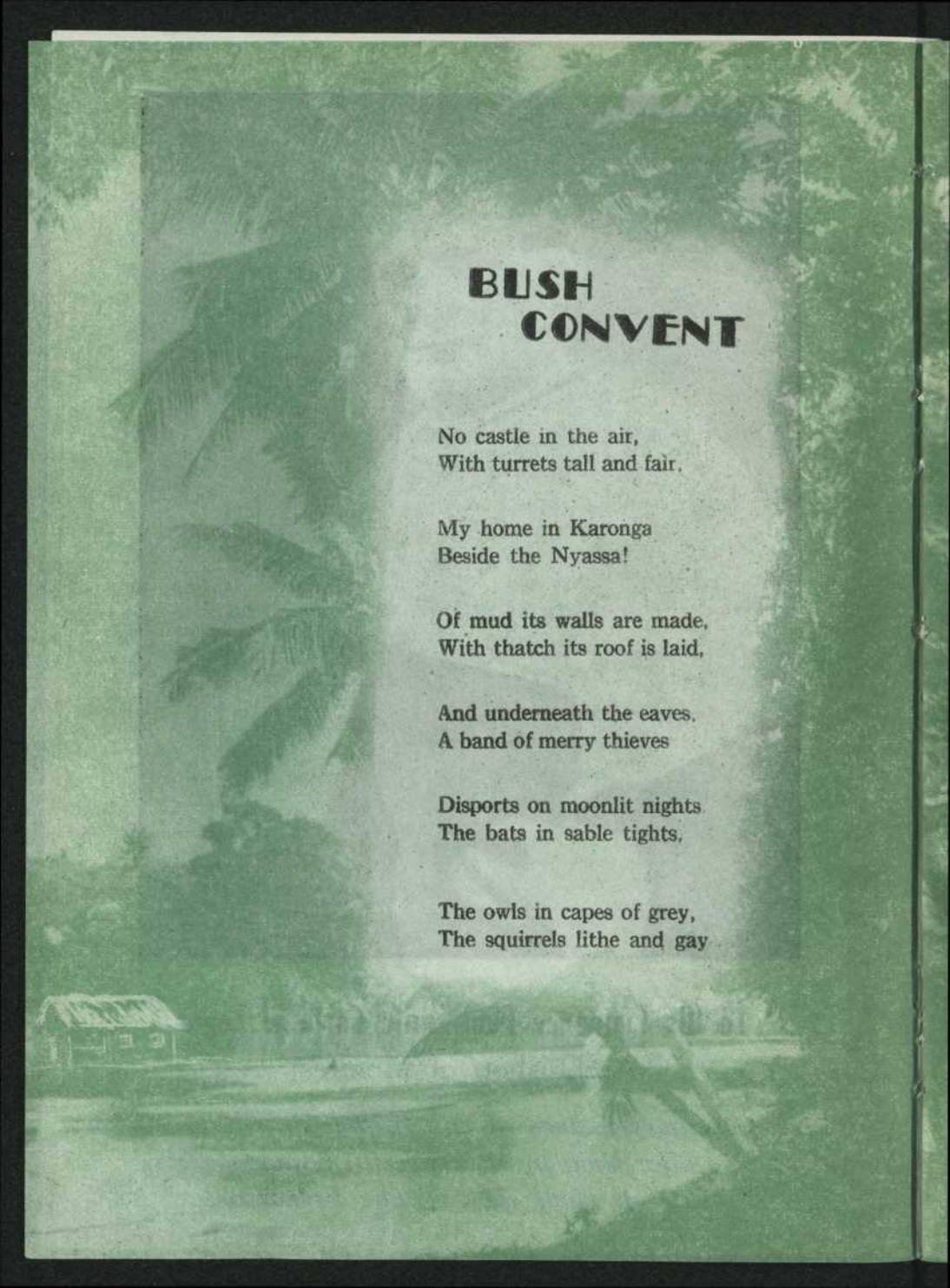
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To His Eminence Paul-Emile Cardinal Leger
Archbishop of Montreal

*The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception
offer their most respectful homage
through their review, The Précursor.*

The background of the page is a monochromatic green illustration. It depicts a tropical scene with several palm trees of varying heights. In the lower-left corner, there is a small, simple hut with a thatched roof. The overall style is painterly and atmospheric, with a focus on the silhouettes and textures of the vegetation.

BUSH CONVENT

No castle in the air,
With turrets tall and fair.

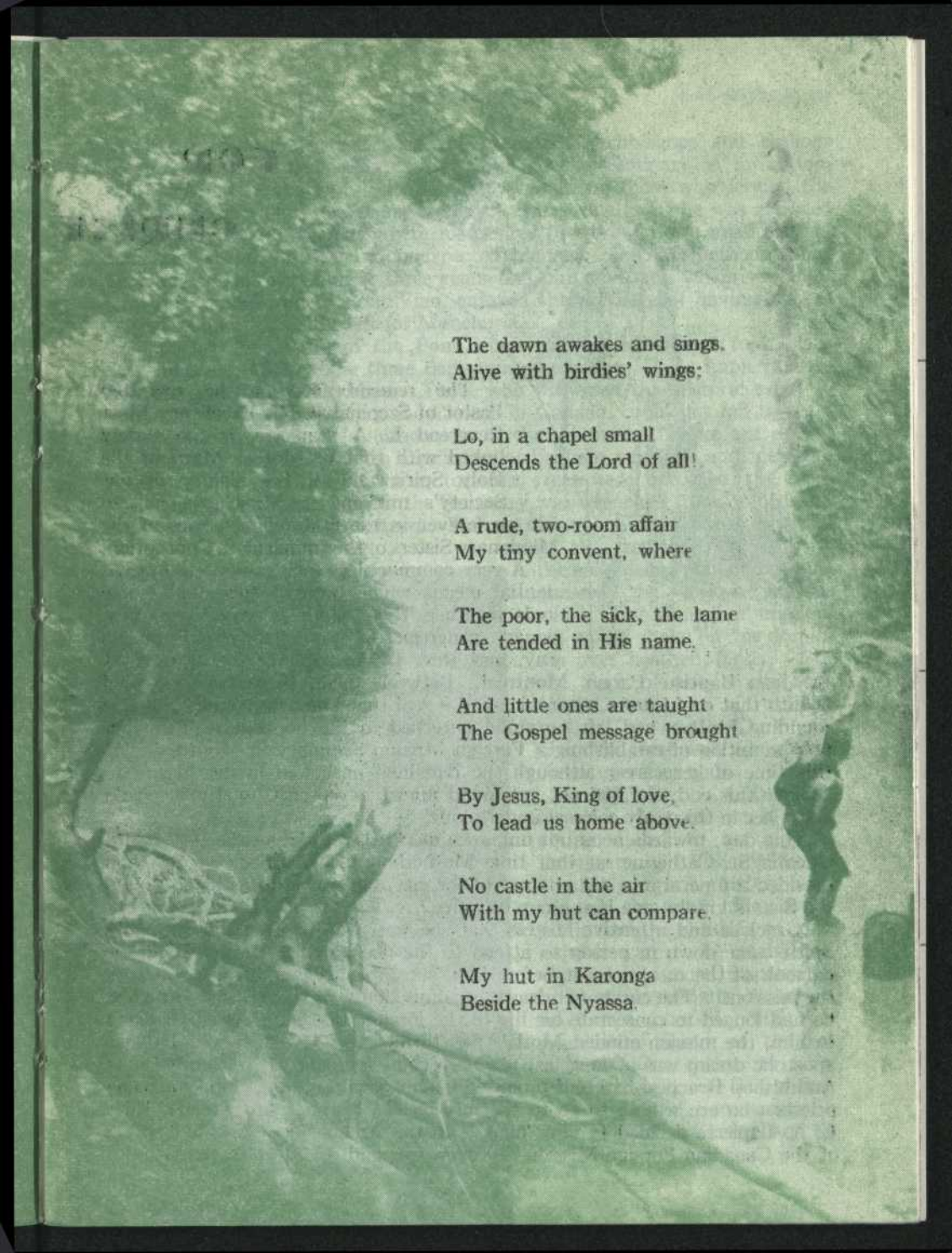
My home in Karonga
Beside the Nyassa!

Of mud its walls are made,
With thatch its roof is laid,

And underneath the eaves,
A band of merry thieves

Disports on moonlit nights
The bats in sable tights,

The owls in capes of grey,
The squirrels lithe and gay

The background of the page is a green-tinted photograph of a dense forest. On the right side, a person is standing, looking towards the left. The forest floor is covered with fallen branches and leaves. The overall tone is peaceful and natural.

The dawn awakes and sings.
Alive with birdies' wings:

Lo, in a chapel small
Descends the Lord of all!

A rude, two-room affair
My tiny convent, where

The poor, the sick, the lame
Are tended in His name.

And little ones are taught
The Gospel message brought

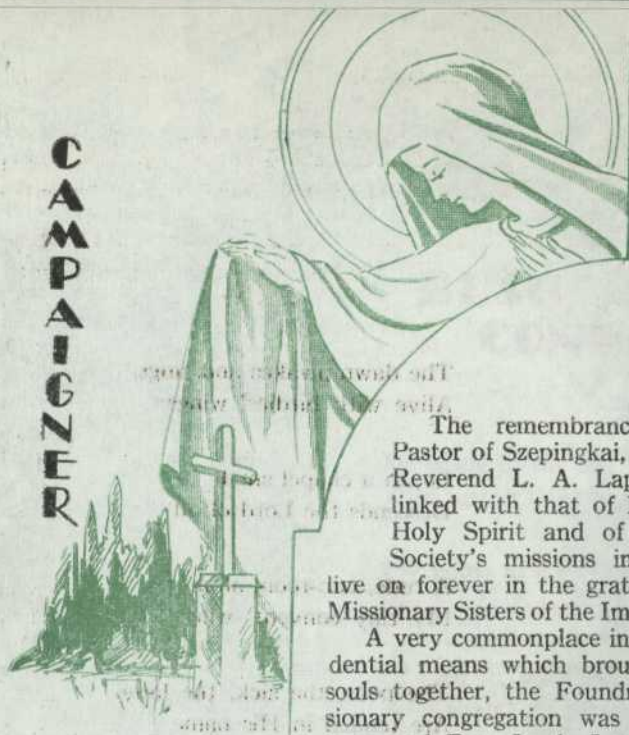
By Jesus, King of love,
To lead us home above.

