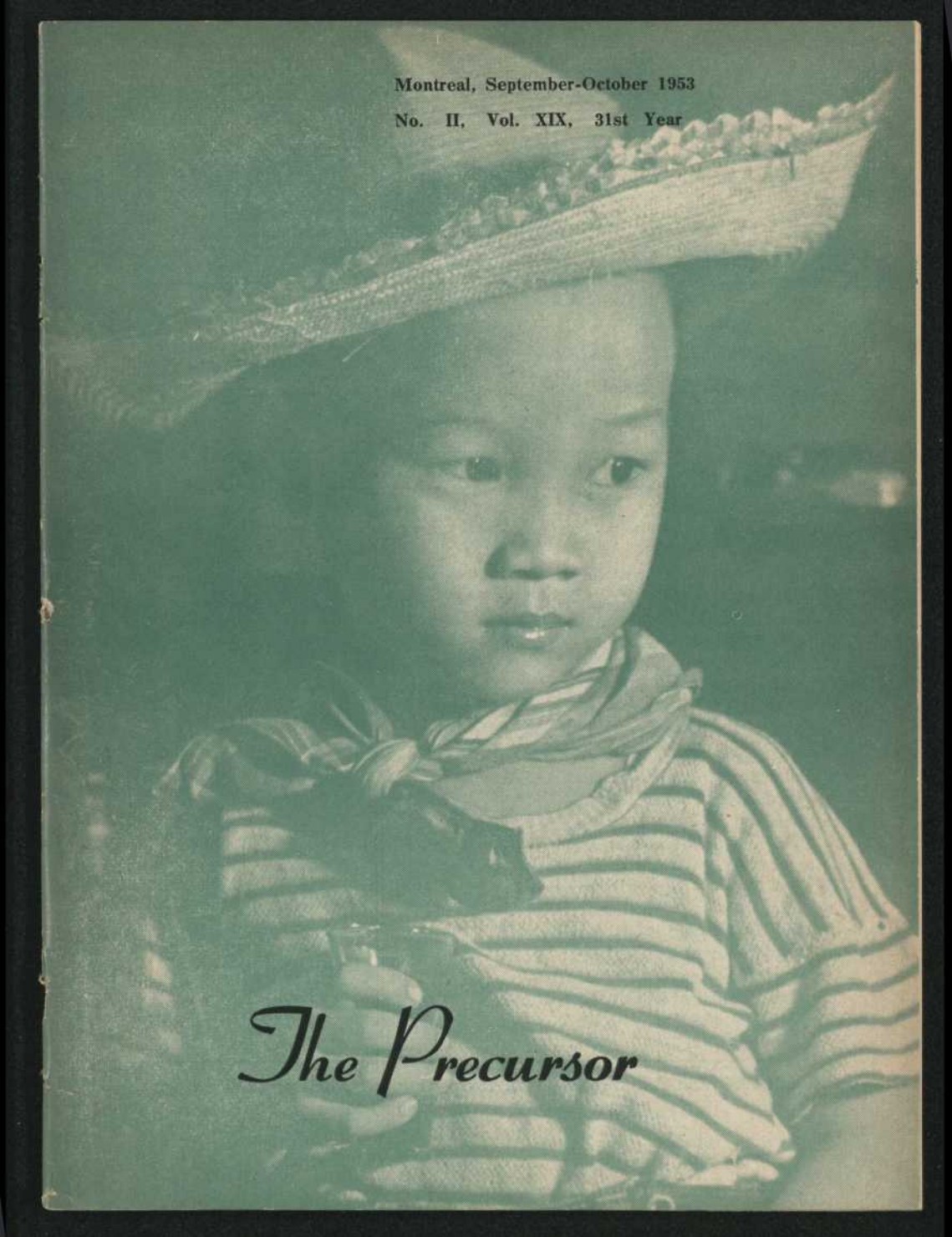




Montreal, September-October 1953

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The Precursor

The Precursor

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COVER PHOTO: Yony Ng, one of the youngest pupils of Tak Sun School;
Hong Kong, loves to parade in cowboy attire.



Why Missions?

Why do the Catholic missionaries leave their homes and loved ones and travel to the remote corners of the world to minister to people still in the throes of paganism? Why do they submit to indignities by the Chinese communists, to the weather conditions of the frozen Arctic, to insect ridden jungles, and war torn, disease filled wastelands? How many Catholics know the real answer? The average Catholic would say that the missionaries must go out and teach the gospel to all because Our Lord commanded the Apostles to go forth and teach all nations. This is a superficial reason for missionary activity. There is a deeper reason why each Catholic should be a missionary in a limited sense, and why the Church must establish her trained personnel in all corners of the globe to give out her message.

In God's plan for the redemption and the restoration of humanity the Church is the necessary instrument. One must belong to the Church somehow or other, if one is to realize the supernatural destiny designed by God. Therefore the Church is Catholic by her very nature. The hope of a restored humanity is in her. She applies the fruits of the Redemption to succeeding ages. All ages must look to her for restoration. As the Body of Christ, a living organism, the Church must grow if she is not to atrophy. The growth must be extensive, by infusing more and more of humanity with her divine life. It must be intensive as well, by deepening and increasing the hold of divine life upon her members.

The Church is under necessity to present herself to all men as the divinely appointed means of salvation. As the Catholic Church she must restlessly reach out to vivify the world of souls spiritually dead. As a living organism she must expand by reproducing herself among all men. This reaching out further to the whole world, the reproduction of herself everywhere, this expanding life through the centuries, has been called the missionary life of the Church. It is of her very nature. It is not something added on or arbitrary, something to be fulfilled in one generation and not in another. It is not something which the Church is free to pursue or not. She must be reaching out always; otherwise she would not be the Body of Christ nor the way of salvation for all men as yet not of her fold. The work of missions cannot be called a work of supererogation or a work that is not absolutely necessary in this stage of the Church's growth. To deny the existing necessity of missionary work is to deny the necessity and Catholicity of the Church herself.

Adapted from Prop. of the Faith News N.

A Miracle During the Zafra

On March 6, in the early morning hours, the ominous sounds of a deafening explosion startled us out of our beds. Outside, people were running, panic-stricken, in the direction of the centrale shrouded in thick clouds of hissing steam. Our first thought was for the safety of our pupils whose anxious parents were already pounding at the College entrance. Doctor Lopez took his little ones and our two Cuban professors away to Manguito. We had to cope with frightened mammas sobbing hysterically and giving us more trouble than their children who remained quietly under the protection of the Sisters in charge of the boarders. One lady frantically embraced the porch pillars, uttering loud lamentations; another fainted away from emotional strain; passersby shouted to the pupils, "Pray, — Pray — Pray — ." They had every reason to place all their trust in Our Lady, for the explosion of a pipe measuring fourteen inches in diameter and containing over seven thousand volts had just taken place at the centrale; such an accident usually brings about numerous casualties.

This once, not one single person had been either wounded or killed. Can you blame the Cubans for proclaiming this to be a miracle wrought through the intercession of Our Lady of Caridad, Cuba's national madonna?

God includes all pleasures of life and heightens their meaning. He is the ideal friend who knows your heart better than you do yourself; He is the meaning of all books worthy of the name, the overtone of music, and the very subject-matter of all science and philosophy.

John C. H. Wu

To His Excellency R. R. M. J. Lemieux

recently elevated to the archiepiscopal see of Ottawa

THE MISSIONARY SISTERS of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

offer their respectful homage and their prayerful wishes

for a long and fruitful career.

One Week in the Bush

SR. FRANCES OF LISIEUX(1), M.I.C.

When I was a little girl, I used to dream of teaching catechism to little black children seated under a feathery palm tree or squatting on the dirt floor of a primitive African hut. How happy I am now that my childhood dream has at last come true! Lately, I have roamed the bush for an entire week on an apostolic tour, climbing up narrow footpaths that wriggled through the mountain, riding on my bicycle over bumpy roads, beside yawning ravines or lush corn fields. For the night, I retired into a cool mud-and-wattle hut and slept like a log.

With Sister Marie Delia (2) as companion, I left the central mission on Easter Tuesday for a small hamlet about twenty miles from Katete. We were to prepare the children of the neighborhood for their First Holy Communion, take care of the sick, and make home visitations to establish contacts with non-Christian families.

When we arrived it was already dark and we saw hardly anybody. At night, it is more prudent to keep inside unless one has any desire of a meeting with leopards or voracious hyenas. A native guide hooked up our mosquito net while we unpacked our clothes and kitchen utensils. By the light of a flickering candle we then ate our frugal supper. One of the girls offered us some water which she had drawn at the com-



1. Marie Claire Lacombe,
Montreal, P. Q.
2. Marie Marthe Terrien,
Ottawa, P. Q.

munity well; although it was of a suspicious brownish color we decided to drink it and trust to Providence. No shining faucets with running water in the jungle!

In this mission district as elsewhere, the missionaries are too few to set up permanent posts in scattered bush villages such as these. They usually pass through only once in a while. On the day following our arrival, Holy Mass was offered twice to accommodate the Christians from remote parts. Thirty received communion at the first of these masses. Crowds of curious pagans hung about the door and windows of the makeshift chapel. After Mass a doctrine lesson was given to about forty children, Christians or catechumens.

In the afternoon we set out on our bikes for our first outing. Three young Blacks accompanied us as guides, for at this time of the year the grass is so tall that we can hardly see more than a few steps ahead. On the hunch-backed roads I took more than one pirouette. Sometimes I had the impression of skiing instead of pedaling along the steep slopes. Fortunately the corn stalks were pliable or I might have suffered casualties. Until sundown we managed to visit five different villages where lived some Christian families who had not showed up at the morning assembly.

