



The Precursor

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The Precursor

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IN THIS ISSUE

The Family in the Philippines 343
Sister Mary of Guadalupe, M.I.C.

Joseph and His Sisters 358
Sister Marie Paule, M.I.C.

If All Had Said Thank You 362
Sister Saint Joseph of Bethlehem, M.I.C.

Grandmother Wong 364
Sister Marie des Oliviers, M.I.C.

The Legion of Mary at Good Hope School . . . 368
Sister Saint Denise, M.I.C.

The Bridge at An Tung 372
Sister Saint Peter Apostle, M.I.C.

Here Comes the Bride ! 375
Peggy Chilemba, Margaret and Ired Mtonga

The Ancient Order of Chopsticks 380
Sister Mary of the Redemption, M.I.C.

Power of the Rosary 384
Sister Angela of the Sacred Heart, M.I.C.

Floral Mystery in a Cuban Garden 386
Sister Margaret of the Infant Jesus, M.I.C.

Our Dear Departed 390

Cover-page : A lovely Filipino housekeeper.

THE FAMILY IN THE PHILIPPINES



Sister MARY OF GUADELUPE¹, M.I.C.

Although profoundly influenced during the course of latter centuries by both Spanish and Anglo-Saxon civilizations, the culture of the Philippines has nevertheless retained an oriental character inherited from the Hindus, the Chinese, and the Malaysians, first inhabitants of the Islands. Out of the blending of Oriental and Occidental elements, a new and distinctive culture has emerged.

In *barrio* life more particularly the people still follow many an ancient custom and family tradition inherited from ancestors. This is observable even today in the mode of building

the house on stilts in the manner of Malayan forebears. Adapted to the climate, the country hut is light and airy with walls and roofs of nipa palm leaves, and floors of bamboo splints kept clean by a daily application of freshly cut banana leaves. It is divided into two rooms, a small one doing duty as a combined clothes closet and toilet alcove and a large one serving in turn as a dining room, sleeping quarters, and living room.

Furnishings are of the simplest consisting mostly of rustic benches placed near the windows. In a corner of the larger room usually stands a

¹ Guadelupe F. Sempio, Davao, Philippines.

Beside the modern house
stands the traditional nipa hut.



small table with a crucifix or statue before which the family kneels for night prayers. Religious pictures, calendars, family photographs hang on the crude walls.

As the magic of electricity has not yet reached remote *barrios*, oil or gas lamps are used for illumination. When the kitchen is enclosed in the housing unit, it is usually built on a lower level to prevent the smoke from the very primitive stoves to penetrate living quarters.

Water is drawn from nearby streams or wells, but in times of drought it has to be fetched from greater distances. All members of the

family then set out bright and early in the morning carrying buckets, jars, or bamboo tubes to secure enough for the needs of the day. When rare showers fall, large jars and barrels are set out near the house to catch the precious liquid.

The towns are built in the old Spanish style with the church, town hall, school, and other main buildings facing a plaza or square where people assemble for *fiestas* and other amusements. The market place stands a little way off. Better class houses are two-storied, made of timber planks or of cement and surrounded by pleasant gardens shaded by palms and other tropical plants.





Organization of the family

The Filipino family has been likened to a fine web enclosing not merely the father, mother, and children, but grandparents, aged unmarried aunts, and other relatives who have no means of support.

It seems that in past ages the matriarchate system prevailed throughout the Islands. With the coming of Chinese colonists, however, the patriarchy began to gain the upper hand although women continued to wield extraordinary influence in domestic and civil affairs. When the Spaniards landed in the Philippines, they found to their surprise that wives shared equal rights with their husbands with regard to familial and even to municipal problems.

Western laws while curtailing these attributions did not lower woman's prestige. The modern code of civil law now grants woman the same rights and authority as man.

In typical Filipino homes, the husband works out in the field or elsewhere to provide for the needs of his family, while his wife keeps house and manages the budget. Money matters are left to her and she is consulted in business transactions of any kind. It was formerly the custom for matrons to be invested with the *llavera* or bunch of keys as symbol of their authority in the home. The number of keys marked their importance, pointing out as it did the quantity of coffers or of cup-

boards entrusted to their supervision. This *llavera* made of silver or of gold and inscribed with the family monogram was worn suspended from the belt. Very old grandmothers cling to the *llavera* despite the fact that it has long since gone out of fashion.

The Filipino mother gives her children a good education. She it is who teaches them the prayers and the first doctrine lessons; she it is who leads them with her to church whenever a priest passes through the barrio. Nevertheless, when the time comes for the children to choose a state of life, they find it difficult not to say impossible to decide against their father's opinion. On such occasions, paternal authority tends to be despotic and many a religious or priestly vocation has

been nipped in the bud by well-meaning fathers ignorant of their spiritual responsibilities. Thanks to the infiltration of democratic ideas and to a sounder knowledge of religious problems, this abuse is gradually disappearing.