No castle in the air
With my hut can compare.

My hut in Karonga
Beside the Nyassa.

C A M P A I G N E R

FOR CHRIST



The remembrance of the regretted Pastor of Szepingkai, His Excellency Most Reverend L. A. Lapierre, is too closely linked with that of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit and of the history of our Society's missions in Manchuria not to live on forever in the grateful memories of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

A very commonplace incident was the providential means which brought these two noble souls together, the Foundress whose own missionary congregation was already well on its way, and Rev. L. A. Lapierre then curate at St. Jean Baptiste Parish, Montreal. Between them, these two possessed a faith that could move mountains and a zeal that knew no bounds . . . The founding Mother had left no stone unturned in the hope of realizing her holy ambition of establishing a Foreign Mission Seminary in Montreal. At this time of her career although she remained unshaken in her desire to achieve this end, she had not yet found ministers of the Gospel who would assist her in this truly colossal undertaking.

One day, towards noon, an unknown clerical visitor rang the bell at 314 Chemin St. Catherine, at that time Motherhouse of our Society. He had presided a funeral in a distant part of the city and was still fasting. Would the Sisters kindly give him a cup of coffee?

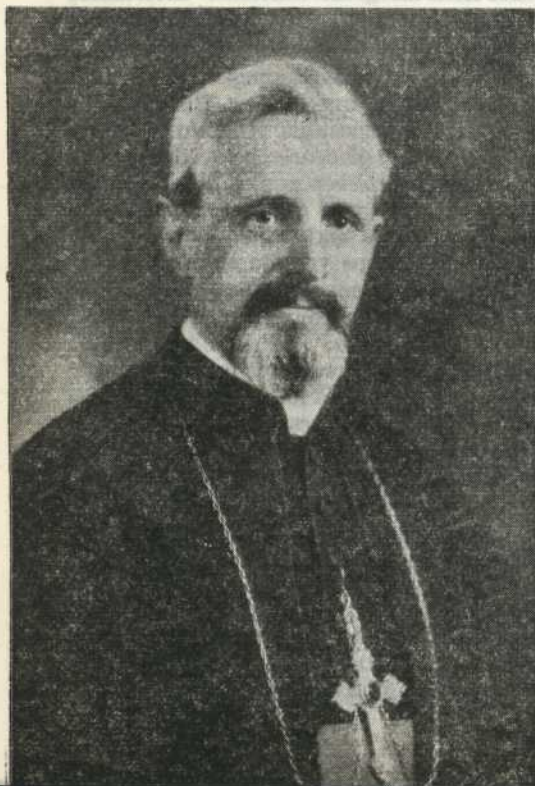
Gracious and attentive hostess that she was, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit came down in person to attend to the needs of her guest. While he partook of the meal set out before him, she broached her favorite topic — the missions. The curate felt drawn to admit that ever since he was ordained he had longed to consecrate his life to the foreign missions. As she listened to him, the mission-minded Mother was thrilled by the realization that her apostolic dream was at long last about to come true and she recounted how Archbishop Bruchesi had half promised his approval saying, "Find me some priests who are willing to go to the missions." Without further ado, Rev. L. A. Lapierre decided to offer himself to the Archbishop. The first stone of the Canadian Foreign Mission Seminary was laid.

On the following year, when the Canadian Archbishops and Bishops nominated Canon Avila Roch as Superior of the Seminary in formation, Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit's guest was among those who formed the nucleus of the young missionary Society. Some time later, he was assigned as chaplain to the convent where his desires to work for the missions had been reawakened in such an unexpected manner. Our Motherhouse thus benefited by his zeal during three years, and our novitiate, which was subsequently transferred to Pont Viau, enjoyed the privilege of having him as spiritual director until he left for Manchuria.

This first departure of the Pont Viau Foreign Missioners took place September 11, 1925. The three departants were Rev. L. A. Lapierre, Leo Lomme, and Eugene Berichon. Those who witnessed this historic event so significant and so glorious for the Church in Canada, could not fail to see a strange portent of Satan's antagonism in the storm that broke out during the late afternoon hours after a morning of brilliant sunshine and ideal fall weather. The rain beat down in torrents, trees were uprooted, the cross surmounting the front porch of the Seminary was wrenched from its pedestal and twisted strangely out of shape. Was not this upheaval of nature a symbol

of the frenzied rage felt by the archenemy of mankind who guessed the serious inroads which these Canadian missioners would make on his dominion over heathen lands? But the fury of the storm soon abated, and in a radiant, peaceful sunset, the three pioneers set forth on their adventurous quest for souls.

In 1927, Rev. L. A. Lapierre, Superior of the mission in Manchuria, called to his aid the daughters of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit. Sisters were needed to serve the divine Child and the children of men. Schools were to be established, orphanages opened, dispensaries and catechumenates organized, novitiates founded. The first Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception to leave for Manchuria were Sr. Julienne of the Blessed Sacrament, Sr. Jane Frances of Chantal and Sr.



St. Gerard. They began their work at Tcheng Kia T'o'en. We read in their diary an account of these humble beginnings and of the paternal welcome extended by the Superior of the Mission.

"Upon our arrival at the Mission compound, the church bell rang out joyfully. Father Superior, tears of emotion spilling from his eyes, greeted us warmly and led us to the chapel for the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The ten missionaries of the Pont Viau Foreign Mission Society were present, happy to welcome those who had just arrived from the homeland. A Te Deum was chanted in thanksgiving for the protection granted us during the journey. Reverend L. A. Lapierre then showed us into our convent built close to the parish church. We entered a large room where pictures of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary were hung in the place of honor; two other rooms somewhat smaller had also been furnished, one as a combined kitchen and refectory, the other as a dormitory. The devoted Superior gave Sr. Julienne of the Blessed Sacrament the keys of the house, blessed our table, and bade us goodnight."

These simple lines tell of the innate kindness which radiated from the personality of him whom Providence was to place at the head of the Prefecture Apostolic of Szeping kai in 1930. This great missionary entertained an ardent devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. His apostolate was firmly grounded in the practice of the interior life.

In 1932, Rome elevated the Prefecture Apostolic of Szeping kai to the rank of a diocese, naming Right Reverend L. A. Lapierre its first Bishop. His motto "*Caritas Christi urget nos*" resumed his apostolic program. Among his Christians he was like a father in the midst of dearly beloved children. The great he received with affability but his heart ever went out with tender compassion to the poor and the distressed. He was generous almost to a fault. Whenever he received visitors he tried to find something which he might offer them as gifts. This busiest of Bishops yet found time to give substantial spiritual conferences not only to the Canadian missionary Sisters of his diocese but also to the native Sisters they were training in the traditions of religious life.

The works of his diocese most dear to his heart were the Junior Seminary and the novitiate for native Sisters. Somewhere in his letters, he wrote with a leader's keen insight into the future, "We cannot rest content with converting and baptizing; our most essential aim must be to christianize our populations, to organize the Church in such a way that it may suffice to its own needs, develop, and spread far and wide its beneficent and salutary influence over souls. The most efficient means to this end are; 1) to form an elite among the faithful; 2) to establish works in favor of native priestly and religious vocations and the formation of lay catechists." Some time later, the Bishop wrote again, "Thanks be to God, vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life are relatively numerous in our beloved Manchuria. This infuses into our souls, sanguine hopes for the future of the Church in this part of Asia." We who have had the privilege of knowing the Bishop in an

intimate manner, can vouch that the greater number of these vocations were wrested from Heaven by his fervent prayers as he knelt through countless Holy Hours.

The whirlwind of World War II brought ruin and desolation to the Diocese of Szepingkai. The venerable Pastor then went through the ordeal of life in a concentration camp and for some time even in prison, at the hands of the victorious Nipponese. On the indignities and moral tortures that were then inflicted upon him, Bishop Lapierre constantly refused to comment. When someone indiscreetly sought to make him reveal certain gruesome details he replied, "Later on I will tell you all about it." This "later on" never came. Those among his confreres who knew him best, asserted that he had promised Our Lord never to reveal what he had then undergone for His sake. When the sons of Nippon suffered the humiliation of defeat, the Bishop immediately grasped the occasion of taking his revenge — the revenge of the saints — by helping them in their disgrace and sheltering them from the retaliation of the natives whom they had oppressed. He rented a large building where hundreds found a safe refuge. Out of his own pocket, he paid for their food and fuel during one entire winter season and assigned priests and Sisters to look after their well-being and security. His motto he translated into flaming deeds of charity.

With 1945 came a short lull in warfare. Alas, it was to be the lull before the storm. Communists and Nationalists were already struggling for supremacy, ruin and persecution stalking in their wake. An important railway center, Szepingkai soon became a target for both armies and the mission personnel once again went underground. Bishop Lapierre was never one to fear persecution. To the end he remained at his post determined to live and die with the sheep of his flock. On one particularly serious occasion he wrote, "It is certainly not very encouraging to work in such desperate conditions but we cannot abandon our beloved Christians. May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be our strength and may our Immaculate Mother protect us always. Still, I would not have you despair about the ultimate fate of our Mission. No, it is not dead! To the Good Friday of persecution, will succeed the Easter of resurrection. What matters most of all, in these troublous times, is that we Canadian missionaries remain faithfully at our post, doing what we can to promote the growth of the Church in this country, happy to suffer something for the glory of God in so doing. The Manchurian people must be aware that we will be faithful to the end, whatever that end may be!"

Easter 1950 seemed to bring the first faint glimmer of the glorious dawn or resurrection. Six masses were celebrated on that day in Szepingkai and hundreds of Christians jammed the modest chapel which served in lieu of the Cathedral reduced to a pile of rubble during the conflict. To those who expressed their sympathy regarding the ruins of all the buildings set up with such painstaking zeal, the Bishop replied with an exultant lilt in his husky voice, "I do not need any buildings. I need only Christians and the Christians remain. What more can I desire?"

For two years longer, the heroic Pastor struggled like the dauntless warrior that he was, to keep the remnants of his missionary army in fighting shape. His faith in the ultimate future of the Church in China remained always unclouded. Time will tell what we owe to his robust optimism in face of trials.

Kneeling beside his grave, we the daughters of Mother Mary of the Holy Spirit confidently beg for a share in the apostolic genius of the first priest she found to initiate a great missionary work. May his gentle, courageous spirit brood over the remnants of our Manchurian Missions and over those who strive to carry on for the Master Missioner, in the face of almost insuperable obstacles.