On the following day we had no Mass, for the visiting missionary had gone on elsewhere. We herded the children into the empty chapel to tell them Bible stories and teach them their prayers and catechism. Suddenly an epidemic of giggling burst out among our little flock. Eyes danced with merriment and fat little hands clapped with glee as the youngsters looked ahead. Glancing around to see the cause of this distraction, I saw two little imps dressed in their birthday clothes going through their physical exercises balanced on the altar railing. Before I had opened my mouth to shoo them away, they had already vanished into the jungle.

Our tiny clinic soon became a thriving concern. We had hardly enough medicines to relieve all the ills that were brought to our attention; colds, fevers, migraines, large fetid sores. All the patients were of course cared for *muli na lusungu* (free of charge). One grandmother who came in late had suffered a dog bite. We were distressed to find that nothing remained to dress the ugly wound except a little vaseline; while we cleaned her injured limb the old lady vituperated against the whole canine race in strong dialect.

Most of the people around here are superstitious. They may not wear much in the line of clothing but they would hardly ever be seen without some kind of amulets or fetishes tied around their necks; bits of rushes strung on twine, fruit kernels, small pieces of charcoal... One baby sported a long feather from the tail of a rooster; this talisman was supposed to assure the poor wee mite health and comeliness.

The bush people are hospitable to a remarkable degree. No sooner had the news of our arrival been broadcasted, jungle fashion, than practical gifts



*Sr. Frances of Lisieux (Marie Claire Lacombe, Montreal)
teaching young African ladies to knit.*



Sr. Marie Delia (Marie Marthe Terrien, Ottawa)

thinks the world of her mission in Northern Nyassaland.

of milk, eggs, and ears of corn were brought to our hut. On home visitations we received a hearty welcome and a brand-new straw mat was spread out for us to rest upon. The people were deeply touched by the fact that we had come so far just to visit them and appeared at a loss to know how to prove their gratitude. Even the poorest Africans will never refuse to share their meal with strangers. Once as we crossed a remote little village we asked some food for Zirani (come for something) one of our guides who was literally famished. Four ears of corn and a pumpkin were given him which he wolfed down in the twinkling of an eye.

After enjoying this one week of missionary life in the bush, we reluctantly had to pack up and go home to Katete. The thought of all these shepherdless souls hungering after the truth haunts our dreams. When will apostolic laborers throng to the mission fields in sufficient numbers to minister to all the souls crying out in the night of paganism for someone to lead them to the Light?

NEW SISTERS IN KATETE

SR. BERNADETTE OF FRANCE(1), M.I.C.

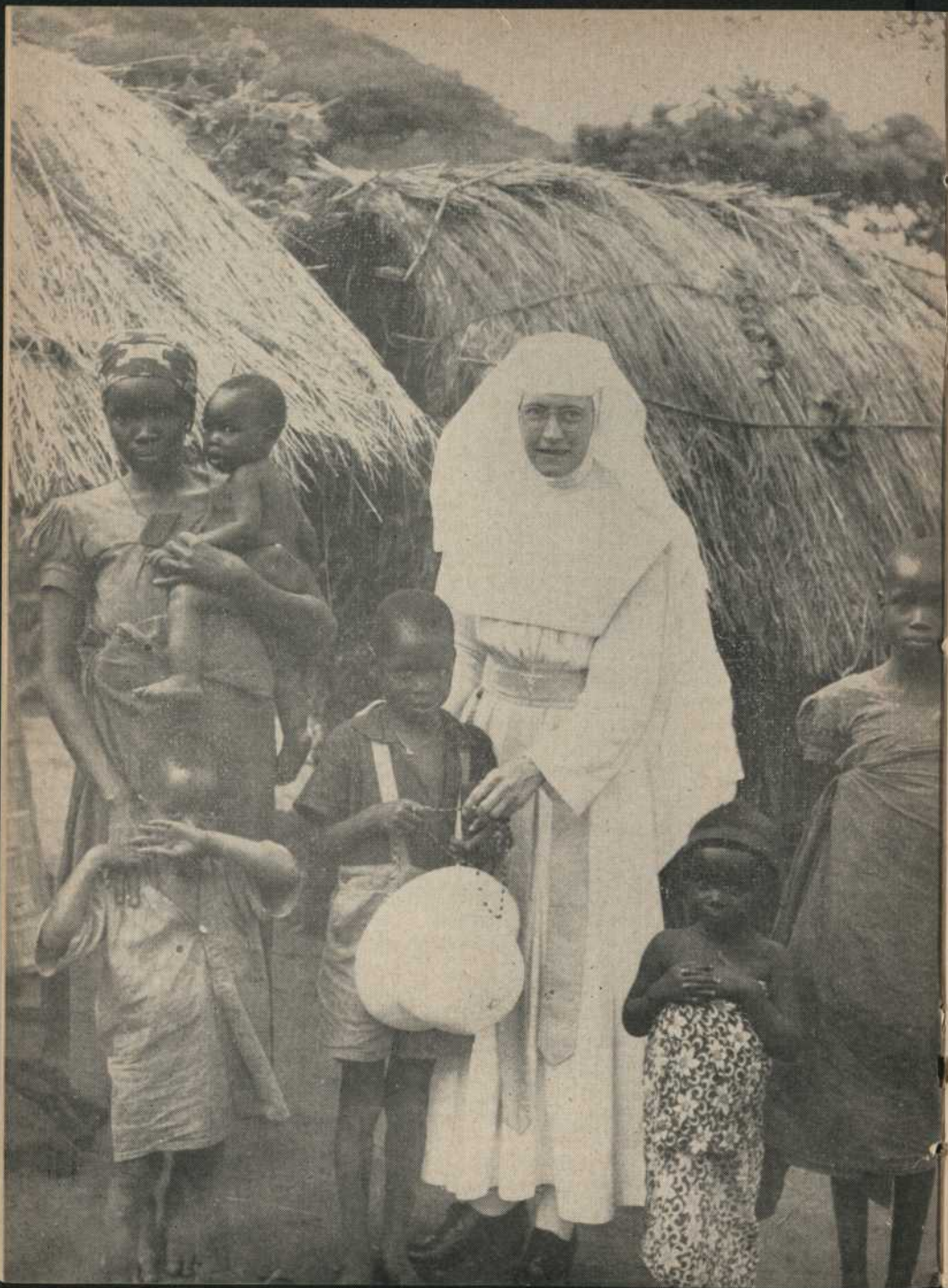
Holy Saturday afternoon in Katete. From all over the bush, the Christians have swarmed into the Mission compound to assist at the Holy Week celebrations climaxed this year by an unusual ceremony in these parts. Five daughters of the soil are to be clothed today in the white and blue habit of a native Sisterhood. With a look of reverent awe on their eager faces, they listen while Msgr. J. E. St. Denis extolls the sublime grandeur of the religious vocation. To the parents and acquaintances, his words remain for the greater part shrouded in mystery. It is well-nigh impossible for them to believe that African women may be called to a superior state of life. Not so very many years ago did not these same people even have doubts about women folk owning a soul at all?

The courageous pioneer members of the Society of Our Lady of the Rosary have showed utmost generosity throughout the months of their postulancy. Life in the native mud huts is not exactly what might be termed an adequate preparation for religious regularity. It is a daring thing that these girls are doing — taking the austere path of religious life straight from the bush. Souls with centuries of Christianity behind them need special uplifting graces to meet the challenge of divine Love and here are these five, but a stone's throw from fetish shrines, venturing to embark upon it! We admired them more especially during the eight-day retreat which they followed with great fervor and faithfulness to strict discipline.

And now the time has come for them to take another important step on the road that leads to perfection. Kneeling at the feet of their Pastor, they answer his query "What do you ask, my daughters?" by the tremulous petition "The grace of God and the holy habit of religion." As they leave the chapel to exchange the blue dress of the postulants for the white habit of the novices, we sing the psalm "In Exitu Israel." See them as they re-enter the chapel, eyes modestly cast down and looking radiantly happy to wear the Marian liveries. In the rear benches, people jostle one another to get a better view. This is a strange poignant thing to be happening in Katete. Only God knows how far its influence will reach in the conversion of Africa and the rehabilitation of African womanhood.

After the Te Deum of thanksgiving has been sung, Msgr. St. Denis is called upon to bless the new novitiate. In this peaceful solitude, our little black novices have a big hidden work to do for God — the work of their sanctification.

1. Bernadette Dumas, St. Anselme de Dorchester, P. Q.



The ceremonies once over, the parents are free to gather about their daughters. We are happy to have them visit the new native convent built in the neighborhood of ours and to chat pleasantly with our guests about their homes, their children. Discreetly we try to sow the seeds of other vocations. Our Africans as a whole see only the practical side of things so they are apt to judge the life in the convent as a loss of time and of precious material advantages. Their daughters becoming nuns, means that the family will be deprived of a goodly dowry consisting of several cows. As the father of one of our novices put it, "Sister, a battle rages within my heart . . . I am happy to give my child to God but I cannot help thinking of the nice fat cows she would have brought me if she had married." Our good people are torn between the pride of a moral victory and a material loss all the more keenly felt because they are so very poor. My suggestion to this afflicted father to turn his thoughts on the eternal reward awaiting him, found him only half convinced. The needs of the present apparently affect him more deeply than the promise of a distant future.

At last all the visitors have gone home and the five novices are alone with God. Compared to the rude huts of their native villages, the novitiate is almost a dream house to these children of the wild. It is however the school of perfection and renunciation where they will learn to follow their crucified Lord and Master.

O you who love the missions, parents, benefactors, friends, you, more especially dear pupils of Granby whom I was so happy to teach a few years ago, please do not forget in your prayers the first novices of Nyasaland. And you, privileged novices of the Pont Viau novitiate, your little black Sisters of Katete rely upon your help. Let there be between Our Lady's two *dove-cotes* an emulation of fervor and an exchange of prayers that will assure perseverance unto the end.