Brothers and sisters observe among themselves a certain order of precedence. In Tagalog provinces, for instance, the first boy in a family is called *kuyo*, the second *diko*, the third *sanko*, the fourth *siko*; the first girl, *ate*, the second *ditse*, the third *sanse*, the fourth *dete*. The honorific particle *po* must be added to answers given to superiors or the aged. In the evening, when rings the church bell, Filipinos are in the habit after reciting the Angelus of wishing one another a pleasant "Goodnight!" The children respect-

A lovely Filipino family,
that of Mr. and Mrs. Ramos.



fully kiss their parents' hand before taking their leave for the night.

Weddings, births, anniversaries, *fiestas* are so many opportunities to tighten the bonds of family love.

The child is the heart of the Filipino family. Around him centres the tender solicitude of the father and of the mother who bend all their energies in providing him with the benefits of education and who later help him settle in an honourable state of life. Brothers, sisters, grandparents, and other relations surround him with affectionate care. In turn, the Filipino child is full of delicate, respectful attentions for his elders.

He is remarkably docile and obedient. His grandmother he looks up to and cherishes as the queen of the household. Is she not the most influential member of the family? Under the magic rays of her benevolent kindness melts the severity of the father; her gentle wisdom balances the too great indulgence of the mother. In domestic conflicts, she is the beloved arbiter whose word is law. For the little ones she symbolizes comprehension, sympathy, and warmth. Pressing her toilworn fingers the young find strength to wage the battles of life. In her wrinkled face illumined by a serene, perennial



smile, they find countless reasons to hope for the best even when things are darkest. Once in a while, the grandparents are given some money to use as they wish. It is unheard of that anyone who has any connection with the family should be left alone, sad and bewildered, when the shadows of life are falling. In a Filipino home,

the old are given warm affection and deference. Even should they become senile or slightly demented they are surrounded with love and understanding. By their presence in the home children learn that we all grow old and feeble. Is it not the best way to teach them compassion and patience?

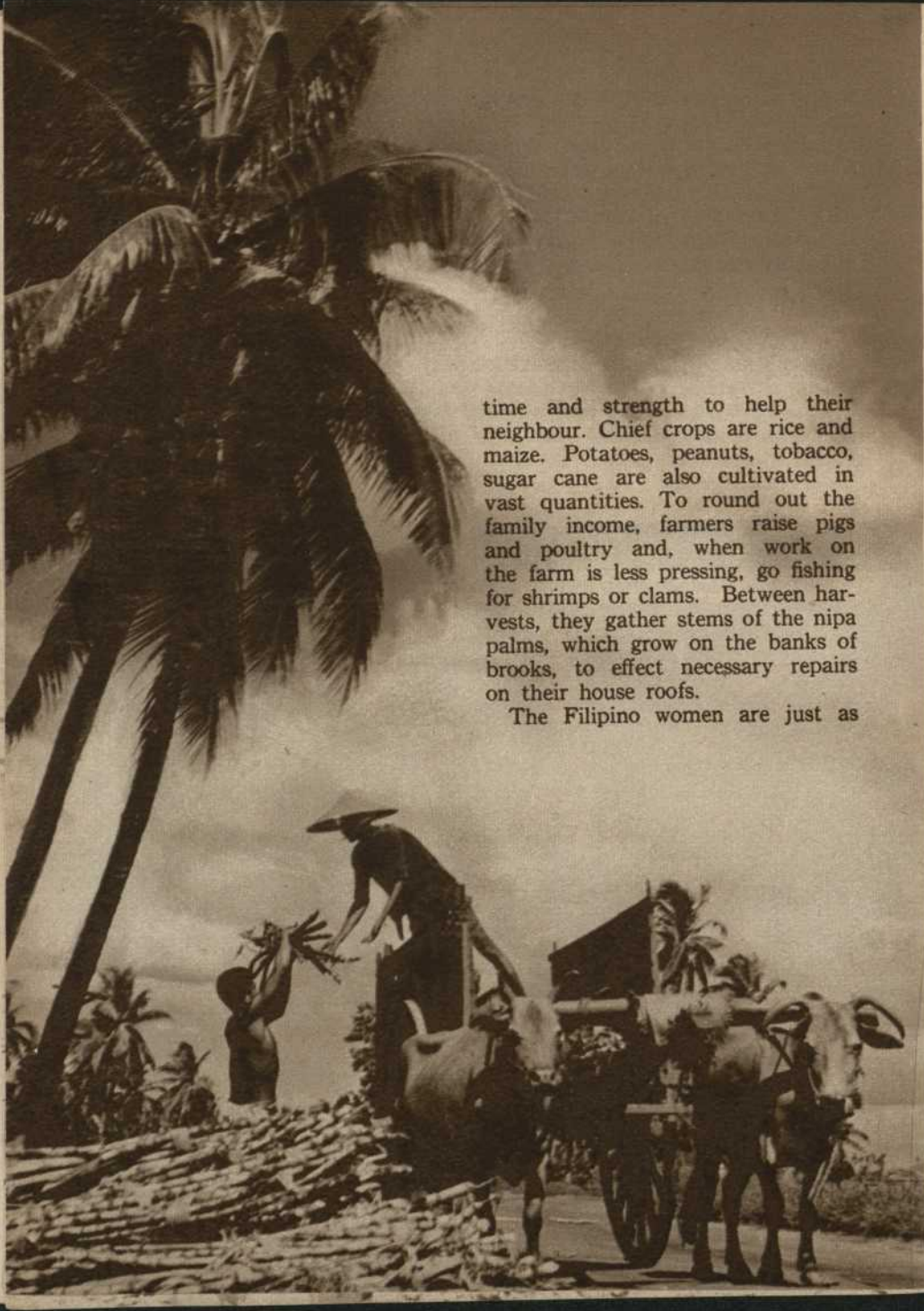
Occupations

Agriculture is the most important source of revenue in the Philippines where ninety percent of the country's communities are farming centres. Farms measure about four hectares

and are worked with the help of the *carabao* and of simple agrarian instruments. Famous for their spirit of cooperation Filipinos enjoy working bees and cheerfully give of their