WHY BE SAD !

The trouble with this modern world is that there is too much love of science and too little science of love.

Science is not a bad thing but it furnishes you only with the fuel for the fire of your love. If your fire is weak, the fuel will only extinguish the fire.

This age has been called the age of frustration. The principal cause of this frustration is that man has drifted from God. He is thinking more and more in terms of material things, less and less in terms of eternal values.

Having abandoned the Divine Bridge that God has built from Heaven to earth, man is trying to build a bridge of his own from his shore to the other shore, with the inevitable result that both the man and the bridge have fallen into the unfathomable abyss of sin and error. *Nisi Dominus frustra.* Without God there is only frustration.

With Christ, there is peace in war. Without Christ, there is war in peace. Without Christ, the rich are poor. With Christ, adversity is sweet. Without Christ, prosperity is bitter. With Christ, the ignorant are wise. Without Christ, the wise are fools. With Christ, life is a prelude to Heaven. Without Christ, life is a prelude to hell.

Perfection in this life consists in never-ceasing striving for perfection. So long as you continue to strive for perfection, you will never be sad, because there is nothing to be sad about.

Dr. John C. H. Wu



SHARING IN HIS PASSION

PRISON MEMOIRS

Sister ST. FOY(1), M.L.C.

In all the painful events that filled our lives as prisoners, we derived strength and comfort from the thought that these trials gave us at least some faint resemblance with our divine Model in His Passion. We offer these considerations to our friends in order to have them share in the consolation they afforded us.

OUR LORD'S ARREST—Our own arrest took place on March 12 and 13, 1951.

ECCE HOMO—On Maundy Thursday, March 22, 1951, we were forced to have our pictures taken in prisoners' garb. We knew these photos were taken for purposes of Red propaganda.

GARMENTS OF DERISION—We Sisters were compelled to wear men's clothes.

FROM TRIBUNAL TO TRIBUNAL—We were dragged through four different prisons.

JUDAS—We also had our own traitor, the orphan Wong Gna Sin.

FAITHFUL FRIENDS—Our children in general were true to us more especially Wong Lick Si (Agnes) who was thrown into prison on April 24, 1951, because she persisted in defending us against false accusations.

ANGEL OF CONSOLATION—Our interpreter showed us sympathy in different questionings. On December 2, while we were waiting for our trial by a People's Court, he spoke very kindly to us in French. "Do not be afraid. You will not be killed. The government only wants to give a lesson."

1. Elisabeth Lemire, la Baie du Febvre, P. Q.

AGONY

Until December 2, we suffered the pangs of agony over the uncertainty of our fate. Each one of these terrible moments we offered as a constantly renewed Fiat.

CRUCIFIGE EUM

We heard the heinous cries of a frenzied mob calling out repeatedly, "Hack them to pieces! Throw them out! Bury them alive!"

THE BEARING OF THE CROSS

We were given to understand something of the sorrow felt by our Blessed Mother when she saw her divine Son staggering under the weight of the Cross. On December 4, Sister Superior and Sister Marie Germaine were sent to a separate prison. As we saw them barely able to walk on account of their weakness and obliged to carry heavy bundles, we stepped forward to accompany them at least part of the way. The guards roughly shoved us aside and compelled our companions to move on alone dragging their load unaided.

SPAT UPON

After our judgment by a People's Court, we were made to cross the immense Memorial Hall. The mob spat upon us the entire way.

THE MOB

On December 2, 1951, 24,000 persons demonstrated against us with fiendish fury.

THE FAST—Our fast was almost continual within our prison cells

GALL AND VINEGAR

Towards the end of November, we suffered great pain from a strange irritation of the tongue brought on by eating pimento served with our rice.

MY GOD, MY GOD WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

We have tasted also this bitter draught of what seemed utter abandonment even by those near and dear:

Catholics usually have a fair idea of the joy which is the apostle's laboring directly at the salvation of souls. But have you, my dear friends, ever reflected over the joys and consolations which our divine Savior keeps in store for those who suffer persecution for His sake?

I would like to tell every boy or girl who feels called to the religious and missionary life, "Do not be afraid of what might happen to you. Even if you should be thrown into prison and condemned to spend months or even years in foul dungeons, you will never regret your decision, for God is never outdone in generosity."

HOLY WEEK

IN CUBA

Sister MARIE HERMINE(1), M.I.C.

Not many countries attach such importance as Cuba to the Palm Sunday celebrations; very few perhaps evoke in such realistic manner the ephemeral triumph of Our Savior on this great day. For once the churches are packed. From remote plantations, out-of-the-way hamlets, distant *campos* people flock to Manguito, riding jeeps or antiquated bullock carts. Not even the famed *Misa del gallo* at Christmas time can draw such enthusiastic crowds as the Holy Week celebrations.

Were it not for the presence of the Madres, the people would chat as freely within the church walls, as if they were in a theatre. Evidently the Church manners of our good Cubans leave much to be desired; most of them do not make any genuflection; they just drop down into their seats as soon as they enter, stare about at the assistance, or nod pleasantly to acquaintances and friends. I said that most of them omit their genuflection; I should have added that those who do not, genuflect in the wrong places, before the statues of their favorite saints meanwhile tracing small crosses on forehead, mouth, and breast, Spanish style. During mass, the men remain standing while the women kneel.

Processions are the most popular of rallies in Cuba. On Palm Sunday, the cortege winds about the village streets, each participant holding aloft the blessed *guano*. This word designates the special palm branches utilized for this festival; these *guano* are the tender shoots springing up at the very heart of the palm tree, still closed and very straight and firm. As each palm tree usually has only two or three *guano* apiece and the men who climb to cut them off require fifteen or twenty sen each, the Pastor usually requests some of his parishioners as climbers to reduce the cost.

After the ceremony of the blessing of the palms, Father distributes the *guano* to all the faithful who come up to the altar rail. In certain places, followed by the altar boys, he passes through the nave to make this solemn distribution. Every Cuban kneels upon receiving the *guano*, kissing it fervently and respectfully. All that day he will wear it with great reverence affixed to his wearing apparel or as a blessed necklace.

The Palm Sunday procession ushers in the series of allegorical manifestations depicting the major events of the Passiontide. These are very

elaborate affairs as you may judge from the following list of floats used last year in the cortege of *San Entierro* (holy burial); life-size dummies represented the triumphal entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, the Agony in the garden, the Crowning with thorns, the Scourging, the Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Burial.

On Easter morning, the faithful go in procession to meet the float representing the Risen Lord and they accompany it back to the parish church for the Solemn High Mass.

During Holy Week, penitential observances are extremely rigorous in Cuba; total abstinence is required, not even the least use of animal fat being admissible. Whoever knows something of the customs of the people, can easily gauge the importance of this mortification. On Good Friday, all work is prohibited and this is to be strictly understood not only of work in farms, stores, or factories, but, even of household tasks such as washing, ironing, sweeping the floor, washing the dishes. The children who are usually as free as larks, are made to share in the penitential mood of the day by being kept indoors.

What we find difficult to understand is that to all this emotional display of fervor, is not added the faithful observance of the precepts of the Church. What do all these exterior ceremonies amount to before God? On Low Sunday, the churches grow empty and silent once again. The demonstrating Cubans have gone back to Mammon.

Josette Writes From Haiti

Dear Sister Superior,

I have something important to tell you. First of all, let me introduce myself. I am a little girl from Limbe, Haiti; my name is Josette Misidor.

I want to let you know how satisfied I am with your Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. How delighted I felt when on September 29, 1950, they arrived in my country where the climate and customs are so different! Let me tell you, it makes a great deal of difference being taught by your Sisters, than learning at the public school. I can hardly get over it. Thank you for sending them to us.

Sister Jean Louis is my teacher; I like her very much for she is a good teacher. Sr. St. Germaine Cousin, the Superior is still "gooder" than my teacher. Each Sister has her own work to do. None of them are ever lazy. We, little girls from Limbe, are very fond of them. Yes, your Sisters are just wonderful. They are extraordinarily devoted to us. At the end of the school year, Sister Superior gives us beautiful prizes.

Every day, I pray to God to keep close watch over my Sisters.

I remain, dear Superior in Canada, your grateful Josette from Limbe

Josette Misidor

GRANDMOTHER'S FIRST COMMUNION

Sister ST. SYLVERE(1), M.I.C.

Nearly four score years Synthemise has lived, years filled with superstitious practices and vexed with heathen charms. But on last Easter Sunday, God Himself came to her for the first time, in holy communion, to free her from the bondage of sin. A look of intense happiness irradiated her features as she knelt at the altar and prayed with the fervor of an angel. There is, however, nothing angelic about Gram. She certainly would not win any beauty contest with her face as shrivelled as a dry persimmon, her beady eyes, mere slits through which gleam hints of malice, her gesticulating arms, her lame foot dragging along and giving her a lurching gait.

Her conversion was brought about by the zealous activities of one of our second graders, Eliana, who on her First Communion Day, begged Jesus to convert her own parents. Not only did she obtain the grace solicited of getting the marriage of her father and mother rehabilitated, but she also won the great consolation of helping to instruct her mamma in view of having her make her First Holy Communion. Stimulated by her daughter's example, this woman in turn became an active apostle in her home town. Synthemise was among the first fruits of her apostolate.

The old woman greatly desired to receive Holy Communion but her memory had grown so rusty that she could



scarcely remember even the simplest prayers. Eliana and her mother pleaded her cause so eloquently that Father, taking her four score years into account, granted her request.

On the morning of the great day, she arrived early decked out in borrowed finery. Some charitable soul had lent her a white dress; a kind shoemaker had furnished her with a pair of new sandals; on her snowy locks rested the large-brimmed straw hat familiar to all the inhabitants of the coast. After receiving her God, she prolonged her thanksgiving while tears of joy and repentance coursed down her cheeks.

"What did you tell Jesus all that time you stayed in church?" someone inquired. "Oh," nonchalantly replied Gram, "I talked to Him about some little childish pranks of mine and I begged His forgiveness. I also told Him how much I loved Him."

On the very next day, Synthemise sold her last plot of land for 25 gourdes (about \$5.00). With this small fortune, she bought a coffin. Peacefully now she can await the day when *Papa bon Dié* will see fit to call her home. In her poor *caille* (hut) she lives happy in the thought that whatever happens, she will be decently provided for. Has she not a coffin and — a veil. I was puzzled at first when she asked to keep the white veil I had lent her on the day of her First Communion. With an impish grin she explained, "Sister, can't you see how ugly I am? I don't want people to look at my face, and make comments when I am laid out. I'll ask my friends to hide me within its folds."