Sr. Bernadette of France
(Bernadette Dumas,
St. Anselm of Dorchester)
Making home visitations
in the African bush.

Hippopotamus Bouquet

SR. ST. YVES, M.I.C., (Yvette Ricard, Grand'Mere, P. Q.)

Fresh meat! Who wants fresh hippopotamus meat? The call had no sooner echoed from the mission center than unending processions of Blacks covered all the paths. First come, first served! The early birds went home lugging choice cuts for *filet mignon* but with such an enormous beast there was a taste of meat for all.

Shouldering his gun, Brother Jean Marie had taken to the warpath by the shores of Lake Nyassa, one hazy evening, when he espied at about one hundred feet a massive greyish blue form moving about in the alders. He aimed and fired. Although mortally wounded, the huge beast ran to the edge of the lake and plunged in swimming furiously. Nevertheless, in a few moments it sank and its body was soon washed ashore.

The following morning, a tractor was set in motion to haul the dead hippo in front of the mission. What a mountain of a beast! The adult hippopotamus weighs between three or four tons and supplies as much meat as five or six cows. With hilarious jests the men tied a stout rope about the snout and around the legs, then six stalwarts pulled it in triumph to its final destination. Crowds of gesticulating natives danced about it with glee at the prospect of enjoying a hearty meal.

Even those who had no money to buy were not sent away empty-handed. By sundown only the carcass remained. The thick slabs of grease will serve in the fabrication of a soap which might be called *Hippopotamus Bouquet*. The hippo's teeth are as much prized as the elephant's tusks; the hide will provide a sounding board for a future drum.

Brother Jean Marie has another interesting capture to his account — an aged crocodile. According to our Vua philosophers, the crocodile is an emblem of exceptional longevity for it may live hundreds of years. Of course I cannot vouch for the accurateness of this assertion. From father to son is handed down, in Nyasaland, the tradition of the sacred crocodile marked with distinctive signs, and carefully guarded. When slavery flourished in these parts, the reptile, horrible to relate, fed upon rebellious slaves condemned to death by their cruel masters.

Adult crocodiles measure from ten to fifteen feet in length; youngsters, two or three years old, are a bare twelve inches long. Brother Jean Marie's catch was a superb, seven foot specimen and again according to local opinion must have been a centenarian. Its powerful jaw was enough to strike terror into anyone with its rows of seventy-six teeth strong, sharp, and pointed. No wonder that it can easily devour goats, cows, and even men. It is related that the crocodile first stuns its victims with a mighty stroke of its scaly tail. The prey thus knocked into unconsciousness is then killed outright but is not devoured on the spot for the crocodiles favor a high taste in their steaks.

KATETE, AFRICA — BIG WHITE BEAST**SR. ST. LEO THE GREAT, M.I.C.,** (Pauline Longtin, Montreal, P. Q.)

African given names are startlingly original. Some time ago a young woman called at the dispensary for medication; when I inquired after her name she timidly answered that I might put her down on my registration file as — Cain's wife. Another young woman whose dying baby I had just baptized gave the father's name as *Asikisi* which is the word for *six* over here. In our neighborhood lives a man the size of a prize fighter who answers to the elegant appellation of *Swollen Meat*. His mother must surely have been endowed with the gift of prophecy when she called him thus as a baby. Another helper lately arrived to share in my work at the dispensary calmly announced her name as — *Eretik*. This was too much for me, so I proposed to change it. It was her turn to be surprised for she thought her name was quite fashionable. I explained that heretic was really a distasteful word; if she had no objection I would call her Mary while she worked at the mission. One month later she inquired about her feastday. As December was near at hand, I suggested that she adopt December 8 as patronal feast. She then declared her intention of petitioning for the catechumen's medal on that blessed date. She is now fervently studying the doctrine in preparation for her baptism although she fears that her husband who has gone to work in the South African mines may not be overjoyed to find his wife a Christian when he returns. Mary alias Eretik brings her four-year-old son, *Small* with her when she comes to work with the Sisters. *Small* or *Smaro* as the people of Katete pronounce it stands in mortal dread of the Sister-Nurse. Fantastic stories he has heard of people like her beating small boys, cutting off their ears, and pulling out their eyes to concoct their powerful medicines. Cherishing a healthy desire to live, he keeps at a safe distance from her. When he first arrived here, as soon as I loomed on his horizon, he yelled, shaking with terror, "Mamma, I'm afraid of the big white beast." I would have you know that now he seems no longer to dread the big white beast that I am. Perhaps he has decided that my mouth is too small to swallow little black boys whole.

* * *

KASEYE, AFRICA — GOODBYE KARONGA**SR. MARIE BERTHE, M.I.C.,** (Berthe Alice Champagne, Montreal, P. Q.)

A few weeks ago I received an unexpected assignment to Kaseye. Sister St. Bonaventure (1) who will take my place at the Karonga dispensary will no doubt like it as much as I, did and do all in her power to alleviate the aches

1. Hedwidge Lapierre, St. Marie de Beauce, P. Q.



Brother Jean Marie of the White Fathers with hunting trophies.

and pains of the numerous clients who call daily. From the civil point of view, Karonga is quite important as towns here go, for it can boast of having a *District Commissioner* with his assistant beside a hospital with a resident practitioner who may be either an Englishman or a Moslem. Nearly all the officials are European and the Protestants are as a rule very obliging. The population in this district is continually on the increase. At present there are over two hundred families living on the central Mission's premises. These will move as soon as new homes are made available.

Enough said about my beloved Karonga. Now, let me take you around my new home in Kaseye. The climate here is pleasant, even bracing, at least in my case; the scenery is wonderful. I never tire admiring the beautiful softly curved mountains which surround us on all sides and the serene, exquisite landscape untouched by any modern horrors. The only noises that disturb the silence of the night are the dismal howls of prowling hyenas. Our little convent building is nearly completed. After school hours, Sr. St. Bernadette aided by her husky pupils from Standard Four, works the garden plot she has laid out in front of the house. Soon, with the impending rainy season, her neatly raked alleys will burst in full bloom. Something tells me that Kaseye will in time become the most interesting of all our African Missions — this with apologies to those who choose to think otherwise. Meanwhile, I am dreaming dreams such as all missionaries dream.

On the neighboring mountainside how happy we little Canadians were to find growing the familiar fir of our own native land. The mountains that crown Kaseye with greenery and flowers such as the laurel and the flamboyant, tower about eight thousand feet. On their verdant slopes one may also find graceful acacias and wild peach trees. As mountain climbing is not my forte, I have not yet had a taste of the latter.

My new dispensary, about as large as a thimble, is very neat and attractive with its red-tiled roof. Already, the sick and the infirm have learned the way that leads to the Catholic Mission where they firmly believe all their ills will be cured. In their opinion I am a No. 1 doctor whose injections are expected to bring even the dead back to life. I often think it is just too bad the Pentecostal miracle of tongues cannot be renewed in favor of the poor missionaries who have to learn new dialects at every post they happen to be assigned to. At Kaseye my biggest headache is trying to cope with the dialect problem. My patients speak citumbuka, cinthali, cinkandi, cilaabia, just those four if you please . . . I sometimes feel like the overseers must have felt when the language problem arose during Babel's mammoth enterprise. There is nonetheless a special Providence for missionaries, as one often hears it said, for my clients always leave perfectly satisfied.

Let us thank God that He makes us live among the present problems. It is no longer permitted to anyone to be mediocre.

Pope Pius XI

HELMASE

SR. MARIE LUCILE(1), M.I.C.

Children can sometimes be unwittingly cruel. At the Immaculate Conception School of Camp Perrin the pupils absolutely refused to make friends with Helmase one of their classmates. The reason — an absurd color prejudice. Unfortunately for her, nature had endowed this little Haitian girl with a flaming coronet of red hair.

For weeks she scurried about like a nervous little mouse; the joy of living which up to this time had been bursting from her every pore seemed to die out. She hid herself in an out-of-the-way corner and cried as if her heart would break. One day, however, she acquired a friend, the merriest and happiest creature that ever lived. Gradually Jeanne, with a perpetual smile on her round healthy face and laughter dancing in her eyes, captured the wounded heart of the red-haired child. From this time onward, Helmase became a changed girl.

It was at recess that the metamorphosis was most apparent. The formerly ostracized Helmase now imposed herself on all the others even on declared enemies of red hair. In the classroom, the result was disastrous. Full of pranks and mischief she scorned all thought of any serious study. Furthermore, we never learned why, she unexpectedly stopped praying, and while the others knelt down to say the beads she would toy with her knitting, a pencil, or anything that fell under her hands. After fruitless efforts to amend her, the School Directress finally decided to send her home. Before resorting to this extreme measure, she made one last attempt. "Helmase" she said presenting her with a miraculous medal, "hang this about your neck and ask Maman la Vierge to help you."

Real improvement was noted until the day the miraculous medal disappeared; with it vanished every good disposition. Quite satisfied with herself, Helmase had given it away to one of her classmates who coveted it.

The precious talisman was replaced and the following advice given, "Never part with your medal. You can do nothing without the help of Maman la Vierge."

She is no angel yet, but there is in her make-up budding wisdom and piety. Results so far give us reason to hope that this vivacious, resolute nature will greatly improve under the motherly guidance of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, patroness of Haiti.

1. Léa Lecuyer, Montreal, P. Q.

Red Island Doings

SR. ST. ADELAIDE(1), M.I.C.

The reason why Madagascar should have been nicknamed *Red Island* becomes evident once you set foot on this island. The earth is of a dull reddish color, the houses are built mostly of red clay, and red also is the dust that clings to your garments as soon as you stroll about the quaint, crooked streets.