Bamboo poles are often used as recipients.





time and strength to help their neighbour. Chief crops are rice and maize. Potatoes, peanuts, tobacco, sugar cane are also cultivated in vast quantities. To round out the family income, farmers raise pigs and poultry and, when work on the farm is less pressing, go fishing for shrimps or clams. Between harvests, they gather stems of the nipa palms, which grow on the banks of brooks, to effect necessary repairs on their house roofs.

The Filipino women are just as

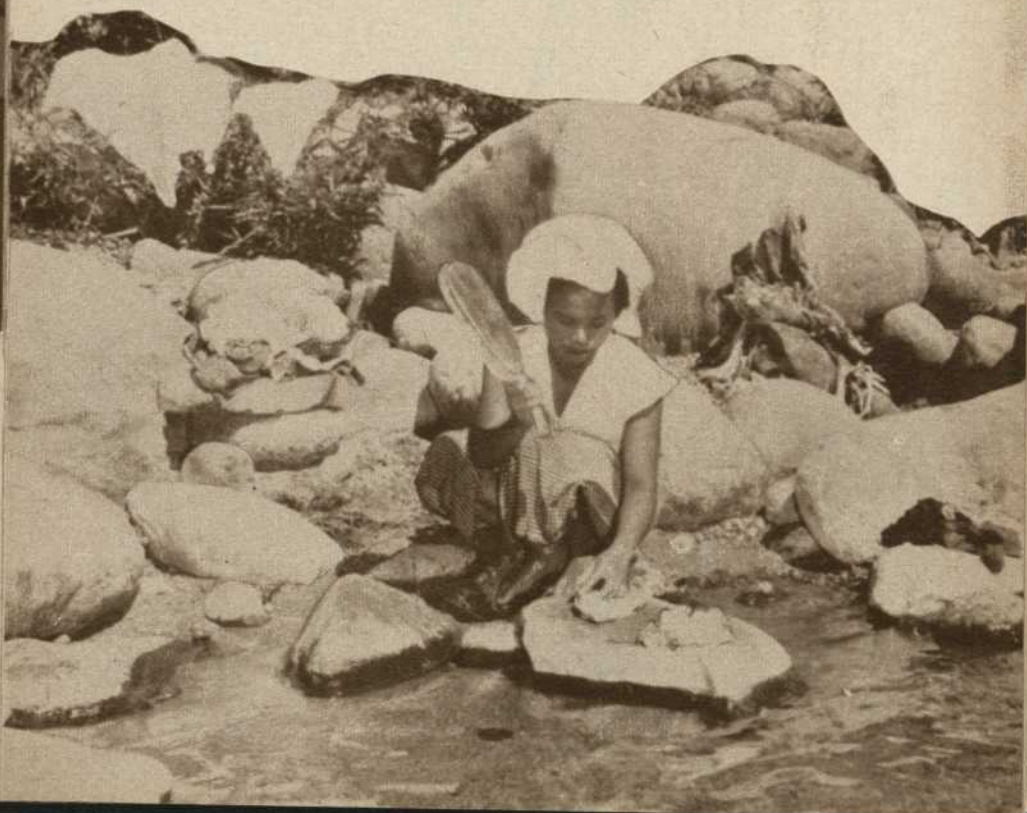
busy as their men folk. Up before the dawn, they cook the breakfast, then go down to a nearby stream, tub riding on their head, to soak the family wash. Placing large stones to keep the clothes from being carried away, they return home to serve and to eat breakfast, wash the dishes, put the rooms in order before completing their laundry task, a daily one in this land of torrid