While waiting for the eternal summons, the stooped soothsayer of days gone by spends all her days in church, telling her beads before the Tabernacle or in front of our Lady's statue. She probably has made up her mind to inveigle *Maman la Vierge* into blinding St. Peter over the records of her childish pranks.

A Short Meditation for Every Day

The past — where is it? — It has fled.

The future? — It may never come.

Our friends departed? — With the dead.

Ourselves? — Fast hastening to the tomb.

What are earth's joys? — The dews of morn.

Its pleasures? — Ocean's writhing foam.

Where's peace? — In trials meekly borne.

Where's joy? — In Heaven, the Christian's home.

Selected

AFRICAN ROMANCE

Sister ST. BERNADETTE(1), M.I.C.

Whenever a young man around these parts decides to take unto himself a mate, he begins by casting surreptitious glances at the more buxom village belles and finally fixes his choice on two damsels. He then talks things over with his father to make sure which of the two his parent favors. These preliminaries amicably settled, a *jembe* (hoe) is sent, through a broker, to the girl's father. This broker will henceforth conduct all the matrimonial negotiations. He begins by secretly placing the *jembe* against the prospective father-in-law's doorpost. When the latter notices the farming implement, he knows that some one intends asking his daughter in marriage. Two days later, the broker calls bringing another *jembe* and makes the proposal for his client. A family council is then called and the young girl is made to sit in the center of the group, while her father broaches the all-important subject. Does she or does she not accept? If she refuses, she may be rebuked but contrary to the customs of other tribes, she will not be constrained. It sometimes happens that the father frowns on the match while the girl decides that the swain is indeed her dream man. In such cases, the couple elopes disregarding parental displeasure. If the marriage proposal is refused, the two *jembe* are returned to the broker; if it is accepted, they are solemnly placed inside the family hut and the father declares to the middleman, "On such and such a date, you may return with so many cows... six, seven, eight, nine, and a few other dowry gifts".

On the appointed day the cows are brought to the girl's father as stipulated. The latter then requests his future son-in-law to hoe part of his fields or to build a hut in order to gain a fair idea of his ability and muscular strength. On his side, the groom's father claims the bride-to-be to judge of her culinary skill and general accomplishments as a housewife. She is expected to crush the corn, to boil the *sima*, and to model the *viviya* (earthen pottery); once the candidates have passed these tests cum laude the marriage date is fixed.

When the great day arrives, all the village women and girls accompany the bride on her way to the council hut called *milandu* where the groom awaits her with a lugubrious look on his face as if he were pondering over the Four Last Things. Both are formally invited to sit at a makeshift table decorated with jungle flowers. Those who wish to shake hands with the pair, must throw a penny or two in the tin bowl placed on the table. Then it is time for the dance to start. The performers begin a series of undulating motions and capers; as the tempo increases, they go through varied contortions whirling faster and faster until all are exhausted. Such is

1. Marie Fyfe, Laprairie.

African Dancers

the uproar during this performance, that it is impossible to understand one word of the conversation. Meanwhile, the bridegroom continues to sit apart and look glum while the bride crouches beside her lord and master, hiding her face with her hands in token of womanly reserve and submission.

At sundown the village elders give the signal for the dance to cease, and invite the married couple to follow them outside the *milandu* in order to take formal possession of the hut which is assigned to them as their private property. A native banquet is afterwards spread out where all the guests may sample the bountiful fare of meat and vegetables furnished by the two fathers-in-law for this festive occasion. Millet beer takes the place of sparkling champagne.

Once as we passed through Ifumbo, we stumbled in on such a wedding feast. The host, a friendly black minister of the *Free Church*, insisted on having us congratulate his son who had just been married the native way. As we came out of the council hut, the women and girls formed into a gay procession and accompanied us to the outskirts of the village, clapping their hands and singing at the top of their voices. We were nearly deaf when we reached the highway! These women thus expressed their satisfaction because we had shared in their happiness. The Africans like to share. They rejoice with their parents and friends upon whom Fortune smiles; they mourn with them, when sorrow knocks at their doors. Noticing one of my pupils moody and downcast, one day, I inquired into the reason of his sadness. "Oh, Sister," he replied, "How could I be gay when my little brother is in pain?" And sadness clouded his usually cheerful face until the sick boy was cured.

This laudable habit of sharing in the joys and sorrows of those who surround us, we have made our own, especially in all our dealings with the natives. They love us for it and are not far from considering us as members of their clan. Our motto is, "African with the Africans" in order to win them all to God, their Father and Creator.



LFS COTEAUX, HAITI



Every day during Lent, the Coteaux school girls
carry bricks for the erection of a Calvary.



My Mother

My Mother —

And One Other —

Across the frontiers into life

Came with no scar of Eden-strife.

My Mother —

And none other —

Bore in her womb Emmanuel;

And kept her maidenhood as well.

My Mother —

And none other —

Went bodily — what can it mean?

To reign o'er angels as their Queen.

My Mother —

And none other —

Holds mercy-keys to Paradise.

And so my frailty's highway lies

By Mother

To Another.

Rev. T. Gavan Duffy

THESES MANLY CUBAN LADS WERE PROUD
OF BEING PRIVILEGED TO BEAR NUESTRA
SEÑORA DE LA CARIDAD ON HER PILGRIMAGE
THROUGH THE ISLAND

THE LEGEND OF THE CUBAN FLAG

Sister MARTHA OF THE REDEEMER(1), M.I.C.

Ardent patriots that they are, the Cubans profess a veritable cult for their *bandera* (flag). Even the children early learn to know and to revere the national emblem of their beautiful country.

Every Friday, in every Cuban school, whether public or private, a ceremony is held which is calculated to instil in the younger generation, increasing respect and loyalty towards the *bandera*. While two boys hold the emblem aloft, representatives from each grade step forward to recite patriotic poems. The whole body of students then files past saluting, the boys with their right hand to their forehead, the girls with theirs to their heart.

To the Cuban *bandera* is attached a pretty legend which grandmothers like to transmit to their grandchildren. According to this legend the flag was presented by fairy hands, to the illustrious general Narciso Lopez. A Venezuelan by birth, this brave soldier was a Cuban at heart. He it was who prepared the military expedition that was to free Cuba from the yoke of its oppressors. Everything was ready and yet he hesitated to launch on his glorious adventure because he possessed no national emblem which would help to spur his troops to victory. Hesitant and perplexed he spoke of his predicament to his friends, but none seemed to have a satisfactory solution.

While the general thus remained in a state of anxiety, he dreamt one night a significant dream which finally solved his problem. A beautiful fairy clad in golden raiment stood before him. Fascinated by this ethereal vision of light and beauty, the general remained speechless. In gentle tones the fairy inquired after the reason of his sadness.

"Madam" he managed at last to reply "For already too many years, the despots who rule over Cuba have oppressed our good people in a most shameful manner. No longer shall they hold the souls of Cubans captive. I want to liberate my unfortunate compatriots and, to achieve this end, I am willing to lay down even my life. What I need is a flag to rally all those whose hearts are loyal and true."

The fairy smiled an enigmatic smile.

"Is that the reason why you feel so sad and despondent?" she inquired. "I can easily fashion the most beautiful emblem you ever saw."

1. Marie Marthe LAURIN, Beauharnois.

Gracefully fluttering away, the sprite flourished a pair of golden scissors with which the nonplussed General saw her scallop two white fringes off a cloud, and three blue fringes off the azure of the sky; then leaning low over the horizon, she cut out a red triangle in a crimson tinted cloud. When presented with these pieces Lopez exclaimed,

"How can I make a flag out of these pieces?"

"My friend," replied the fairy, "Have patience, and you will soon appreciate my handiwork. The three blue fringes represent Cuba's three departments; the two white, symbolize the purity of heart of your people; the red triangle expresses equality, liberty, union which must closely link together, through charity, the sons of benediction."

"Yours is a splendid idea but..."

"What? Are you not satisfied?"

"Yes... but I would like a special symbol representing Cuba as an independent state with a glorious future."



"Ha! Ha!" bantered the golden-robed little lady, "You are getting ambitious, my good Narciso! It pleases me, however, to grant your request, for your enthusiasm is noble and commendable. I admire you. Your reward shall be such as will surely please you."

With regal grace, the fairy then plucked in the velvet canopy of the heavens, the scintillating evening star and set it as a brilliant jewel within the red triangle.

On the next morning, Lopez hastened to call on his friends and to relate his dream. All applauded the wonderful combination. A seamstress was ordered to carefully sew together the pieces of the new flag, and a few hours later the *bandera cubana* was launched on its glorious career.

LENTEN ANECDOTES

Some time before Lent we explained, in our Catechism lessons, how to make the Stations. The lessons appeared quite inspirational to the pupils of the Primary Course especially to those of Grades one and two. Ever since, they make with great devotion their daily Way of the Cross in our chapel.

Today I watched a group of smaller pupils led by the tallest of the class. Everything was perfect; genuflections, inclinations of the head, contrite and respectful attitudes — except — that they had started at the 14th station!

* * *

Sr. Joseph Arthur was one big smile as she entered our convent after her day's work. This meaningful smile of hers made us feel that we knew all the answers even without putting any questions.

In making her rounds today she had met a wrinkled old lady of eighty-eight. As a sequel to their friendly chat, grandma accepted without too much persuasion, to take up again the practice of her religious duties. It is understood; she will go to confession for Easter. Our happy Samaritan is simply bubbling over with the thanksgiving spirit. Listening to her you would think she has found a pearl of great price.

And come to think of it, is not a soul which has been shriven in the divine Blood of Our Lord, the most precious jewel in the world?

After a while someone curiously inquired, "How long had God been waiting for this straying soul?"

"Oh, seventy odd years.", Sister replied.

◎ HINA MATSURI

FESTIVAL OF THE DOLLS

Sister ST. COME(1), M.I.C.

The origin of this celebration is said to go back to Japan's tenth Emperor, the illustrious Sujin who reigned about the year 200 of our Christian era. It was then simply a day when young girls gathered together for a feast in front of dolls arranged in a display.

Some six hundred years later when the capital was in Heran, the festival underwent changes and elaboration. Miniature palaces were built to house the dolls representing the Emperor, the Empress, and the members of the imperial court.