At Morondava, however, we see more white than red. The soil here is mostly composed of white sand which may give the place a neater appearance but is not conducive to fertility. Still, quite a variety of fruit-bearing trees may be found; bananas, pawpaws, coconuts, mangoes, as well as flowering trees such as bougainvillea, flamboyant, pink laurel, and jasmine.

The accelerated tempo of encroaching European civilization in our primitive sector sometimes brings about ludicrous contrasts. In church you may notice a Malagasy gentleman elegantly draped in a bed sheet while his compatriots kneeling on either side of him are dressed, one in impeccable tropical whites, the other in a threadbare winter overcoat.

Whenever there is mention of our little town, the good people solemnly insist on affixing *ville* to Morondava. Compared to the primitive bush villages consisting of groups of scattered huts, even such a sparsely populated center

Using the OLD TIN BUCKET, Madagascar.

Sr. Jean de l'Immaculee (Annette Bonin, St. Hyacinthe)



1. Adelaide Tremblay,
St. Cyprien de Temiscouata, P.Q.

as Morondava-ville organized on the European municipality plan with French officials in charge, may of course be decorated with the pompous title of city.

The Malagasies show themselves sympathetic towards Catholicism although progress is slow owing to the perplexity arising from a variety of Christian sects. To any pagan, the spectacle of Christian preachers attributing contrary doctrines to the same Master must indeed prove confusing. The devotees of Allah also have quite a number of disciples. Their mosque rises right across the road from the Catholic Mission Center. The majority of the inhabitants of Madagascar still remain pagans.

Gay, carefree, fond of song and music, our good people might well adopt as national emblem, the proverbial cicada. Except during the rice planting season which requires arduous labors, they take life as it comes. When clouds of grasshoppers threaten to destroy the harvest, they take it out on their enemies by catching them in nets and landing them in their frying pans. They thus provide relishes à la Malagasy. In my opinion this is one of the world's ideal spots to learn the practical philosophy of life — never trouble trouble until trouble troubles you.

Hairdressing, Morondava style, by our boarders. Madagascar.



The Heart of Our Sister

All the Christian world has admired the remarkable courage displayed by the Catholic Students of Aurora University, Shanghai, China, in their struggle against Red propaganda.

One of the girl students was hustled off to jail and kept there for fifteen months. Then, one fateful day she was liberated. She returned to the University, publicly abjured her former beliefs, denounced her old friends, and finally declared in vehement terms her adherence to the Reformed Church. Her defection was a terrible blow for the Catholic students. Many were those who wept and prayed in silence for their erring sister.

At the time of her arrest, her comrades had shared among themselves the beads of her rosary. They now gathered the scattered grains, strung them up again, and found a way to send it back to the straying sheep. This was rather a pointed appeal inspired by brotherly love than a gesture of reprobation.

Later, at a Catholic meeting, when someone expressed the fear that the students might be shocked by such a painful trial, one of them rose and resolutely declared, "They (the Reds) have robbed the heart of our sister and we suffer deeply, but we are not depressed. In our moments of prayerful recollection before our dear Lord, we have glimpsed our own weakness. Our sister resisted for over a year in complete isolation; now she has fallen. In this tremendous struggle against the powers of darkness, we are all solidary; if one should fail, this is due to lack of co-operation. We have not prayed enough, we have not been generous enough."

The fervent plea of the students of the Aurora has been heard. Two months ago their misguided companion made a public recantation in one of the churches of Shanghai.

"God has given back to us the heart of our sister!" exulted all her former classmates.

Mass is celebrated once a week in the chapel of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for the intentions of Subscribers to THE PRECURSOR and all living Benefactors.

Pope Pius XII dedicated the Republic of Paraguay to Our Lady of the Assumption. He was but keeping the ancient tradition in her honor since the early sixteenth century when her first settlement was called, "Asuncion".

W. H. Doucette, C. SS. R.



Our Lady Goes Visiting

SR. ST. COLETTE(1), M.I.C.

In the first days of October, the federates of our *Juventud Cubana Catolica* resolved to have their national Madona make the *Visita Domiciliaria* in the two hundred families of Mercedes. Accordingly, on the feast of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, patroness of their section, a statue of Our Lady of Caridad was solemnly blessed by Rev. Henry Landry, p.m.e., then escorted in triumph to the home of the X. family who had asked as a favor to be the very first hosts to their celestial guest of honor.

Groups of people who had gathered outside the house to watch the proceedings joined with the family members in the recitation of the Rosary and the singing of hymns. During the first week this popular homage was daily renewed. Then on subsequent Fridays each family in turn benefited by Our Lady's visit thanks to the zeal of the federates who bore the Pilgrim Virgin about town in a portable shrine.

These house-to-house visitations have taken on the splendid character of a loving crusade to win back straying souls to God. One day, our youthful apostles learned about the serious illness of an elderly lady long estranged from all religious practices. They obtained permission to take the blessed statue to her house. No sooner had Mary entered than she introduced the priest into this home whence he had been for so long banished. Her merciful tenderness melted the icy barriers that had kept this soul from plunging into the ocean of love. A few days later, she peacefully responded to the eternal summons.

Only one family obstinately refused to tender hospitality to the Queen of Caridad. Was it mere coincidence or a heavenly warning? The only child of this couple developed a strange complaint which kept her from swallowing even a morsel of food. Filled with remorse the distracted mother begged the federates to bring Our Lady to her home. When the blessed image entered, she humbly threw herself on her knees imploring forgiveness and offering reparation. A few hours later the stricken child was able to swallow a small quantity of liquid; her condition gradually improved until she was pronounced perfectly cured. To the grateful mother who now expressed the wish to keep the statue she had at first refused to accept, the federates suggested that she secure another, for Our Blessed Mother had not yet terminated her triumphal tour of the pueblo.

1. Lucienne Constantin, Montreal, P. Q.

Only son of a wealthy family, Orestes requested all the servants of the old homestead to kneel with him and recite the Rosary as a welcome homage to the *Caridad*. His mother who had just suffered an attack of paralysis, made her peace with God, received the Last Sacraments and recited her act of resignation while yet fully conscious to the heartfelt consolation of her son who had recited many a rosary for this intention.

Nuestra Senora has magnificently rewarded her devoted knights of the Juvendud for their zeal in escorting her image through the streets of their little town. The *Caridad* has helped them win more than one sinner to her divine Son and these spiritual conquests have afforded them treasures of supernatural happiness. Thanks to its youthful apostles Cuba is adding its own golden chapter to the Glories of Mary.

Baptism For Jesus and Odile

SR. LEO JOSEPH⁽¹⁾, M.I.C.

MANGUITO, CUBA

Saturday, October 25, was a red-letter day for the missionaries in Manguito, for on that date a ten-day-old infant received the sacrament of regeneration. You will perhaps wonder why I mention this event as unusual. The fact is that in Cuba the majority of Catholics very seldom have their offspring baptized as babies.

One of the pretexts brought forward to postpone baptism is the absence of relatives, or friends, or acquaintances who are expected to stand as godparents. When the baby already mentioned put in an appearance on October 15, we Sisters decided that he must be the one to set the record for early baptisms in Manguito. A few days later, we called at the home of his parents to congratulate them and to invite them to have their treasure made a child of God, within the least possible delay. So happy and elated felt we over the parents' ready acquiescence that we immediately went on to plead the cause of two-year-old Odile, their wee daughter, who had not yet been freed from the bondage of original sin. Mamma objected that she must wait for the arrival of an older sister working in the United States, who had requested to be chosen as godmother. This was a very flimsy excuse for we knew for certain that Odile's big sister had more than once urged her parents not to wait for her but to have someone stand as proxy. We reminded the mother about this and she reluctantly gave in.

When the time came for the ceremony, however, Mamma once again changed her mind and refused to countenance Odile's baptism. The baby alone was baptized and named Jesus, a name often given to boys around here. What happened in the heart of the mother while her little son's soul was clothed in the shining garments of innocence, we cannot tell but no sooner was her last-born brought home than she requested that Odile also be immediately baptized.

Somewhere, in Canada, a fervent soul conscious of its duty as member of the Mystical Body, must have offered a special sacrifice or an unusually ardent plea for some member in need of a special grace.

1. Simone Sabourin, St. Isidore de Prescott, Ont.

Wedding Bells in Guareiras

SR. LEO JOSEPH(1), M.I.C.

Early this morning we left for Guareiras, a mission outpost situated at about four miles from Manguito as the crow flies. Until a few years ago in this pueblo of two hundred families nothing important ever seemed to happen; then Rev. J. P. Guillet, p.m.e., arrived on the scene and things began to hum. Beside serving as curate in Colon, this zealous missionary undertook to pay monthly or even weekly visits to Guareiras. The dilapidated little chapel underwent a rejuvenating treatment; parish life was reorganized; a spacious hall was built to be used for meetings and more especially as a badly needed parochial school. At present thirty youngsters are enrolled.

Alicia, one of my former English pupils who was getting married asked as a special favor that the Madres attend the ceremony to be celebrated at her native pueblo of Guareiras. She wanted them to sing a few appropriate hymns. Church weddings in Cuba are such rare events that we missionaries do all in our power to encourage them. How happy we felt to see this couple assisting at Mass and receiving holy Communion on their bridal day. Both Alicia and her husband who is a native of Camaguey Province, are fervent Catholic Actionists. We fondly hope that many other Cuban youths will follow their splendid example.

Under its decoration of flowers and greenery, the rustic little chapel was a comforting sight. People crowded inside from all over the scattered parish, overjoyed to be present at a genuine Catholic marriage. Silence reigned while the matrimonial contract was drawn up as is the custom here at the foot of the altar. The spectators craned their necks to get a good view of Alicia and her husband kneeling to receive the nuptial blessing.