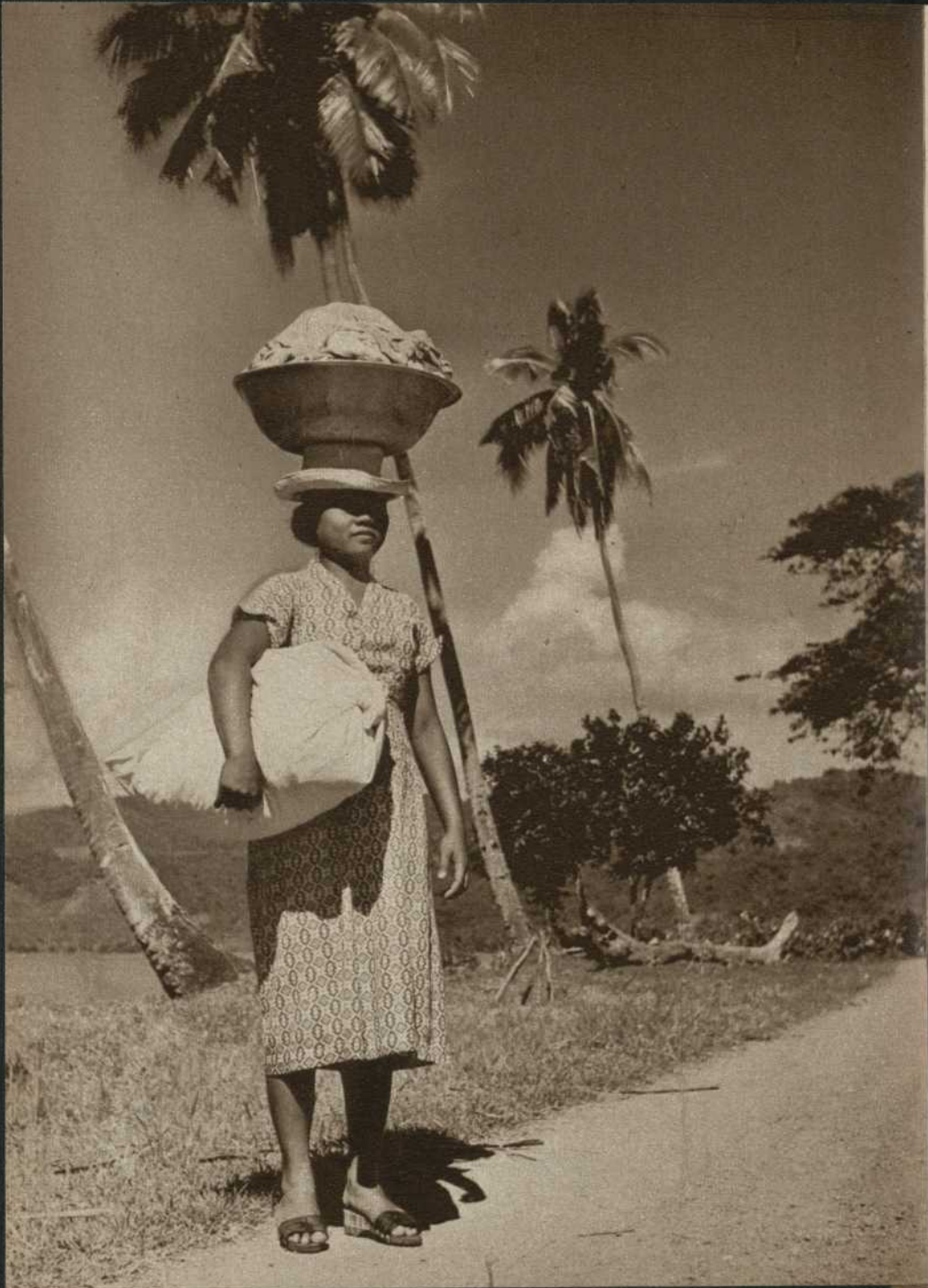
heat. Each piece is thoroughly soaped in a basin, slapped with the *palu palo* (beetle), rinsed in the stream, and laid out to dry on large flat stones. During the afternoon, when they have finished preparing the *merienda*, the housekeepers do some darning until supper time. This ordinary schedule is sometimes broken by unforeseen events such as visits, sicknesses, deaths...

Education

The majority of children in the *barrios* are allowed to attend only

the primary course of studies. In the evenings as they are expected







She likes to wear mamma's BAKIA...

to do their share on the farm, they have little time left to study or do homework. It sometimes happens that the children of a family can attend school only by turn.

In this respect, the children of urban districts are more fortunate since they are able to enroll in parochial primary schools and then to enter high schools conducted by religious congregations. How grateful the Filipinos are to the Sisters for the splendid Catholic education they dispense! Such an education is hard to get in public institutions. In 1958 there were 1,891,000 Catholic Filipino children who were left without religious instruction of any sort. Even though the government has

lately authorized the teaching of catechism in public schools, few are the schools that have benefited by this concession since the Ministry of Education requires from those who teach the doctrine the same qualifications as for other subjects without, however, providing any fee.

Our Immaculate Conception Academy in Gagalangin has assumed the charge of paying the annual salary of one doctrine teacher for a public school with an enrollment of 4,000 pupils. Other schools have done likewise. In places where nothing has been done to remedy this situation the only religious instruction available to Catholic children enrolled in public schools is that given

**Pupils of
Immaculate Conception Academy,
Gagalangin.**





in the Sunday catechism classes. Needless to say it is insufficient. Too long, Filipinos have taken the Faith for granted. They have not troubled to inquire deeply into Catholic doctrines and practices. Now, when Communism, Freemasonry, and Protestantism are openly harassing the Church, it is evident that the greatest danger comes not from the strength of the enemy, but from the weakness of Catholics who do not know the Faith is being attacked or who knowing it are incapable because of their ignorance of defending their beliefs. It is, therefore, of the greatest urgency to multiply parochial schools and to pray with fervour to obtain still more favourable

solutions to the religious educational problem.

In the realm of secular sciences, numerous normal, technical, and vocational establishments are being opened everywhere placing the benefits of education within the people's reach. This evolution favours the innate taste of Filipinos for learning. Perhaps in no other country in the world if population is taken into account are there so many professionals and artists among both men and women: 3,600 medical doctors, 3,950 lawyers, 19,728 musicians among whom 188 composers, 496 orchestra leaders, 17,514 instrumental performers.