A bizarre custom borrowed from China is connected with this festival. According to the ancient calendar, during the third month, on the day of the serpent, people made figures resembling human beings (called *hito-gata*) and floated them down a river because of the belief that one could thus purge his heart of all sin and defilement accumulated during the preceding year. This custom was called *hito-gata nagashi* or man-figure drifting.

Under the Tokugawa, towards 1460, the two customs blended into the festival now known as the *Hina Matsuri* (festival of the dolls). On the modern calendar, its date has been fixed to March 3. The Japanese word *hina* (doll) originally meant a miniature pattern or form; as craftsmen became more proficient in turning out elaborate dolls, these lost their original characteristic namely being small. The *hina* came to be dressed in silk; the male dolls were dressed in the *sokutai* (double kimono), while female figures wore the *junihitoe* (12 double dresses) special to the aristocracy.

The orthodox set of dolls for HINA MATSURI is now made up of fifteen characters. The figures are displayed on a stepped dais covered with a red cloth and adorned with early peach blossoms. At the top of the dais, neatly seated on padded cushions, in the traditional Japanese fashion, are the Emperor and the Empress; one step below stand three court ladies wearing scarlet skirts; again one step below, the five court musicians ply their flutes and drums. There are also two warriors, a young man and an old one, fully armed. At the bottom are three court servants. The set of miniature

1. Therese LALIBERTE, Lotbiniere.

furniture includes, the screens behind the imperial couple, fantastic lamps of ancient design, a cherry tree in bloom on the left and an orange tree bearing fruit on the right, besides dainty tables and chests of drawers.

In these modern times, Japanese girls sometimes add their western style dollies to the display with the incongruous effect that may be imagined.

This festival is a happy one for the children who may be said to constitute the very core of national life in Japan. During the days of the Meiji Restoration, many age-old national celebrations were banned as they were thought to be too lively a reminiscence of the shogunate. About the only ones that did survive, were the four more especially dedicated to children: *HINA MATSURI* (Dolls' Festival), *TANGO NO SEKKU* (Boys' Festival), *TANABATA* (Weavers' Festival), and the festival of the new garments. The children won the day against the law and the proscriptions of fanatical reformers.

IMPERIAL DAUGHTERS OF NIPPON, TERU NO MIYA, TAKA NO MIYA,
AND YOSHI NO MIYA BEFORE THEIR OWN DOLL FESTIVAL DISPLAY



JAPANESE

RICE

PADDIES

Sister ST. ANGELA OF MERICI(1), M.L.C.

The present method of cultivating Japan's staple cereal was introduced during the sixth year of the reign of the great emperor Meiji. Until then, rice had been grown in small irregular patches. Farmers were henceforth ordered to lay out the paddies in sizes of 180 x 60 feet, and to separate them by the means of little mud walls one foot high, which would serve as foot-paths. On the slopes the *tofu* bean could be cultivated once the rice crop was completed. A perfect network of minute streamlets and watercourses, to be turned off and on by primitive but ingenious devices at the will of the farmers, penetrated the terraced fields.

As no fences mark off the ownership of the different plots, how the proprietors manage to recognize their respective paddies remains something of a mystery for us foreigners. Disputes often arise during droughts when the owners of the higher terraces close up the aqueducts to keep all the moisture in the upper fields.

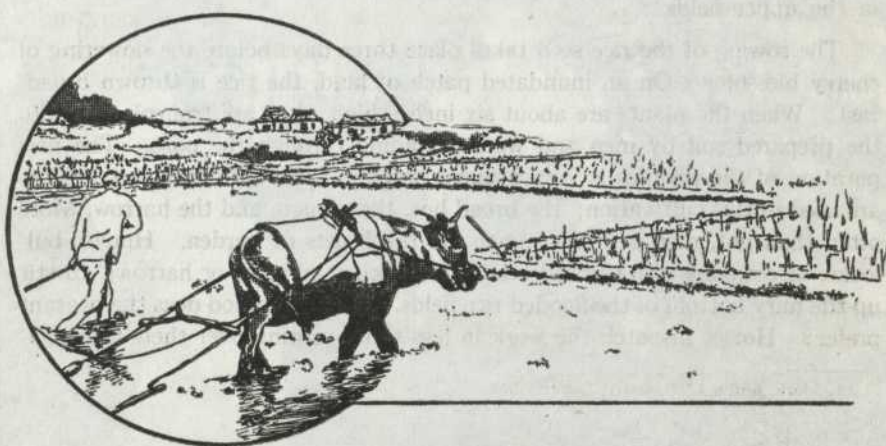
The sowing of the rice seed takes place three days before the flowering of cherry blossoms. On an inundated patch of land, the rice is thrown broadcast. When the plants are about six inches high, they are transplanted into the prepared soil by men and women wading through the ooze. The preparation of the paddies is very arduous work. Three primitive instruments are used in this cultivation; the broad hoe, the plough, and the harrow. More often than not, men or even women are the beasts of burden. Horses, bullocks, or cows are also utilized hitched to ancient ploughs or harrows, to stir up the miry bottom of the flooded rice fields. Which method does the peasant prefer? Horses dispatch the work in less time, turning over their four pad-

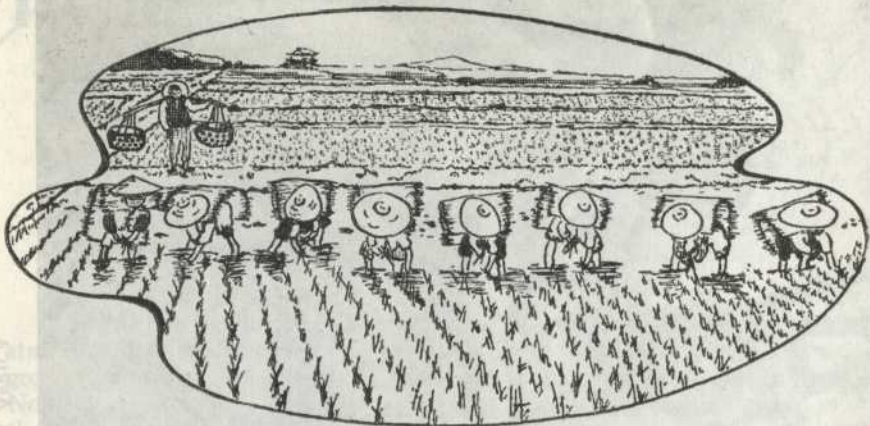
dies a day; cows or bullocks turn only three but they are cheaper as a mere child can guide them along. In Japan, the man at the plough merely guides his implement, never the animal.

After this first preparation of the soil, fertilizer is spread, and the harrow is passed once again to drive in the ooze. The fields are then ready for the transplanting. On this occasion, the country schools enjoy a two-week holiday, for all hands are needed in the rice fields. The grandmothers look forward to this season when they may entertain the illusion of reverting to the days of their youth; proprietors hire them out for their three meals and 80 cents a day, and they momentarily forget their stiff aching joints as they deftly tie together, by little packets of ten, the young rice shoots. Everybody is in cheerful mood, and songs are heard all over the flooded paddies, for in Japan rice transplanting is considered almost as a national event.

The rice shoots are planted in beautifully symmetrical patterns marked out beforehand by widely pronged bamboo rakes. After twenty days have elapsed, the first weeding is done by means of a primitive weeding machine; two subsequent weedings are ordinarily done by hand. This is perhaps the most back-breaking part of the rice cultivation as the peasants must wade through the water almost knee-deep and bend over all day long. But, oh, the beautiful sight presented when the muddy flats are converted into masses of living, delicate green!

The harvest is done by hand. The straw is cut close to the ground with a sickle, and is tied up in small sheaves which are hung over a pole resting on legs so that the heads of rice are off the ground. About three weeks later





if the weather allows, the rice is winnowed, put into straw bags, the first class and the second class grain being carefully separated, then sent to the mills to be hulled. The peasant keeps only the quantity required for the needs of his own family. All surplus grain must be sold to government-controlled agencies.

The Japanese boil their rice in unseasoned water, using closely covered pots which help to retain all the flavor of their favorite cereal. Besides the ordinary rice, a small amount of *mochi gome*, (glutinous rice) is also cultivated to furnish the delicious holiday fare special to the New Year celebrations. Heavy wooden pestles are used to reduce the *mochi gome* to a fine flour. Moistened with water this forms an elastic white mass which is shaped into round cakes of all sizes. As these cakes become almost as hard as marble, the Japanese soak them in water then cut them into cubes or slices to be toasted over charcoal fires or boiled with shoyu (fermented bean sauce). The *mochi gome* is not always made into flour. It is sometimes boiled like the ordinary rice with the addition of small red beans and tinted a pretty rosy color. Small round balls are also shaped and covered with very sweet bean paste and this really seems to be the only Japanese dish approaching dessert according to our foreign taste.

The cultivation of rice is very important for the Japanese. They may eat bread with apparent relish but they soon tire of it and hunger after their heaped-up bowls of appetizing rice.



MILES OF SMILES FROM NORTHERN AFRICA

WHEN IT RAINS AT KARONGA

Sister MARIE ANNA(1), M.I.C.

You are perhaps among those who go into ecstasies while gazing at the starry skies with their myriad points of fire pricked into a velvety background. How you would admire, then, the splendor of our Karonga nights! Not only the roof of heaven is studded with scintillating diamonds, but even the hazy atmosphere about us is afire with millions of fluttering fireflies like earthly stars glowing so brightly in the darkness that you could easily find your way about even in the bush.

This gorgeous pageant, however, only serves to usher in the rainy season when glittering stars above and fluttering stars below are finally extinguished by sulky clouds and torrential downpours.

Does the rainy season mean that it rains day and night? No. During the day, the sun shines as brightly as usual drying up the puddles under its fierce rays, but during the night the rain patters down almost continually. Towards the end of the wet season the low-hanging clouds burst asunder in a twenty-four hour deluge. Karonga then has to cope with inundations.

One April morning, we left our convent at the usual hour to attend Mass at the Mission Church, a five minute walk from our convent. The rainy season was at its peak and as we stepped out into the narrow beaten path leading away from our house, we noticed that during the night, miniature lakes had formed here and there about our premises. Clumps of bushes barely emerged above the waters. Our usual route thus wiped off the map, we decided to try the highway linking us to the *boma* (village). With only one carriage a week rolling over its surface at this time of the year, we found it choked with weeds and other vegetation almost six feet high.