Under pretext of economy and because of certain prejudices difficult to eradicate, many among our Cuban Catholics contract only civil marriages. Expensive toilettes and extravagant banquets being regarded as *musts* on the occasion of certain weddings this has been the cause that many destitute couples unwilling to lose social prestige by publicly flaunting their poverty, choose to live together without the benefit of the Sacrament. Gradually, this way of thinking is being altered and our good people have come to understand that costly apparel and elaborate ceremonies are not requested by the Church as they have been led to believe. The Reverend Fathers of the Pont Viau Foreign Missions greatly encourage this movement by offering to marry their parishioners privately to curtail expenses. Many couples have thus tied the knot in our convent chapel. Filled with tender solicitude Holy Mother Church easily grants such dispensations as may favor the welfare of her children. Join your prayers with ours that our Cuban Catholics may come to understand the importance of founding truly Christian homes upon which God's blessing may rest with complacency.

1. Simone Sabourin, St. Isidore de Prescott, Ont.



Family Hut



Farewell, family hut where I
Spent my carefree childhood days.
As I part from you, I sigh . . .
You shall be dear to me, always,
Humble home of childhood days,
Thatch roofed hut of mine.

Farewell, comely native hills!
Playful does and antelopes
Sport beside your laughing rills
And gambol down your sunny slopes.
Farewell, green-garmented hills,
Haunts of childhood days.

Fare
From
For t
Has
Thou
Griev

Farewell, o my l
Richest dowry w
For at Mary's to
I shall be made b
Dance with m
Loved ones all,

ut

Farewell !

Farewell, fields of tasselled corn,
Bamboo groves so cool and fair.
Tribal land where I was born
No other with you can compare.
Farewell, bamboo groves so fair,
Tribal land, farewell!

Farewell father, mother dear,
From you both now I must part
For the Lord whom I revere
Has cast His spell over my heart.
Though from you both I must part,
Grieve not, honored ones.

my loved ones all!
My will I bring,
My tender call
Made bride of the King.
Myrriment and sing,
All, rejoice!





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The Treasures of San Jose College

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

Beyond any doubt the treasures of San Jose College are my pupils — three baker's dozens of preparatory and first grade tots. Watch them as they form ranks before the *portal* as soon as the school bell rings. In their *carmelita* frocks they are far from impressing anyone as miniature Carmelite monks and nuns ripe for canonization halos. I dare you to resist the spell of their charm as they call out a merry *Buenos dias* wreathed in their most bewitching smile.

Pitter-patter, tap, tap... pitter-patter... The symphony of their tiny feet has a cadence all its own as they march to their classroom. Time for me to recite the customary invocations to the Holy Spirit. Glancing at their attractive faces I find myself smiling at the evident effort they are putting in to keep their sparkling eyes tightly closed for at least the fraction of a second. I am more touched than amused as I glimpse the majesty of baptismal innocence shining forth from their features. They are the hope of the future. God grant that they may ever keep intact their simplicity and candid fervor which render them so dear to the Heart of the divine Lover of children.

For every one of my little charges the catechism lesson seems to be a treat. They listen with rapt attention while I tell them the Bible stories in more or less elegant Spanish. You should hear the original version they give of facts in the old and New Testament when time comes to make reviews. If I may boast of having budding theologians in my class, I must also admit to the presence of a few rash heresiarchs. Imagine the sensation created by Muria

1. Veronique Bernatchez, Pont Rouge, P. Q.

the other day when she announced the existence of five Gods. There might be more she could not tell for sure.

Cuban children are exceptionally eager students. They exclaim, "Que rico! (Splendid!)" at every subject on the curriculum; languages, drawing, history, grammar, physical culture, nature study. Although philosophy is not yet on the program for my youngsters they nonetheless have their own inescapable logic. Even four-year-old Lylian sometimes hands me out a few home truths. During a session at paper cutting, she sidled up to my desk and ordered, "Make me another model. I don't like this one."

As I was then busy with a class of older children I countered, "Use the one I prepared for you." She gravely and reproachfully looked me up and down, then, "Que fresca eres! (you are a fresh one)" she remarked as she reluctantly went back to her desk.

Two-year-old Yvon and five-year-old Otto his big brother.



One day during a doctrine lesson, I explained about miracles. Francisco was deeply impressed. In the afternoon of the same day I promised, to give a reward to those pupils who would keep perfect silence during an hour of intensive study. In keeping with my promise, I later distributed pictures among which were a few with tiny relics of a holy Foundress sent me from Canada by one of my own sisters who is also a religious. One of these went to Francisco. After a while he rose and frantically signalled for permission to speak. "Madre, ya se acabo. (Mother, all better)."

"What is all better?" I queried, nonplussed.

"My *catarro*. You see, Madre, I had a very bad cold, so I ate a tiny corner off my holy card and now my cold is all better. Milagro! Milagro! (miracle)." To me the miracle was that I was able to keep a straight face.

Yvan's faith, is of the same unswerving type. Before the singing lesson I urged the pupils to recite the customary invocation with angelic fervor. Looking over the group I espied Francisco so lately gratified with a *milagro* slouching over his chair, his hair tousled, his tie awry, and his shirt tails flying. "Francisco, sit straight and fix your clothes . . . You certainly don't look like an angel," I admonished. Yvan who had kept his eyes religiously cast down now opened them wide while he gravely remarked, "Angels never, never leave their shirt tails flying."

During recess, I am always surprised to see the children run and jump and skip in spite of the torrid heat. It is pleasant to watch them generously sharing the collation they are allowed to take at this hour. Mario treats his classmates to caramels which he brought from his father's restaurant. The whole bag is soon empty much to his delight. Arturo, Antonio, Teresa, Ada, Alicia are as liberal with the delicious *galletas* provided by their loving mammas.

Yes, no more precious treasures has San Jose Collegio than my thirty-nine Juniors. When they go by, everyone stops to admire them and to wish them every joy that life can offer. They are indeed the little princes of the kingdom.



THE LAMP OF OUR LADY

In that same Portugal where Our Blessed Lady appeared in our own day, the peasants have for centuries called the sun "the Lamp of Our Lord" and the moon "the Lamp of Our Lady." Truly, Mary is a glowing lamp on our pilgrimage here below to illumine our way amidst the shadows of sorrow and suffering. Christians in their darkest hours have always loved to turn to their Blessed Mother for light. She seems so close to us, so completely one of us. Jesus wanted it to be so. He gave his children the best of Mothers. Just before He departed from this world, He said to his Apostles: "I will not leave you orphans." So He left them a Mother, His own Mother. And the day He ascended into heaven she was all they had left . . . of Him.

J. M. Somerville, S.J.

Opening of the Zafra

SR. ST. MAXIME(1), M.I.C.

The *zafra*, sugar cane harvest, begins in January and goes on until May. Three shifts of laborers work night and day at the *centrales* where tons of freshly cut cane are hauled. Six times a day, the sirens screech out their signals. Some of these calls warn the workers that shifts will change in half an hour; others sound the entrance of the new shifts. To these strident calls we Sisters hardly ever get accustomed; personally they afford me a practical point of meditation on what the trumpets of the Last Judgment will be like.

The Manguito Municipality owns three of these *centrales* at a few miles' distance one from the other, Mercedes, Araujo, Porfuerza; the latter is the most important for it keeps busy all the year round. Rhum, a by-product of the sugar cane, is distilled here in great quantities. *Porfuerza Centrale*, the property of the Arechabella Company whose principal associates live in Cardenas, owns the monopoly of the sugar cane industry in this region with thousands of employees at its service. This Cuban family enjoys a well deserved reputation of liberality and benevolence.

According to an ancient local tradition the *zafra* activities are always preceded by a Mass offered on the *Centrale* premises, the first day of the harvest. This year, we and our Mercedes Sisters were invited by the Administrator to sing appropriate hymns at this Mass. We were driven to the *centrale* in one of the Company's cars. A few minutes after our arrival, a special train brought from Cardenas, Mrs. Arechabala, the Administrator's wife, and the Company's top officials. Rev. P. E. Massuet, pastor of Calimete, immediately proceeded to bless the workers and the powerful machinery soon to be set in motion; then Rev. J. L. Michaud, p.m.e., offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Behind the altar, a backdrop of stacked up sugar canes symbolized the rich harvests which give prosperity to the island. The ground had been strewn with *bagasse* residue of the crushed cane to give a more realistic aspect to the ceremony.

1. Jeanne Pelletier, L'Islet, P. Q.



The Zafra season in Cuba.

In a short inspiring sermon, Rev. G. Pageau, p.m.e., invited the Cubans to thank divine Providence for the benefits showered upon their beautiful and fertile country. Because of its productive soil, rich in sugar and tobacco plantations, Cuba has often been called America's *Sugar Bowl* and the *World's Cigar Box*. The cane in particular grows so easily that a Cuban proverb asserts, "Set a sugar cane shoot in your tile floor and it will grow."

The *zafra* inauguration ceremony was followed by a *popular dinner* offered by the Arechabala Company and spread out on the neighboring seashore. The guests numbered between eight to nine hundred. For this gigantic meal, twelve pigs and thirteen sheep were killed; three huge sacks of rice and many other items filled out the menu.

After exchanging a few pleasant greetings with the workers we took the homeward route. This ceremony has left a deep impression upon us. If all employers put Christian ideals into practice and behaved like fathers towards their employees there would be no worker's problems. God bless Arechabala Company and its Cuban laborers!

Set Eggs

SR. ST. EDMUND(1), M.I.C.