Leisure

Filipino families enjoy spending pleasant evenings together. On clear, moonlit nights, the young people play outside at games such as skipping rope, *piko* (hopscotch), *palentero* (stopping the runner), *sipa* (throwing the ball over a rival's head), volley ball, soft ball, etc. In larger towns, the family tunes in on favourite radio programs or on Sundays and feast days goes to a movie. These amusements being unavailable in country places, the people unfortunately turn to gambling, drinking *tuba* (fermented coconut or nip

palm juice) in excess, and cock fighting. Some men are never seen out-of-doors without their favourite cocks under their arms. As incredibly large sums in proportion to the means of the gamblers are sometimes staked on the result of a match, this sport does much harm and causes great misery in the homes.

One source of amusement, however, always at the disposal of Filipinos whether in towns or lonely *barrios* is music and song which lighten their labour and charm their leisure hours.

Conclusion

The Filipinos are a placid, happy people who "keep the noiseless tenor of their way" without unduly worrying about the future. They see no sense in the flurry of the modern world. Living as they do on frugal

fare in a country with a torrid climate, they are unequal to excessive expenditures of energy. Their needs

Dancing the tinikling.



are few. Houses are built in very little time with materials always at hand. Clothes are simple, the same throughout all seasons. There is no need of coal or oil, a few bundles of sticks being sufficient to cook the fish that teems in streams and rivers or the vegetables raised in farms and gardens.

When Filipinos have to travel abroad in Europe or America, they always return to the homeland with a sigh of relief. "Everything overseas

is so complicated!" they exclaim. "People rush about as if their houses were on fire. Their only ambition is to grow rich within the least possible delay. Are they any happier? It does not seem so. Our own joy we find in being in peace with God and neighbour. What can the riches of earth avail to those who possess these treasures."

In this the Filipinos are truly wise, for as the old saying goes, "Contentment is better than riches".



JOSEPH and His Sisters

Sister MARIE PAULE¹, M.I.C.

Master Joseph Tan was half-past-two when we first met. I had known his mother, Féliza, some years back when she had been enrolled for a short while at our Anglo Chinese Academy. She had left unexpectedly

without a word of explanation to reappear three months later her arms laden with Benguet lilies. Shyly, she related how she had been unable to give us news before as her parents had married her according

¹ Marie Paule Larocque, Montreal.



Joseph and his sisters.

to the old Chinese way to Mr. Tan, a wealthy merchant of the Mountain Province, many years her senior. Her own family being in financial difficulties this match was thought to be most advantageous. Certainly, I reflected, Mr. Tan had got the best of the bargain, for the sixteen-year old girl was wholesome and serious besides being as pretty as a picture. She would make an ideal wife and mother.

Years went by without our hearing from Féliza. Meantime, I was assigned to a house of our missionary Society recently founded in Baguio. Walking through the market place with a companion one day, I heard a rush of footsteps from behind and a voice calling out happily, "Sisters of the Immaculate Conception! How happy I am to see you!" It was Féliza. She inquired whether we would be in the city long enough for her to

visit us. "We live here, now," I replied as I jotted down our address inviting her to call as soon as she could.

The very next Sunday, Féliza called accompanied by Master Joseph, a handsome little boy, sturdy and strong. He gave me the long scrutinizing look of a child appraising an adult before he decided to make friends with this strange person his mother seemed to like. While we conversed, he made the rounds of the room and ferreted out a duster with which he gravely began to dust the furniture. Mamma kept a watchful eye on her young hopeful and listened patiently whenever he ran to her to draw her attention to something new he had discovered. I could tell by her gentle yet firm way of handling the lively child that she took her role seriously indeed.



Baguio market.



Still in her early twenties, she was the proud mother of six lovely children: twin girls Fe and Caridad, Julie, Suzanna, Joseph, and Baby Juanita.

Although all bore genuine, Christian names, none of them were baptized. "Ever since I first attended your Anglo Chinese School on Narra Street," she said "I have wanted to become a Catholic. But, my parents opposed my wishes and now my husband, who is a fervent Buddhist and likes to keep the ancient customs of China regarding ancestor worship, will not hear of it."

Her life was a lonely one in this fashionable city where she had not as yet met anyone who spoke her

Amoy dialect. How sorry I felt not to be able to give her the religious instruction she craved! As she did not know enough English even to read a prayer manual or a catechism written very simply, she asked me to teach her some short prayer she could learn by heart. When I recited the first words of the Hail Mary, she was overjoyed to recognize the prayer as one she had learnt at our school, "Sister Saint Louis¹ used to have us say it before and after class every day," she exclaimed. Was it not Our Lady who had kept burning the flame of desire for the faith in the heart of Féliza?

In spite of the fact that she lived at the other end of the city, we

¹ Fleur Ange Pelletier, St. Francis Xavier, N.B.

visited her as often as we could, bringing gifts of holy pictures for the children, teaching them simple prayers, trying to establish friendly contacts with Papa Tan. This was not easy, for he was constantly on his guard against anything that might spell for his wife emancipation of the ancient order of things.