Tucking up our white habits we tried to keep clear of the flooded areas but we fell from one puddle into another and the tall weeds drenched with water slapped our starched coifs out of shape and playfully sent rivulets cascading down our veils. When we finally reached the Mission Compound we looked and felt for all the world like ducks waddling out of their pond.

As we picked our way home after Mass, we expected a holiday, for no children could venture out in such a flood, we reflected. We soon found out

1. Adeline MEDZOWICKI, Montreal.

that we had underestimated the vitality of our black pupils. Before we had time to arrive at our convent, we met them coming, Indian file, holding aloft huge banana leaves in lieu of umbrellas. They were not embarrassed by cumbersome skirts or awkward shoes, for they were all dressed à la Karonga!

Hastily changing into dry clothes and eating our breakfast, we had to hurry out again to our little bush school across a shallow brook. The school day here opens as early as 7.30 a.m. The majority of the pupils were present. My classroom on this rainy morning, presented the appearance of a drying loft with dripping *saru* draped about the six window frames. From the lake blew an icy breeze. The children shivered but not one of them complained such is their enthusiasm for learning.

When the noon bell rang, I heard Sister Superior calling to me from the edge of the woods. The rain had swollen the brook so that it had become a small river about twenty-five feet wide and three feet deep. We could hardly risk trying to wade across. As I was wondering what should be done to solve our problem, I suddenly beheld Sister Superior being hoisted on the shoulders of four husky young women and swiftly carried across, while behind her walked another girl with a large banana leaf held umbrella-wise. The youngsters splashed along shouting gleefully.

In three shakes of a lamb's tail, the charitable Christophers had returned to carry me across. Excitement reigned supreme among my little pupils who all wanted to have the honor of carrying their teacher. I thanked them for their eagerness to help but cautioned them to be content with following along in case my bearers should drop me in the middle of the stream.

The next day, the rainy season had come to an end. We all heaved a sigh of relief for although our children think it great fun to see their teachers riding pickaback, we still prefer riding on our own feet.



Bits of Cuban Humor

It was six-year-old Mercedita's first day at school. Although she cried her eyes out and stamped her tiny foot with rage, neither Juan, her big brother, nor the Madres seemed to notice.

After a while she calmed down. In the afternoon, little Dolores arrived, her tears streaming like a fountain because she had missed the morning class and feared to be punished. The Madres gently reassured her. Mercedita who was bright enough to realize that we had laughed at her fit of ill-temper, stood up and lisped with an impish grin "Madre, I cried this morning because I also was afraid of being punished."

LETTER FROM AFRICA

TO A SICK SISTER HOSPITALIZED AT CARTIERVILLE HOSPITAL

Sister ST. LEO THE GREAT(1), M.L.C.

You were not expecting my visit, I am sure. When I heard how God had been visiting you with the particular marks of His friendship, I determined to write and congratulate you. Let me assure you that the Lord shows remarkable good taste. I hope this does not sound irreverent; at least no irreverence at all is meant. Do you remember the happy trio of probationers who began their training at the Hotel Dieu in 1946? The mischievous *Lion* has seen her mission dreams come true while you, the worthiest of the three, have been chosen to work at the noblest of causes, in a hidden but far more efficacious manner. You are the one who has been asked to offer the costliest sacrifices. We, on the mission front, are the happy privileged ones. Please help me to carry Christ's message of love in the best possible way, by living a life of radiating holiness.

I have just made the rounds of the maternity ward. There is always more work to do here than can be possibly crowded into our waking hours. Allow me to introduce you to Magdalena, one of my patients, third wife of an old polygamous chief, and mother of seven children.

Magdalena came from a fanatical Protestant milieu. Brought here with a serious heart condition, I entrusted her conversion to our zealous catechist Lorenti, himself a convert from Protestantism. Pleased with the careful medical attention lavished upon her, she was cooperative from the start. One day as I entered the hut assigned to her to give her a treatment, I found the hoary old husband sitting beside her and looking almost ferocious. Although I did not feel quite reassured by his boorish manners, I greeted him pleasantly. While I explained about his wife's critical illness, he kept his eyes glued to the floor. At last I ventured to ask his consent about giving her an injection of Soluphylline. As the mere word injection holds a magical attraction for the Blacks who have unlimited confidence in this kind of medication, the chief at last looked up and nodded his assent.

Magdalena rallied for a few short days after this. She became even well enough to learn the elements of Christian doctrine zealously imparted to her by Lorenti. Then, she suddenly suffered a relapse, and begged to be baptized. As she was now beyond any hope of recovery, I went one night to her hut, accompanied by Sr. St. Alberte(2) with the intention of granting her request. Never will I forget Magdalena's smile when I entered. She half rose from

1. Pauline LONGTIN, Montreal.

2. Gabrielle SAUCIER, Montreal.

her bed as if to throw herself into my arms; her eyes were dark with anguish and yet shining with hope as she murmured in tremulous tones, "Amayi, wane!" (my mother and friend).

She then thanked me for some medicine sent to her previously and went on to say that she felt better.

"Sister St. Alberte and I now want to give you two other kinds of medication," I began. "One for your soul, the other for your body. Which shall I give you first?"

"Give me the spiritual medicine first," she eagerly requested.

"Do you want to be baptized?"

"Oh, yes, I do."

To make sure of her dispositions, I asked,

"Perhaps your desire for Baptism is very slight."

"No, no, Amayi. I want it with all my heart."

"Why do you want to be baptized?"

"Because I want to go home to Jesus and Mary."

Sr. St. Alberte poured the blessed waters over her brow while the patient broke out in words of joyful thankfulness.

"Are you happy, Magdalena?" we inquired.

"My heart is overflowing with joy," she replied.

The husband who had not budged from her bedside, forgot all his fanaticism on seeing the dying woman's happiness. Over and over again he thanked us for our kindness.

Five days later, Magdalena exchanged her hut for the mansions of Paradise. After the funeral, her husband thanked us again for all we had done and promised to call on us once in a while. Many are those who make such promises but few are faithful in keeping them. This man however was as good as his word. One month later he returned, offering us some fresh eggs wrapped up in a rag.

"I can never forget Magdalena's friends," he simply explained.

"I will come again."

May I recommend this rough diamond to your most fervent prayers?

Please pray also for your little missionary sister. She feels an immense need of attaining to holiness in order not to cheat her beloved Blacks of their rightful inheritance as children of God, and we missionaries will be channels of the divine only in as much as we are nearest to God and closest to His Heart.

It happened during the drawing period at the Pre-primario. Roberto, flourishing the lollipop he had just fished out of his pocket, offered to give it, as a prize, to the pupil with the best drawing. Sister Eustelle of the Blessed Sacrament was about to praise such generosity when Roberto went on: "I am sure to win it myself because I can draw better than any one else in my class!" Thus, everything was saved: honor, generosity, drawing, and . . . the lollipop!

Statistics of Closed Retreats

In the Convents of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

for the Year 1952

	Retreats	Retreatants	Recollections	Guests at Recollections
Our Lady of the Holy Spirit Retreat House 314 St. Catherine Road Outremont, Montreal (8)	136	3,484	19	1,121
Bethany Retreat House Nominugue, Labelle Co., P. Q.	16	303	—	—
Immaculate Conception Retreat House 750 St. Louis St., Joliette	70	1,967	1	13
Our Lady of the Cenacle Retreat House 651 St. Cyrille Street, Quebec	130	3,772	29	1,818
Our Lady of Missions Retreat House Cenacle Street, Chicoutimi	87	2,597	11	511
Mary Mediatrix Retreat House 35 Dufferin Street, Granby	66	1,622	—	—
St. Bernadette Retreat House 430 Champlain Street, St. Johns, P. Q.	60	1,377	1	25
Our Lady of the Rosary Retreat House St. Mary, Beauce Co., P. Q.	44	1,199	—	—
Our Lady Queen of Missions Retreat House 187 Pleasant St., Marlboro, Mass.	33	690	—	—
Totals	642	17,011	61	3,488

TRIBUTE TO SAINT JOSEPH

All three of our sabziwal's (vegetable man) children had typhoid this year. All the time the two boys and one girl were sick he and Ram Ratii, his wife, kept St. Joseph's statue in the men's ward well decorated. For days the Saint had to endure colored candles and artificial pink flowers with bright green foliage in pots covered with tin foil. By night, streamers of incense would perfume the ward. Finally the children got well, and in thanksgiving, the little girl dressed in a new sari was conducted by her mother to the front of the Chapel for Sunday Mass. One little boy remained in the rear in the only clothing nature had given him. India is a land of extremes!

Sr. M. Adelaide, PATNA



THE MARTYR OF FUTUNA



By Florence Gilmore

(Continued)

Feasts in honor of the gods were held whenever a favor, or relief from some scourge was greatly desired. On October thirteenth Father Chanel noted in his journal, "Public prayers were offered today that the wind may subside. It is ruining the banana trees. The prayers began late in the afternoon and are to be offered to the god of Maligi, the prime minister. They will be continued for only twenty-four hours." When offered to the king's god they lasted for seven days and were concluded by a great religious feast.

In spite of these pagan celebrations the good dispositions, of which Father Chanel had spoken with so much hope, grew stronger slowly, but perceptibly. Several natives went so far as to tell him that they longed to become Christians. "God grant they mean what they say!" he exclaimed. Baptisms became more frequent. A child whom he had baptized died in Alofi and he wrote happily, "My two little islands have some souls to heaven. Oh my God, increase their number!"

The house at Singave for which Father Chanel had longed that he might be able to say Mass within the territory of the Conquered, was begun in January, 1839. A month later his house at Poi, the pride of all Futuna, was destroyed by the wind. "For several days the sky looked threatening and the wind was strong; at last the storm burst in all its fierce fury. During a whole night rain fell in torrents, the ocean roared, the lightning and thunder were terrible, and the frightened natives shrieked wildly to their gods. At daybreak the wind veered to the north and redoubled in violence. Half dressed we struggled to support our house against the fury of the storm, but in spite of our efforts we saw our roof carried away, piece by piece. Our walls were shaken, until they could bear no more, and crumbled to the ground, leaving us shelter-

SR. IMELDA OF THE EUCHARIST (SIMONNE BOISCLAIR, ALMAVILLE) TEACHING CATECHISM TO CHINESE CHILDREN IN HONGKONG

less — homeless. Few houses on the island escaped the fate of ours, and the cocoanut and banana trees and all varieties of trees suffered so severely that famine threatened. To stave it off the natives worked tirelessly, and their patient courage accomplished wonders.”(1)

“Under such circumstances theft is openly countenanced, and we lost some of our things,” he wrote to Father Colin. The king commanded that they should be returned and saw to it that his order was obeyed. Father Chanel carried his belongings to Niuliki’s house, which had suffered comparatively little from the storm, and some days later he had built a little cabin twelve feet long by six or seven wide to live in until it should become possible to erect a larger on the site of the wrecked one.