The mere title of this article will doubtless nauseate more than one of our compatriots. How can it be held that set eggs of all things are dainty morsels? And yet, in these Islands, they are considered a rare treat, a dish worthy to be served at the table of a king. To the Filipinos, *balut*, (the Tagalog for set eggs) and *delicious* are perfect synonyms. If they catch you shrugging your shoulders at this assertion, they will shake their heads and pity your lack of discrimination. Too bad entirely for you! You really cannot appreciate a good thing when it is offered you.

In case you intend spending your next holiday in the Philippines, allow me to give you a few hints that may help you to a better appreciation of this national *bonne bouche*.

The *balut* industry is a very important one over here and is carried on a huge scale. To begin with, the eggs are set in large incubators or outside in the strong sunshine with a thick layer of *palay* (unhulled rice) as a covering. Why the rice, you ask. It seems that it is very useful for keeping the eggs at an even temperature night and day. The incubation is often allowed to progress until two or three days before the hatching, then the eggs are taken from the incubator and cooked in boiling water. After this operation, the baluts (pronounce baloots) are ready for consumption; just break the shell and bite into one as you would into a luscious peach.

Thousands of *baluts* are daily shipped from large factories to every point of the archipelago. From the provinces baloots are also brought into urban centers and peddled about the streets. The requests for *balut* are always in excess of local production.

1. Irma de la Durantaye, Cap St. Ignace, P. Q.



Filipinos are proud of this original food and their appreciation is logical. Physicians agree that *balut* is a highly nutritive food rich in vitamins and minerals, more especially in calcium. They often recommend it to convalescents as a tonic. Everybody in the Philippines is fond of this morsel and youngsters even seem to prefer it to ice cream or chocolate cake! Picnickers usually take a plentiful provision along. Even had they neglected to give them a place in their hampers, they could buy some anywhere along the way. Tempting stands are set up by the roadside or under the shade of a tree.

Some persons of distinction who wished to present us with a pledge of their esteem and gratitude, sent us a lovely beribboned box holding two dozens of *baluts*. In their opinion this was the most suitable gift they could offer.

Balut lovers willingly discuss its merits and qualities. A few admit that a certain practice is necessary in order to do full justice to this exotic dish. What everybody agrees upon is that nothing can compare with its perfectly delicious flavor.

DAVAO, P. I.

In our Mail Bag

I am very happy in the land of my mission aspirations. The Filipinos literally thirst after truth. Every day, numerous visitors call at the convent clamoring for religious instruction. School children who want to prepare for their First Communion; young teachers who wish to take doctrine lessons so as to be able to teach their own pupils; young men who wish to be told the requirements for making their second or perhaps their first communion...

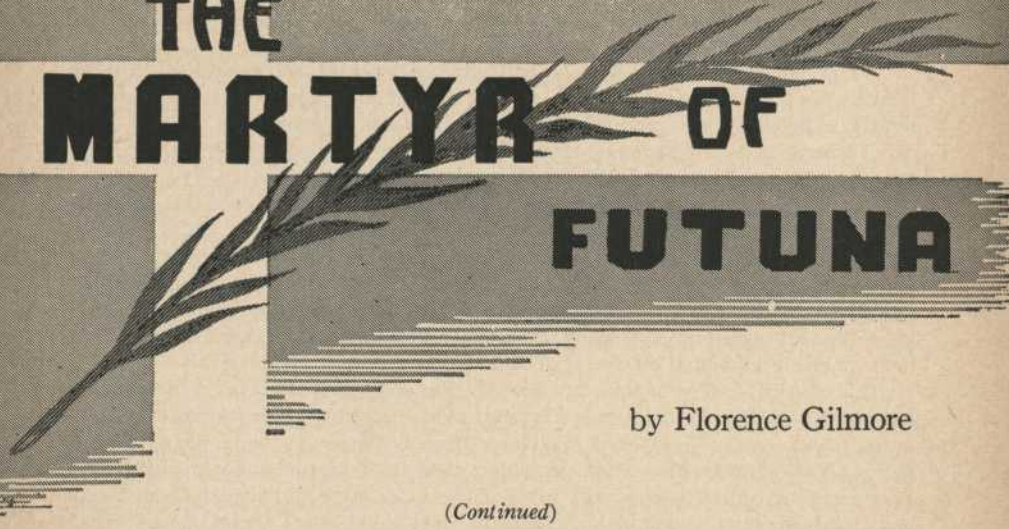
Sr. Joseph Arthur⁽¹⁾ goes out on home visitations to the sick and the destitute. Already a good number of invalid or illicit marriages have been rectified. A couple with a lovely family of ten children lately had their marriage blessed by the Padre. Religious ignorance brought on by the penury of priests in these islands explain this deplorable religious situation of a population where the great majority are Catholics. There is surely a tremendous task confronting us here in Davao. Home visitations are among the best means of reaching the families; as a rule, the people around here think it a great honor to have the Sisters call on them. This morning, Sister Joseph Arthur led to the pastor of our mission Church for their first confession a boy and a girl whom she had carefully prepared and also an eighty-four-year-old patriarch whose last acquaintance with the confessional went back to 1930. What consoling conquests! The sacrifices entailed in the missionary vocation are soon forgotten in the joy of leading straying sheep home to the Fold.

S. St. Albine⁽²⁾, M.I.C.

1. Laura Therien, St. Leonard d'Aston, P. Q.

2. Therese Lemay, St. Hyacinthe, P. Q.

THE MARTYR OF FUTUNA



by Florence Gilmore

(Continued)

CHAPTER XIII

Persecution

Not long after peace was concluded between the two parts of the island, Niuliki left Poi to make his headquarters at Tamana. His action, criticized by some of the chiefs, was explained in several ways. Many said that he wished to please the conquered faction by living near them; others thought he was no longer willing to listen to the instructions of the missionary and longed to get away from him. After the victory, which he attributed to his god, Fakavelikele, he took advantage of every occasion to show his attachment to the old superstitious practices of the island. For a time, however, he did not change his manner towards Father Chanel and appeared to esteem him as highly as before.

But on the sixteenth of October, Niuliki passed twice through Poi, and contrary to his custom, did not go to the cabin of the missionaries. Father Chanel wished to know the meaning of a slight which was remarked by all and might have grave consequences, so he sent Brother Mary Nizier and Thomas Boog to Tamana on the pretext of buying oil, but in reality to sound the king. "His Majesty received them kindly, though we feared he had turned against us for making war on the gods of Futuna."⁽¹⁾ To persuade Niuliki to declare himself in favor of Christianity, seemed to be essential to the success of the mission. Father Chanel had long thought this, but to win the royal approval, or even toleration, became increasingly difficult. Victory had inflated the

1. Journal, October 17, 1839.

king's pride; and learning that King Lavelua of Wallis had refused to be converted, he thought that he would belittle himself if he acted otherwise.

The people did not know that his attitude had changed, and multiplied proofs of their respect for the new religion. Maligi, the prime minister, publicly expressed himself as favorable to it; and falling ill about this time, he was deeply touched by the care Father Chanel lavished upon him. He went so far as to say that if the king would permit it, the whole island would soon be converted.

In a letter to Bishop Devie Father Chanel said, "An old chief, who was hesitating between Christianity and the old religion of Futuna, made a trip to Wallis. He has returned to tell tales harmful to our cause. Forced to admit that Wallis will soon be Christian, he takes a satanic delight in describing the cruel treatment King Lavelua is inflicting on Father Bataillon's catechumens. He has promised to do all in his power to prevent Futuna from following the example of Wallis and is keeping his word. But, if the moment appointed by God is at hand, what can he accomplish?"

This old chief had great influence over Niuliki, and there can be no doubt it was at his suggestion that the king ceased to send food regularly to the missionaries. "To keep up appearances," Brother Mary Nizier related, "he occasionally told some member of his family to give us a few yams, but more than once we suffered with hunger. Learning that certain young men, taking pity on us, were bringing us food, he forbade them to do so, giving as his reason that because we were whites, it was he who should provide for us. Father Chanel foresaw the result of the king's altered attitude and wisely decided that we should work for our own sustenance."

On the twenty-first of November some natives helped them to make a fence and to plough a little field. The toil thus begun was continued to the end. Regarding their new work Brother Mary Nizier wrote, "How many obstacles had to be overcome before we could eat of the fruit cultivated with so much difficulty! We were not strong enough for hard work, and our weakness, aggravated by lack of nourishment, increased from day to day. If you remember the heat of a tropical sun such as we have in Futuna, you will have some idea of our trials. Weak as he was, Father Chanel bore our wearisome toil more courageously than I. He often worked in the field, while I busied myself about lighter tasks within the house.

"I was always astonished and edified to see him hungry, worn with fatigue, and scorched by the heat of the sun, but as joyous as if he had had all that heart could desire; and this, not once, but always. Neither the difficulties I have mentioned, nor those that came later, ever shook his courage, even for a moment. In our hours of suffering I often heard him say, 'The time for mercy has not yet come.' To hasten it he made many novenas. In his humility he regarded himself as an obstacle in the way of God's grace; I knew this, for one day he said to me, when we were about to begin a novena, 'Make it that God may take away whoever interferes with the conversion of the island. If it is I, well —' He did not finish the sentence, but I understood."

There was a saying of Father Colin's which Father Chanel never forgot in times of trial. When difficulties beset the newly founded Society of Mary, its holy founder would exclaim, "The Society is taking a step forward!" Confronted with the ever growing opposition to his mission and the troubles which followed in its train, Father Chanel often said to Brother Mary Nizier, "Religion is taking a step forward in Futuna."

One point he had gained: the natives now told him whenever any one fell ill; and undaunted by rebuffs, he visited the sick often, by his kindness nearly always winning, at last, the good will of the family and sometimes the conversion of the patient.