Mrs. Tan was one of our guests at the inauguration of our new Baguio Convent. How she rejoiced to know that her beloved Immaculate Conception Sisters now had a permanent foothold in the city! Shortly afterwards she was delighted to meet Sister Marie des Victoires¹, one of our Sisters who spoke Amoy. She made full use of the short time Sister spent with us to learn the doctrine and the prayers.

As Mr. Tan seemed to resent our frequent visits to his wife, I set out in search of members of the Legion of Mary who might be better able to contact the family. Having made inquiries at Saint Louis College, I was lucky enough to secure the services of one of the Sisters who knew Amoy. This Sister recently arrived in Baguio had started to make home visits in all Chinese families; it was a consolation for me to be able to leave our dear catechumen in such good hands.

When Christmas came around,

Mrs. Tan brought me the good news that her six children would be baptized at the Cathedral on the following Sunday. Strangely enough, notwithstanding his willingness to have his little ones baptized, Mr. Tan persisted in refusing the same happiness to his young wife. She had to be content with Baptism of desire for a while longer.

The ceremony at the cathedral was beautiful and impressive. In apparel of spotless white, the six children looked like radiant angels. The pastor carefully explained every detail for the benefit of the assistants crowding the cathedral. Mrs. Tan could hardly believe her ears when she heard the blessed words that made her darlings adopted children of the King of kings, "Joseph, Fe, Caridad, Julie, Suzanna, Juanita, I baptize you in the name of the Father..."

I stole a glance at Papa Tan respectfully kneeling in the front row. For the first time since I knew him, I saw a smile, was it of pride or of joy, illuminating his austere features. Will you not dear readers, help us storm heaven for his conversion? Now that he has seen what happiness Baptism has brought to his beloved children, he will doubtless more easily turn his mind towards the God who has bestowed it upon them.



¹ Josephine Bolduc, Saint Victor of Tring.

A black and white photograph of a traditional thatched-roof building, possibly a convent or sanatorium, nestled among tall palm trees. The building has a steep, gabled roof and appears to be constructed of wood or bamboo. In the foreground, there are some banana plants and other tropical vegetation. The sky is bright with some clouds.

INTRAMUROS,
MANILA

If All Had Said

Thank You

Sister JOSEPH OF BETHLEHEM,¹ M.I.C.

Yesterday, a young man suffering from leprosy called at our convent. After a period of hospitalization at the Tala sanatorium, he had been discharged as apparently cured and had joyfully hastened home only to meet with rebuff from his sister, his sole living relative, who went so far as to refuse him the permission

to take refuge under the family hut built on stilts. "Don't expect anything from me," she declared. "Since you are supposed to be cured, you can work for your own living."

Ever since, he had been roaming through the city and its suburbs on the lookout for employment. When people saw how thin he was

¹ Yvonne Routhier, Saint Peter of Broughton.

and how his face had been mutilated by the dread disease, nobody was willing to hire him. So many privations and moral sufferings at last caused telltale blotches to appear on his limbs. Despair engulfed him at the thought that his old enemy, leprosy, was gaining the upper hand again. Far better to die than to return to Tala, he reflected.

In this despondent mood, he knocked at our door after many others had been slammed in his face. At first as he told us what had happened, his words were bitter. "Why should I be the one to suffer? There are so many wicked rich who do not know what affliction means. I was always an honest man. I could bear any other disease but leprosy... Oh, if Mother were only living! She would be good to me, she would take care of me..."

It was heartbreaking to hear him thus recall his mother's tender solicitude. I served him a hearty meal and provided him with what help I could, then, I urged him to go back to Tala as to his only hope of

securing relief. Grown calmer under the influence of good food and of encouraging words, he finally agreed that this was indeed the wisest course for him. "When I came here," he added, "I was in the depths of despair. Your kindness gives me the courage to take the road back to the hospital with the hope of a permanent cure, this once. But, even though I should not be cured, I will be happy all the same because I know now there are still some charitable people left in the world."

The conversation turned to the Gospel narrative where it is recounted how Jesus cured the lepers. "Ah, yes," he remarked, "Once, He even cured ten of them at a time, but only one remembered to thank Him... Perhaps if the others had said 'Thank You,' there would be no more lepers today..."

These words have been haunting me ever since. If we were more grateful to God, who knows how many graces we would be able to draw down upon mankind?

MISSIONARY INTENTIONS

MARCH: The solid formation adapted to modern exigencies of a numerous autochthonous clergy.

APRIL: The organization of efficacious propaganda among Catholics in favour of missionary vocations.

HONG KONG



Sister MARIE DES OLIVIERS, M.I.C.
(Gertrude Laforest, Montreal.)

● When she was a mere slip of a girl, Grandmother was given in marriage to a stolid fisherman who led her to the only home he possessed, a bobbing junk on the Kowloon waterfront. Life in their fishermen's world was anything but a bed of roses, but being young and healthy she soon grew familiar with the world of junks all around her. Year after year she shared the hardships of the sea, knew the buffettings of the waves whipped into frenzy by frequent typhoons, felt the pinch of the damp cold in winter and the sultry heat of summer, suffered the pangs of hunger when fish was scarce and nets remained empty.