To the ravages made by the storm, war soon threatened to add more terrible ones. On the eve of the disaster of February second, as Father Chanel wrote to Father Convers, “The people of the conquered kingdom presented ten roasted pigs to two impostors belonging to King Niuliki’s party, whom they look upon as oracles of the gods. Their aim was to attract these men to their own valley and thus strengthen themselves by the addition of a number of gods, so that in time they may be able to regain the supremacy of the island. The ruse was understood and deeply resented. King Niuliki and his men swore vengeance. They pursued those who had brought the pigs, overtook them, and but for the clemency of His Majesty all would have been put to death. He contented himself with making them beg pardon.”

This happy solution of the trouble made it possible for Father Chanel to continue his journeys back and forth over the island. He was unwearied in his visits. On the twentieth of February he was in Assou-Vele where he found a man ill with a serious form of throat trouble. He judged it to be incurable, and determined that in the weeks left to the poor invalid he would try to instruct him sufficiently to administer baptism, if the man were willing. He went to Singave on the twenty-fifth and visited the various valleys there, speaking of the faith to as many as a hundred persons and having a long and serious talk with Sam. The old king, Vanae, asked many questions and declared himself pleased with Father Chanel’s replies. Returning to Assou-Vele, he found Tui-Karepa, the sick man, worse than when he had seen him before. He talked to him and his friends about Christianity and succeeded in arousing their interest. The impostors supposed to be loved by the gods suggested many remedies for his throat, some of them supremely ridiculous, but nothing helped him. His condition grew more and more alarming, and his grief-stricken relatives carried him to a house thought to be favored by a god, but with no result. As long as Tui-Karepa was surrounded day and night, by his friends it was impossible to instruct him, but he was not in immediate danger, so Father Chanel went back to Singave where his first visit was to a young man who was very ill. “I found him in danger of death and asked him if he would not like to become a Christian. He replied that he was too tired to talk. Later, with the help of Thomas Boog, to whom I spoke in my broken English and who translated what I said, I explained to him the truths necessary for salvation. I went away, then, and when I returned, he said that he wished to become a Christian, and his whole family echoed his words. I baptized him, giving him the name Peter, and on leaving,

1. Letter to Father Convers.

told him to say often, 'Have mercy on me, Lord God, for I wish to go to heaven.'¹(1)

On the following day he saw his neophyte again. "His condition has not changed," he wrote, "His relatives are resigned. I spoke but little to the sick man for fear of tiring him, but talked for a long time to his father and to some natives whom I met as I came away."²

In the house of King Vanae Father Chanel saw a girl who was an invalid, but apparently not in danger of death. He resolved to try to convert her, and great was his sorrow when, the next day, Thomas Boog told him that she had died suddenly and was already buried. In the hour of her agony she had begged those about her to go for the missionary because she wanted to become a Christian so she could go to heaven. These were her last words. "How sad I am over this news! God grant that baptism of desire made her soul pleasing in His sight and opened heaven to her!" he wrote in his journal.

After visiting his neophyte once more he left Singave, happy because he felt that the people there were well disposed towards Christianity. All wanted to go to heaven, as they expressed it. When he reached home Brother Mary Nizier told him that Mafigi and other natives had shown a friendly attitude towards the Faith. Father Chanel wrote joyfully, "Before a large assembly, the prime minister did not hesitate to say that the religion we have brought to Futuna is good; that it teaches men how to reach heaven and to avoid hell. May God bless these first changes of heart!"

Meanwhile Tui-Karepa had grown worse despite many offerings to the gods. Through a beating rain Father Chanel went to see him, and, profiting by a moment when most of his friends were away, spoke to him of baptism. "Tui-Karepa listened eagerly to all I had to say. His father who was standing by, asked me to tell him of the sufferings and death of the Man whose image he had seen on my crucifix. I did so; and afterward tried to teach Tui-Karepa something concerning the Trinity, the Incarnation and our Redemption. He begged me to baptize him, and I did so, telling him to make an act of love of God as I poured the saving water on his head. He was happy, then, to know that his soul had become pleasing in God's sight and heaven was assured to him. I taught him a little invocation to the Blessed Virgin before I left him, and he thanked me and begged me to come again."³ He died a few days later before Father Chanel had found time to go to Assoa-Vele again and was buried with the usual Futunian ceremonies. Not long afterward his father asked for a cross which he wished to place upon Tui-Karepa's grave.

About this time Father Chanel baptized two more dying children. Thus, slowly, very slowly, his work progressed. His flock in heaven was growing; the sheepfold on earth was still empty.

One day when he was busy about his ordinary work in the little house at Poi a native burst in upon him, hot and breathless, to tell him that his relatives had landed at Singave. Father Chanel hurried to meet the visitors, having no idea who they were and found Fathers Baty, Epalle and Petit, and Brothers Augustine, Elias, and Florentine. Father Bataillon was with them. What a surprise and what joy! At first words

1. Journal, March 13, 1839.

2. Journal, March 15, 1839.

3. Journal, March 21, 1839.

failed him, but recovering himself quickly, he welcomed them and listened eagerly to the story of their journey from France to Futuna.

"My surprise was as great as yours," Father Bataillon told him. "Like you, I could not utter a word at first. After they had told me such news as I could not wait to hear, I hastened to take them to the king. He had been a little distant with me for some time and seemed embarrassed, but presently recovered himself and all went well. Knowing that their schooner, the *Queen of Peace*, was to leave almost immediately, he asked me to come as far as Futuna in search of some of his subjects who fled in a canoe. For the sake of my mission I could not refuse to do him a service which would delay our brothers' arrival in New Zealand by only eight or ten days. Besides, for them and for me, it is a great joy to see you and Brother Mary Nizier." While Father Bataillon talked "a crowd had gathered about the strangers. The natives seemed almost as happy as we. A little dinner was ordered to celebrate the occasion."¹

Father Epalle, afterwards consecrated Bishop of Sion, wrote to Father Bourdin, "I shall always remember the days we spent with the first apostle of Futuna. He had worked a year and a half for the conversion of his pagan and cannibal island, with no help but what a young lay-brother could give. I saw again that angel of peace and love whom I thought to have parted from forever when he left France. What a pleasant surprise to his loving heart and what happiness for mine! How I was edified by his amiable simplicity! His smiling face, his modesty, his sweet gaiety, all betrayed to me the peace and joy of his soul.

"Before we reached his house some one told him of the arrival of a party of Europeans, and he came running to meet us. We went at once to his tiny cabin. It was not like the holy house of Nazareth, which though poor, had some simple furniture, some cooking utensils; it was not like the room of the Prophet Elias, for that contained a little bed, a chair, a table, and a candlestick; Father Chanel's house was bare except for an altar of rough wood. Pebbles gathered on the beach formed the floor. The trunk of a tree, which extended the width of the house along the wall, served as a pillow at night and a seat by day. There was also a 'tape'; that is, a piece of cloth made from the papyrus plant, used to cover him and Brother Mary Nizier while they slept to protect them from the myriads of mosquitoes that infest the island. His clothes were in rags. For the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice he had only what was strictly necessary. We saw, too, a few agricultural implements and the axe which became the instrument of his martyrdom.

"His poor hut was made of bamboo and stubble from the marshes. The innumerable knots in the bamboo had made it impossible to join the pieces closely, so windows were unnecessary and none had been made. As to its size, what can I say? All that I know is that in the evening we nine missionaries squatted on the floor and talked far into the night, and when at last we lay down, side by side, with our heads on the trunk of the tree, there was not an inch of free space in the cabin.

"This little house was in a valley close to the sea, and had a garden planted with orange trees and vines still too young to bear fruit; but I noticed some banana trees heavily laden.

1. Journal, May 8, 1839.

"There being neither kitchen nor food in the cabin it was easy to forget the meal hour, but in time my hunger became so keen that I could not refrain from saying something about it. Dear Father Chanel smilingly replied that the feast would be truly royal, both as to the number and quality of its dishes, but the hour at which it would be served depended on the appetite of His Majesty. This sounded a little mysterious, but soon we heard some one call loudly. The cry proved to be the king's; he was summoning us to dinner. We went to the royal palace, or rather to the smoky hut of the king who later decreed the death of our saintly brother. The meal consisted of roots and yams; food which satisfied hunger for the moment but was not nourishing. And this was Father Chanel's ordinary diet!"

On the next day, Ascension Thursday, four Masses were said in the little cabin, and a fifth was sung by Father Bataillon in Niuliki's house before a great number of natives who did not know how to express their surprise and admiration. He took advantage of the occasion to say a few words about the Faith. On Saturday, Fathers Baty and Petit and the three lay-brothers went with Father Chanel to Singave to make the necessary preparations for their departure on the *Queen of Peace*. The three priests said Mass there on Sunday, May twelfth, in Father Chanel's newly completed house, which had never before been used. The natives were present in crowds at all the Masses. It was the same on the following day. The chapel emptied a little only to be refilled.

The missionaries decided that the *Queen of Peace* should not return to Wallis, but proceed at once to New Zealand, after they had celebrated Pentecost together with all possible solemnity for God's greater glory and the edification of the islanders. They decorated the chapel at Singave as prettily as they could. "The most beautiful thing we had, and one which the natives came from far and near to admire, was a robe that we used on the statue of Our Lady of Fourviere. I am constantly reminding the Blessed Virgin of this."⁽¹⁾

At Mass on Pentecost Sunday a small organ, brought on the *Queen of Peace*, was used for the first time, to the delight of the islanders who had never heard anything so sweet. "My people," Father Chanel wrote, "were deeply moved by the majesty of our ceremonies, the grandeur and beauty of our holy religion, and the zeal and charity of her ministers. The little presents which my brothers distributed aroused intense gratitude, and many of the people wept to hear them tell of the interest in their welfare felt in France and all over Europe." In the evening of that same day the schooner set sail for New Zealand, carrying with it all the visiting missionaries except Father Bataillon.