One of the king's little sons, who had been ill for several days, was carried to a house believed to be favored by various gods, but instead of improving, he grew worse. Father Chanel visited him many times and at last obtained permission to baptize him. He thought it would be well to administer the Sacrament solemnly to impress Niuliki and his relatives. In his journal he wrote, "I started for Tamana about noon, with everything I needed for the baptism of the king's son. I had begged the mother's consent before I asked Niuliki's. He gave his readily. I put on my surplice and stole, and after saying a little prayer on my knees I began the ceremonies. Each thing I used excited their curiosity. I gave the name Mary Theodore to the baby. The king and all who were present seemed to be pleased with the few words I said before I came away."

Nevertheless Niuliki abandoned none of his superstitious practices. The next day he carried an offering to some god, hoping to obtain the cure of his son; and when the child died, he tore his face until it was covered with blood and repeated this barbarous rite for several days. In his inconsistency, he permitted Father Chanel to baptize his grandson, and when the baby died was willing that he should have Christian burial. "The ceremony silenced the moans and cries of the natives and dried their tears. Many of them said to us afterwards that it was beautiful, and they wished to be buried in the same way."⁽¹⁾ But in spite of his zeal, untiring labor, and ingenuity in devising ways of presenting our holy Faith to the reluctant, Father Chanel succeeded in touching neither the chiefs nor the mass of the people, who continued to be strongly attached to their superstitions.

A drought was endangering the crops of the island, and the king and his advisers, in a council held at Tamana, decided to build a house in Fakavelikele's honor, that rain might come and the harvest be bountiful. "The best workmen from each village assembled in Poi. They were astonished that I did not offer to lend my tools and mingle freely with them to examine their work. I told them that they were not working for the true God, and I was unwilling to have my tools work for the devil."⁽²⁾

But Fakavelikele sent no rain. On the nineteenth of December Father Chanel passed through Tamana and preached to the people. The king turned away and would not listen. "Those who remained asked me to pray to my God for rain, adding that theirs had deceived them. They said that if it rained they would carry me in triumph on their shoulders. I told them not to trifle with the one true God, but to turn to Him in the simplicity of their hearts."⁽³⁾

By this time Father Chanel knew the Futunian language perfectly, and during the sixteen months that remained to him, he not only prayed for the conversion of his dear islanders, but preached to them with unwearied zeal. The witnesses, examined before his beatification, testified that "he gave himself with great ardor to the preaching of the Gospel, going from village to village, that all might hear the word of God." He

1. Journal, December 9, 1839.

2. Journal, December 2, 1839.

3. Journal, December 19, 1839.

was opposed at every step. Not slow to take advantage of Niuliki's ever increasing dislike, chiefs and people began a persecution which ended only with his martyrdom. The natives taunted and insulted him, flaunted their superstitious practices before his eyes, threatened him, and would have starved him if they could. Day after day they annoyed him in a thousand petty ways; for instance, they would go to his house at any hour of the day and make themselves as disagreeable as possible. The king being told of their conduct, gave Father Chanel permission to send away whoever disturbed him, but his friendship was no longer to be counted upon. Both missionaries knew this: and so did the natives.

Long, fatiguing walks over the steep mountains and through the valleys, unremitting and unaccustomed toil, and insufficient food were ruining Father Chanel's frail health. Early in March he was unable even to say Mass, but as soon as a little rest had helped him, he resumed his visits to the various villages, everywhere preaching God's word in public and in private. His great desire was to convert the king, and he profited by every opportunity to instruct him. On March seventeenth Niuliki took some yams to Father Chanel, and entering his house remained long enough to sharpen a tool which he carried with him. Taking advantage of a moment when they were alone, the Father spoke to him of the new religion. Niuliki contented himself with saying that it would be well if those who wished to become Christians would do so, which Father Chanel knew he did not mean. Again and again in his journal he speaks of similar efforts to interest and to influence His Majesty.

In spite of the ill treatment which had become the missionary's portion, several young men attached themselves to him more and more closely. To Father Convers he was able to write, "I have a few catechumens; some of them are not openly taking instructions, but all are standing firm against the opposition of their own families." One of them went to live with Father Chanel at this time, when all the world was turning against him.

Such was the state of things when a great and unexpected joy came into the lives of the lonely Marists. On May sixteenth Father Chevron and Brother Attale landed in Futuna, sent by Bishop Pompallier to live alternately in Futuna and Wallis. They had already been in Wallis, where they had left Father Bataillon surrounded by eight hundred catechumens, and in the clutches of a persecution more violent than any that had preceded it, but which he felt would be the last. Father Chevron brought with him a letter from Bishop Pompallier addressed to Fathers Chanel and Bataillon and Brothers Mary Nizier and Joseph Xavier, expressing his regret at having been unable to visit them, as he had promised to do. His Lordship had not forgotten Niuliki and sent him messages which Father Chanel read to him. The king was greatly flattered and declared that his island would soon become Christian.

(To be continued)

Mass is celebrated every week in the chapel of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for the deceased subscribers to THE PRECURSOR and all deceased benefactors.



With Our Novices

A Red-letter Day

May 14, 1953, will go down in the annals of our novitiate as a day filled to the brim with choicest heavenly favors. While the exultant liturgy of the Church commemorated the Ascension of our divine Savior, we were privileged to hail within our walls His Eminence Paul-Emile Cardinal Leger.

Welcomed at the entrance by Reverend Mother General, our august Visitor proceeded at once to the novitiate chapel. The two little novices who knelt there in adoration will never forget the Cardinal's paternal gesture as he offered them both his ring to kiss. After a brief pause in the chapel, our eminent guest entered the assembly hall where the entire personnel had gathered to receive his blessing and benefit by his inspiring words. The following is a brief summary of his allocution. "My dear children if I were to ask you the point you find most difficult in the novitiate schedule, you would probably tell me that the thirty minutes assigned for meditation are among the most strenuous of the day. Who among you has not wrestled with this brief half-hour shifting position, heroically trying to keep from nodding, shooing away importunate mental mosquitoes, striving not to have any distractions which is the best means of inviting them. Taking up your meditation manual you faithfully read through the points assigned for the day, ponder over their significance, then dutifully make one, two, or even three resolutions relative to what you have read. As there are three hundred and sixty-five days in a year that makes over one thousand not mentioning those taken during the annual retreat, those suggested by Mother Mistress or your own fervor on certain auspicious occasions. That brings you to a total of thousands of resolutions which nearly all die before they have had time to bear any practical fruit. Why should novices thus take thousands of resolutions? They certainly cannot be charged with having thousands of defects even if we admit that they do have a few quite visible to the naked eye.

Spiritual life consists in trying to tackle one fault at a time, preferably the one that is at the root of all others. The Imitation assures us that if we

really corrected one bad habit a year we would soon be perfect. I would like today, to impress deeply upon your minds the importance of the rule of silence without which there cannot subsist any genuine religious life. I am not speaking merely of the exterior silence but of that interior quietude of the mind which allows God to make His blessed presence felt not in any emotional sense but in the unerring reality of Faith. Once He finds us in this disposition He takes possession of our hearts and becomes our all, our Master, the God whom we must love, whom we must lead others to know and to cherish.

All great vocations have been prepared in silence. The prophets of old asserted that men who wish to establish contact with the Eternal must seek the desert solitude. When our divine Lord walked our earthly ways He became a model of silence. For the greater part of His human life, He remained silent in the humble home of Nazareth. Silence is not mere natural taciturnity. It is an inclination of the soul which keeps it wide awake to the interior voice of God, which illumines the intelligence so that it may more readily grasp the teachings of Faith. In a word it is the aptitude of a pupil who listens attentively while in the classroom, looking forward with joyful eagerness to being introduced by his teacher into the realm of science."

His Eminence then touched upon the difficulties encountered in the spiritual life, upon certain practices of self-denial which at times seem to be contrary to common sense. "Try to think of spiritual life" he added, "as the will to serve God in all things. Living our day in Christ's spirit is true spirituality. Without feeling compelled to keep a spiritual inventory sheet endeavor so to live that at the end of each day you can sincerely say 'I have done today all that God wanted me to do.' Let this suffice. The task of becoming a saint is not one of days or weeks, but of months and years. You must be willing to begin over and over again every morning. One learns to sew by breaking a few needles, to make a dress by sewing on the sleeves inside out, once in a while, to paint by wearing out brushes.

The noviceship is an initiation. Even when it is over you will not yet have reached perfection. Spiritual life may be compared to the different seasons of the year. You are now in the spring. Time to sow, and weed, and bask in the sunshine...

Summer will come later on with its terrific heat waves its acute temptations. The only thing that will really matter then as now will be to accept all that the Lord sends moment by moment. Our bread, our daily food should be the Will of God."

The Will of God... this was the Cardinal's final watchword. Was it with a paternal desire to temper the austere lessons given in his allocution that he immediately decreed a wonderful holiday whose programme he himself deigned to outline?

On the point of leaving, our revered Pastor blessed us anew. This Thursday, day of grace which the Lord has made, will not soon be forgotten at the novitiate.

Wednesday June 17

This date has been set apart for the holiday granted by the Cardinal last month on the occasion of his first visit to our novitiate. According to his suggestion the regulation bell will be silent throughout this day.

All over the novitiate building and the garden re-echo the merry chatter and the joyful laughter of postulants and novices intent on enjoying the day to the hilt.

Some novices with a practical turn of mind busy themselves putting desk and toilet bureau in the pink of order while others avail themselves of this opportunity to read books they had laid aside for such an occasion. One Sister who teaches English every day, does the chores about the hencoop and cow shed for a change. Among the novices assigned to kitchen duty, one decides today to exchange a while her ovens for the piano and plays with dash Ravel's "Jeux d'eau." An apprentice from the sewing room unexpectedly discovers herself rare aptitudes for horsemanship as she triumphantly jogs over the grounds on Nelly's back. The gentle old mare will have cause to remember the Cardinal's holiday which meant added merriment for the novices and harder work than usual for herself.