In her floating home were born eight children four of whom died in infancy. Of the remaining four, a son died at twenty and two daughters were killed during the war in 1942. Then her husband passed away and

she was left alone with her youngest daughter and two little grandchildren.

At seventy-two unable to wrest a living from the sea any longer, she left her junk to become a peddler of sweet potatoes in the streets of Kowloon. Money was scarce and her only refuge for the night was a dark corner in an already overcrowded shack.

God has not forgotten her, however. Having heard of a distribution of wheat flour to the needy at our Kowloon Convent, Grandmother Wong came to ask for her small share. It happened during the official visitation of our dear Mother Assistant and Mother Marie Vianney who helped us distribute the parcels. To give our Mothers a remembrance of their stay in Kowloon, I asked Grandmother to allow me take her photograph in company with them which proposal she cheerfully accepted.

GRANDMOTHER WONG



**Mother Marie of La Salette, Assistant General,
gives a bag of flour to Grandmother Wong.**

Mother Assistant inquired whether she was Catholic. "No," she replied, "I have often heard about your religion but as I do not know how to read, I cannot study the doctrine." I hastened to explain that one could become the child of God even if one was illiterate and urged her to visit us again soon. This she promised.

As I retired that night, I felt worried over my new acquaintance. Would we ever see her again? Unfortunately I had forgotten to ask her where she lived.

On the very next day, however, as I accompanied Sister Saint Jean Baptiste to the Saint Joseph catechumenate for Sunday Mass, I sud-

denly came face to face with Mrs. Wong. She was happy to accept our invitation to attend doctrine lessons. For several months, she faithfully came to Saint Joseph's even when she was exhausted with her daily rounds of the city.

She was baptized on May 24, and given the name of Anna; she

made her First Communion on the following day. Ever since, she has been a frequent caller at our convent, for she is eager to learn all she can about God and her immortal soul. She looks forward to the day when, her earthly labours over at last, she will be called to the eternal rest of heaven.

Aboard her sampan.





The Legion of Mary at Good Hope School

by Sister SAINT DENISE¹, M.L.C.

Two praesidia, one senior and one junior, have been organized at Good Hope during the last school year. The former under the patronage of Our Lady, Mother of Charity, is composed of professors and of a few employees from the Administration office.

The majority of these new Legionaries brought Mary nothing but their inexperience and their good

will, yet under her motherly guidance they have been transformed into zealous apostles ready to work with might and main for the conversion and salvation of souls. "To know that of himself he can do nothing is the condition of success for whoever ventures into unexplored territory," declares His Excellency Bishop Suenens in his inspiring volume, *Theology of the Apostolate*.

According to the spirit of their promise, our Legionaries have presented their souls as torches to be kindled by the flames of the Holy Spirit. Their desire now is to set the world on fire with love of God and love of Mary.

The work launched by militant members has already achieved remarkable success. Every Catholic home in our sector has been visited; this has proved a splendid training for the Legionaries. They have since been making the rounds of the families of our pupils. Such contacts have led to the discovery of many moral and material miseries. In one home, prayer was neglected. In another, a father, a professional actor, had deserted his wife to take up relations with another woman. The one who suffered

most from the disruption of family life was the little daughter who could neither attend Mass nor receive the Sacraments as there was no one to take her to church. Every Sunday morning a Legionary now accompanies her to Mass. A non-Christian father and mother prevented their child who had been baptized from performing her religious duties. The father of one of our First Communicants had been keeping away from the church ever since he had been married out of it. Although he had had his children baptized, he had not provided for their Catholic education. With a member of the Legion I visited this family. After a while, the couple thawed down enough to accept our suggestion that they should discuss their problem

A group of seniors at Good Hope.





Members of the praesidium "Mother of Good Hope" teach catechism to their young classmates.

with a priest and have their marriage regularized. Jolted out of his indifference, the husband now follows regular doctrine lessons. Our Lady has worked wonders in his soul.

Thanks to the Legion, the Crusade Movement has been organized at Good Hope with an active senior member, noted for her zeal, in charge.

The junior praesidium placed under the aegis of Our Lady of Good Hope exercises its apostolate within the campus. Besides the regular weekly meeting of the Legion each of its eighteen members spends a minimum of one hour a week in apostolic activities. Various active work duties are as follows:

Winning auxiliary members who give priceless spiritual assistance to the Legion.

Accompanying to church Catholic children who otherwise might miss Sunday Mass.

Catechising younger companions, teaching them their prayers.

Spreading Catholic literature : books, newspapers, magazines...

Initiating pupils into liturgical ceremonies.

Inculcating religious lessons particularly those based on the Old and the New Testament.

Under the authority of a president who assigns a weekly tasks to each, Legionaries are trained in ways of obedience, self-forgetfulness, charity;

they learn to love Jesus, Mary and souls. Since the organization of the praesidium, a good number of pupils have begun to attend daily Mass and to recite part of the Rosary every day, and the younger pupils have readily followed their example. Between class hours groups of ten,

fifteen, or twenty may be seen kneeling at our Lady's shrine devoutly praying the rosary.

Parents are quick to notice the good influence of the Legion over their daughters who daily grow in docility, meekness, piety, and devotedness.