"During every minute of our stay with the apostle of Futuna we were edified by Father Chanel's piety, sweetness, resignation, and good advice," wrote Father Epalle. "Neither the length of his frequent journeys about the island, nor the bad condition of his people, nor the ever-recurring wars which divided them, could cool the ardor of his zeal.

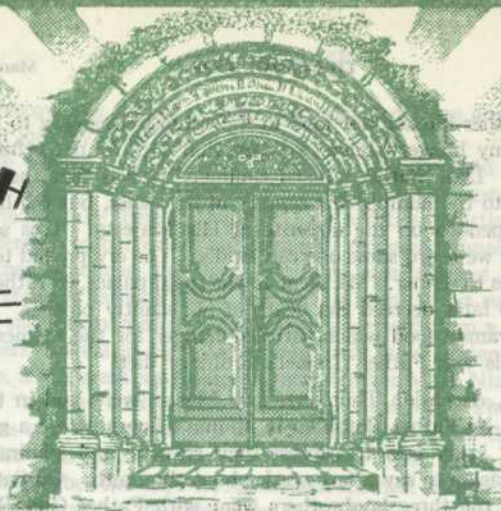
(To be continued)

THROUGH

A GATE

OF

BEAUTY



JOAN YANG

Finite mind wrestled with Infinite Truth and, like the lark searching for the confines of Heaven, returned shaken and defeated. For one who has Faith, revelation merges into Truth, and he remains unperturbed. But without Faith, man can but ask, and vainly ask again — what is Truth?

Truth, the light without flickering, without shadow, illumines darkness. It is that which is, and there is only One Who is; God the absolute Truth. The numerous existing and knowable truths are but reflections of the one eternal, unchangeable and Divine Truth, — God.

Truth knows no confinements. Truth beckons and sheds the intensity of her light upon all who pass beneath her gate. Anyone who dares to enter this gate, she welcomes with her illumination; and all who kneel before her altar, she adopts and calls her chosen ones.

Coming from a Protestant family, I have always believed in God. The form of this belief, however, often changed. Sometimes God was far away, impersonal; sometimes He was very near, and at other

times he seemed to become embodied into the poetry of trees and clouds and raindrops. But under these forms God was ever vaguely present to me, Someone to look up to, Someone whom I knew to be Almighty, Someone who created me. From a purely relative angle, this awareness of God really impeded me rather than sped me on to the whole truth.

Coming into contact with Catholics, and judging them to be no better apparently than other human beings, I learned to look upon the Roman Church as just another "Form of Religion". Indifferently, I considered her outward appearances, and completely blinded to the Divine life throbbing within her breast, I jumped to the conclusion that the human mind possesses a freedom that transcends all religion. In a certain sense, my mind at that time was simply weltering in a hodgepodge of Wordsworth's pantheism, Whitman's liberalism, India's mysticism, and my own country's natural wisdom. In this state of mind, I naturally didn't bother about the teachings of the Church. My idea of Christianity evidently did not gain anything from all the dry Sundayschools and the sleepy two o'clock religion classes. Faced with invincible problems, which I thought some men were fools enough to solve, I became just another of the numerous Protestants who have long ceased "protesting".

God, in the timelessness of His eternal wisdom was lovingly biding His time. Tenderly He set to work, and slowly, but surely and masterfully, He molded, from out of piteous nothingness an image of His own very Self.

His first step in this work was to make me aware of my own insufficiency, of the preciousness of this life, and of the responsibility of making something out of it. He made me see how easy it was to wreck my whole future with just a tiny mistaken notion of eternity. I was not satisfied at all with what I knew and slowly I began to doubt the value of whatever knowledge I had gathered. God gave me the grace of prayer. I prayed more and more to God for guidance. I doubted the efficacy of these prayers, because I was not even aware of what I was asking for. Yet the Lord had pity on me, and He guided me on. He led me to St. Teresa's, a place I can truly call home; there I found love and friendship and truth. There, through His faithful friends, He introduced me to the great angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas; He let me cast a glance into the inner life of His Church and her true history. From St. Teresa's, prayers went continually up to Him for me, countless prayers from friends and Mothers, some of whom I shall never have the happiness to thank personally.

Though my intellect was slowly opening to truth, my will did not stir. While I was vaguely aware that one day I might become a Catholic, that one day was always in the distant future, hazy in the cloudiness of probability. Though the grace of Faith was not yet mine, I continued to pray.

Then I was brought face to face with something I had no power to resist, something that took my whole soul into its stream of pulsing. I found Beauty.

It was like a spark that enkindled my whole being. I discovered that the Church, far from being the dry, obsolete thing I had imagined it to be, contains within her fire-filtered heart a treasury of boundless beauty. I found beauty pulsing with warmth and laughter and tears, uniting into a more human love all her magnificent poetry, her splendid cathedrals, her lucid revealed doctrines; and always, all the way through, in every form of her beauty, I was struck by that undying, never-varying love theme, that centers up the T of a Cross, a blood-drenched T that, undaunted, proudly stands for Absolute Truth.

By the mysterious grace of God's boundless Wisdom, I was led on. Without realizing how intensely I burned with thirst, I was taken to the fountain of grace where my God gave me to drink of water that springs to an everlasting life. And sponging my parched lips with refreshing waters, I began to drink and discovered that I was very thirsty indeed. I drank in small draughts Newman's lucid prose, Hopkin's poetry, Maritain's flawless exposition, Merton's uncompromising autobiography. And all of a sudden, I realized that I was living in a state of compromise.

Here, the Almighty Hand of God paused for a while. Two ways opened themselves to me. I was called upon to exercise my human free will. I had pleaded and prayed for Truth. God had shown it to me. Now it was my turn either to accept His proffered Hand, or to reject it.

With trembling uncertainty, I accepted. And thus I stepped into His Church through a gate of beauty, I entered into the sanctuary of Truth. Like a lost child I stumbled in, and I found a Mother with outstretched arms. It was like coming "HOME" after a long exile. In the open-mouthed intoxication of my childish amazement, I absorbed with relief the air of warmth and love and welcome and as I buried my face in the softness of her enclosed arms I found an elation of spirit I had never know before. Isn't it Thompson who says,

"Hardest servitude has he That's jailed in arrogant liberty;

And freedom, spacious and unflawed, Who is walled about with God."

Slowly, I began to realize what a wonderful inheritance I had come into. Step by step, I learned to walk up the aisle of my new-found legacy — the Cathedral of my Church and Faith. A peace has descended upon me, a peace I have never known before. Unconsciously, my heart has been slowly pilfered, my heart has been slowly consumed with a fire that leaps into flames without ceasing before the Tabernacle because of a love that knows no boundaries; my soul has been slowly purged of all false values as I abandoned it within the folds of my Mother's all protecting mantle. As I approached gradually the Altar with firmer steps, I dared at last raise my eyes and study my surroundings.

The first things that hold my attention are the towering figures of the gloried saints, all clothed in the simple magnificent garb of sanctity. Numberless is their company, and beautiful the face of every one. There is Peter, the impetuous lover; there is the Therese of the little children; there are the countless numbers of men who gave their all to God, the army of women who died returning love for love; there is the Virgin Mother wrapt in the silence of her purity, and there is the King of all Saints, the God-man meek and humble of heart. And as I contemplate these figures, I realize that one dowry out of my great inheritance is the hard-pressed footprints of these men and women that lead up the mount of perfection up to my last End; God my Father in heaven.

Yes, I still walk up the aisle of the big Cathedral. It is a narrow aisle, but it has been swept clean and covered with a carpet of grace so thick that even should I fall, I would not hurt myself again. At the end of this aisle rests the Tabernacle of my God, the house of my Savior. Behind Him throng the glorious figures of all the saints; human beings who once walked up the aisle as I am now walking; the aisle of love and sacrifice. If I follow their footsteps, I shall reach their End.

Youth Is For Heroism

If we have to leave our missions it is an immense consolation to have seen the Church established and living more fully than in many other lands. We have seen the Church in China, truly the Church and truly Chinese, and we know that she cannot die. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church and our Catholic youth has understood that it is their blood, their lives that count. There is no narrow nationalism in their attitude, they are too Catholic for that; but much as we long to stay with them, they pray, with grateful affection and love, that we may leave in safety. It is their fight, and they do not want us to suffer in it — they claim the right of suffering for Christ themselves in their own land, and in that, as in the depth of their Catholic living, it is clear that even in these young souls the Church in China has reached maturity and achieved her birthright. St. Paul's words come naturally to mind when speaking of them; but of all the Epistles of the New Testament perhaps the most actual in realism are the letters of St. Peter. He might have been writing to the Catholic youth of China of the tribulations they are undergoing today; and seeing them we understand his words: "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood a consecrated nation, a people God means to have for Himself; it is yours to proclaim the exploits of the God who has called you out of darkness into this marvellous light."

Adapted from *China Missionary Bulletin*

Our Beloved Dead



Msgr. Adelard Harbour, Cathedral pastor, Montreal; Mr. J. A. Campbell, Bedford, P. Q., father of our Sister St. Jean l'Evangeliste; Mrs. E. Terrien, Ottawa, mother of our Sister Marie Delia; Mr. A. Morisset, M. D., Quebec, father of our Sister Agatha of Jesus; Mrs. David Leclair, Putnam, Conn.; Mrs. Black, Old Town, Maine; Mrs. J. Gondek, Danielson, Conn.; Miss Marie Roy, Jewett City, Conn.; Mr. Ivory Goddwin, Rumford, Maine; Mrs. Theophile Boyer, St. Joseph de Sorel, P. Q.; Mrs. David Duguay, St. Adelaide de Pabos; Mrs. James Rowan, Rawdon, P. Q.; Mrs. E. Fraser, Mrs. M. Quinn, Mrs. L. Eden, Montreal; Mrs. Germain Desmarais, Mr. Felix Champagne, Cote des Neiges; Mrs. J. H. Lamarche, Mrs. Ernest Deniger, Outremont; Mr. Georges Pelletier, Ville St. Pierre; Mrs. Desrosiers, Lachine; Mr. Raoul Desrochers, Mr. Arthur Casgrain, Mr. Edmond Gravel, Longueuil; Mrs. Alice J. B. Poisson, Mrs. Alphonse Ayotte,

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