The picnic fare laid out under the shade of our stately old elms and maples, is taken in recreation. This in itself is a rare treat, for our meals are usually taken in silence.

In this atmosphere of cheerful relaxation the hours tumbled along in sunny peacefulness. After supper the postulants played one last game of badminton while the novices gathered about Mother Mistress for one of those familiar chats which they enjoy so much.

In the lengthening evening shadows the convent bell silent all day once again rings out its summons to prayerful recollection. Blessed be God and our Immaculate Mother sing we at the end of another perfect day.

RESIGNATION

I CAN NOT clasp it to my breast,
The cross my Lord hath sent;
But I can bow to His behest
And strive to be content.
For did I shift the heavy load
Or cast the burden by,
How could I face the lonely road
The day I come to die?

Hope Willis

Watchmen of the Night

SR. ST. CHARLES GARNIER(1), M.I.C.

When night shadows blanket our sleepy little town cradled at the foot of softly undulating hills, out comes the night watchman with his gong. Along the deserted streets he goes, the *clop clop* of his getas and the *tan tan* of his gong the only noises that shatter the silence of the night. Once in a while his voice issues a singsong injunction to cover up every charcoal fire inside the low-roofed houses. As night progresses, he also beats out the hours on his gong. The good folk of Wakamatsu can sleep in peace — the night watchman is on duty; come rain, come storm, come raging winds he will never fail to make his rounds.

Each family in turn, appoints one of its members to beat the curfew gong. Nobody is allowed to shirk this civil duty and none ever seem to think this too burdensome a demand on their personal comfort.

Whenever I hear the muffled sound of the gong calling out during the night hours that all is well, I always think of God whose paternal solicitude watches not only over Nippon but over the whole wide world.

1. Graziella Langlois,
Quebec, P. Q.





KORIYAMA, JAPAN

SR. FRANCES OF CARMEL(1), M.I.C.

Originally a monastic custom introduced by Japanese Buddhist monks who had gone to China for study, *cha no yu* is now forgotten in the land of its origin. In Japan it has survived as the aesthetic pastime of an elite, a cult in which the beverage is more or less idealized. As such it in no way resembles our five o'clock tea which we have borrowed from the Britons by finally substituting our cup of coffee!

Tea cult was at first practiced by the famous Buddhist sect of *Zen*. In order to keep themselves awake during their lengthy nocturnal meditations, the monks drank tea which they prepared according to certain invariable rites. As it gained in popularity, the tea ceremony gradually lost its religious significance. Neither religion nor philosophy has much to do with the cult as it is today.

So far as written evidence is available, the earliest record of tea drinking in Japan takes us back to 729 A. D. in which year the Emperor Shomu invited one hundred monks to a *cha no yu* ceremony in his own palace. In the north-eastern corner of Kyoto secluded from the bustling city life, there is a famous villa where Yoshimasa, a *shogun* of the *Ashikaga* line, indulged in aesthetic pursuits. The historic tea-room built as specified by *Shuko*, Father of the tea ceremony, is still preserved in good condition in this villa. Principles of refined and chaste simplicity as taught by *Shuko* were further elaborated by *Jowo* (1503-1555), who pleaded for a loftier and more original taste. *Jowo's* mantle fell on *Rikyu*. The formula and etiquette instituted by the latter remain to this day the basic principles of *cha no yu* as taught by the various masters of the art.

The Japanese love of simplicity and plainness in which there is subtle beauty is discernible in the room set apart for ceremonial tea. Art may there be appreciated without distraction. The only furniture consists of silk cushions for each guest to sit on, a few braziers, and some ash trays. The unpainted and unvarnished woodwork of the room consists of the finest parts of cedar, maple, and other rare woods, whose grain is shown to the best possible

1. Madeleine Coursol, Montreal, P. Q.

avantage. In the alcove hangs only one scroll, in black and white. When the visitors are all seated, the host takes his position in front of the brazier. After lifting the kettle, he sees if the fire needs to be replenished and usually adds a few pieces of charcoal. Then he places three spoonfuls of powdered tea in a bowl, plunges the dipper deep into the kettle and draws it out overflowing with hot water. About one third of this he pours over the tea-powder and two-thirds he returns to the kettle. The mixture in the bowl is vigorously stirred with a whisk made of plain bamboo until it becomes frothy. When the tea is made, the host places it in front of the principal guest. The latter bows to his fellow-guests and delicately places the bowl on the palm of his left hand. Supporting one side of the bowl with his right he takes one sip complimenting his host on the excellent flavor. After taking two more sips the bowl is passed on to the second guest, thence to the third and so on until all the guests have tasted the beverage. This reminds one of the ancient English custom of handing round the loving cup. The chief guest called *shokyaku* must not omit to request the privilege of examining closely the tea bowl. It is usually scrutinized and turned upside down for closer inspection. On the part of guest, it would be a serious breach of etiquette to fail in appreciation of each and every utensil used for the ceremony. These are often precious century-old-family heirlooms. They furnish inexhaustible topics of conversation and absorb the participants in discussions on art and history, for *cha no yu* is related to nearly all branches of Japanese arts and crafts. It



is in this rare atmosphere of congeniality that the thick tea is served. When the bowl, caddy, and spoon have been returned to the host in prescribed fashion, the entertainment is considered over.

The host returns to the tea room and sits awhile in front of the kettle which is now his sole companion. Indulging in philosophic meditation, he listens to "the wind in the pines" as the music of the boiling water heard in this environment is poetically called.

WAKAMATSU, JAPAN

Contemplative sect in Japan

SR. OF THE HOLY NAME OF MARY(1), M.I.C.

The *Zen* or contemplative sect was introduced into the Sunrise Land some eight hundred years ago, by Eisai and Dogen, two Buddhist monks who had spent some time in the Middle Kingdom studying the Chinese philosophy of life. Convinced of the salutary and wholesome influence which the practice of *Zen* was bound to wield over their compatriots perturbed by the political agitations of the feudal system, these two established severe standards of Buddhist asceticism, which eventually exerted powerful appeal. *Zen* seeks salvation by meditation and divine emptiness. Its doctrine may be summed up in the following injunction, "Look carefully within and there you will find the Buddha." In practice, each believer must work out his own salvation by austere discipline, bodily and mental, thus developing the necessary will power and self control. It is this that has in no small measure contributed to that rigid moral and social code, that national spirit of Japan, known by the historic appellation of *bushido* (way of the knights) or *Yamato damashii* (soul of Japan.)

The characteristic practice of the sect is *zazen* a sort of retreat during which the devotee tries to attain at nothingness; becoming *munen muso* according to the Japanese expression, devoid of any thoughts or desires. In our own days haunted with the hideous specter of universal conflagration, even perfect strangers to the sect regularly take part in *zazen* retreats to acquire interior stability and to improve their personality.

The schedule of these retreats is rather exacting. They usually take place in the library of one of the Buddhist monasteries. The keynote of these cloisters is simplicity and neatness the former being a handmaid to the other; aside from the quilts used at night and the square cushions to sit upon, the monastery is absolutely bare. The retreatant sits or rather squats on the bare mats, facing the wall, for hours at a time in silent meditation. There

1. Rita Blais, Thetford Mines, P. Q.



are two ways of sitting; full cross-legged sitting and half cross-legged sitting. Neither are conducive to comfort. Keeping the body upright and sitting erectly he must not incline to the right or to the left, nor lean backward or forward. Should he be found trying to make himself a little less uncomfortable he is immediately reprimanded by the monk in charge of discipline who raps him smartly on the shoulders. The victim of this Spartan treatment must not only withhold any recrimination but is expected to express grateful thanks. The length of the retreat depends on the aptitude shown by the retreatant in attaining to the right degree of concentration required for the full enlightenment that is to follow. This may be ascertained by visits to the Master to answer the questions previously assigned by him for contemplation. If the disciple is unable to answer, he must keep on further concentration on his nothingness.

One of our acquaintances, a woman doctor of some renown, periodically retires into a Buddhist monastery giving herself up to the practice of *zazen*. She assures us that this is for her an infallible means of rising above the trivial banalities of life.

In the mental discipline of *zen*, concentration is considered more important than anything else and devotees are taught to cultivate direct communion with the inner nature of things in order to arrive at truth. It is natural that the inadequacy of words as vehicles of expression should be recognized. Only a small section of the Japanese people can really comprehend *Zazen*. It is nevertheless certain that the entire nation has been influenced by it in an indirect manner. Who will gainsay us if we assure that the characteristic intuition of the Japanese for seeing true beauty in severe simplicity and refined poverty may be traced to the ideals incalculated through *Zazen*? Susuki has written somewhere that the *do* or ways, such as tea cult, flower arrangement, classical dancing, fencing, calligraphy, with their respective philosophies of life, are all popular applications of Buddhistic *zen*. They are the ways of wisdom and contemplation and knowledge.

Doubtless *zazen* alone will never lead to the knowledge of God. Through such ascetical practices a certain poise will be attained, a calm and tranquil bearing; but there must also ensue spiritual vacuity. When one considers the unconsiderable even for a length of time one is likely to emerge as considerationless as one was before entering upon one's retreat. If any moral quietude is attained through this medium, its roots cannot be expected to penetrate to any depth. But through prayer we may obtain that these noble souls yearning after an ideal may at least be oriented towards the only One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Others we hope will follow in the footsteps of the Buddhist monk who wrote on the eve of entering the true Church of Christ, "The Absolute is unsearchable but the Absolute has revealed itself in time and space through the mystery of the Cross. The Cross is Christ and Christ teaches us that the Absolute is God, God who is the Father, God who is Love."

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