Legion Beginnings in Hong Kong

The Legion of Mary was established in Hong Kong towards the close of 1948. When Reverend A. McGrath asked His Excellency Bishop Valtorta permission to organize it in the diocese, the Bishop was at first inclined to be skeptical. A veteran of forty-two years in the mission field, experience had taught him that many a project elaborated in a moment of enthusiasm had been doomed to failure. Nevertheless, mindful of the precious assistance lay apostles provided in parochial activities, he gave his approval. Needless to say, he has had no reason to regret his decision. He was later to write: "The day I gave this approval I consider as the most fruitful of my missionary career, for a magnificent work was then inaugurated which will forever endure." On another occasion Bishop Valtorta declared, "I would like to

see a Praesidium of the Legion of Mary established in every street of Hong Kong".

Today the Legion has units in every parish of the diocese — 150 Praesidia, 2 senior Curiae, 4 junior Curiae, and 1 Comitium numbering over 2,000 members.

The present bishop of Hong Kong, His Excellency The Most Reverend L. Bianchi, relies especially on this Marian army to assure the triumph of the Church over atheistic Communism and its revolutionary armies ready to storm the last frontiers of freedom.

At the hour marked by divine Providence, once our sinful world will have washed away its crimes in a bath of purifying pain, the spotless Virgin will again crush the head of the infernal dragon. Then will be ushered in the reign of Mary Queen of Angels and of men.

The "personal touch" that you can add to life cannot be duplicated by any other person in the world. Whatever your circumstances, you have been entrusted by the Lord with talent of your own. Through it you can add your own particular contribution of love and beauty to a world much in need of it. Personalize all you do, while following faithfully the "notes" of God's revealed law, and the world will be the richer because of you!

Rev. James Keller, M.M.

Formosa is a queen crowned with snowy mountain peaks, arrayed in luxuriant vegetation, decked with crystal springs and sapphire lakes.

This I know from hearsay, but as yet I have gazed on none of these glorious panoramas, for our convent is situated on An Tung Street, one of the most prosaic spots in Taipei. My catechist's office fronts a canal spanned by a small bridge over which in the words of the old French song *tout le monde y passe*. Lately, for some reason or other, the water has been cut off and groups of poor people wade ankle-deep in the mud looking for shrimps or other edible mollusks.

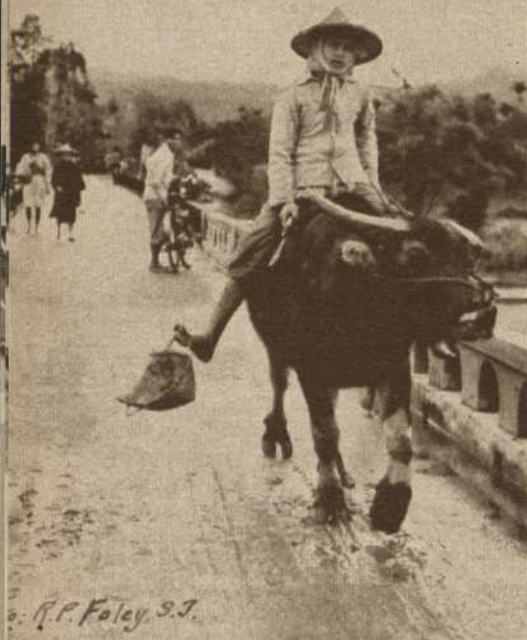
Among the first to cross the bridge in the early morning are a few devout Christians for whom daily Mass is a must.

On Sunday, a hundred Christians come over for Mass as our convent chapel is an outpost of the parish of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. At nine, takes place the children's Mass usually attended by about seventy-five boys and girls. Three young ladies help the Sister catechist lead the prayers and hymns. Mass over, the children are served their breakfast at the Mission and are then taught catechism lessons. Another Mass is offered at four in the afternoon for all those who are unable to be present at the morning offices. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament brings the Sun-

The Bridge at An Tung

by Sister Saint Peter Apostle, M.I.C.

(Leocadie Landry, St. Jean l'Evangeliste.)



P.P. Foley S.J.

day liturgical ceremonies to a close; before returning home neophytes and catechumens like to gather for friendly talks with the Missionaries. In the evening hours doctrinal courses are held for those who are preparing to receive Baptism or to make their First Holy Communion.

Across the little bridge, on week days, pass and repass long files of patients of all ages and social conditions who seek a cure or at least some relief from their aches and pains at the dispensary. Numerous students come to the convent for lessons in doctrine or in foreign languages. At present, among my class of catechumens are several Protestant Taiwanese dissatisfied with the teachings of the sects to which they belong and eager to pursue their quest for truth.

From the early forenoon hours until half-past eight in the evening, I dispense doctrinal instructions or teach language lessons to various groups. The last to call after supper is composed of University students intent on improving their English accent. As most of them are Episcopalians, Methodists, or Anglicans they make good the opportunity of asking many a specious questions regarding religious matters. All are keenly interested in technical progress and dream of going to America for postgraduate studies.

From my office windows I cannot help seeing what goes on beyond the little bridge on our one-way street where saucy jeeps venture always on the wrong track. By the side of these fussy vehicles, plod placid brown oxen yoked to crude carts.

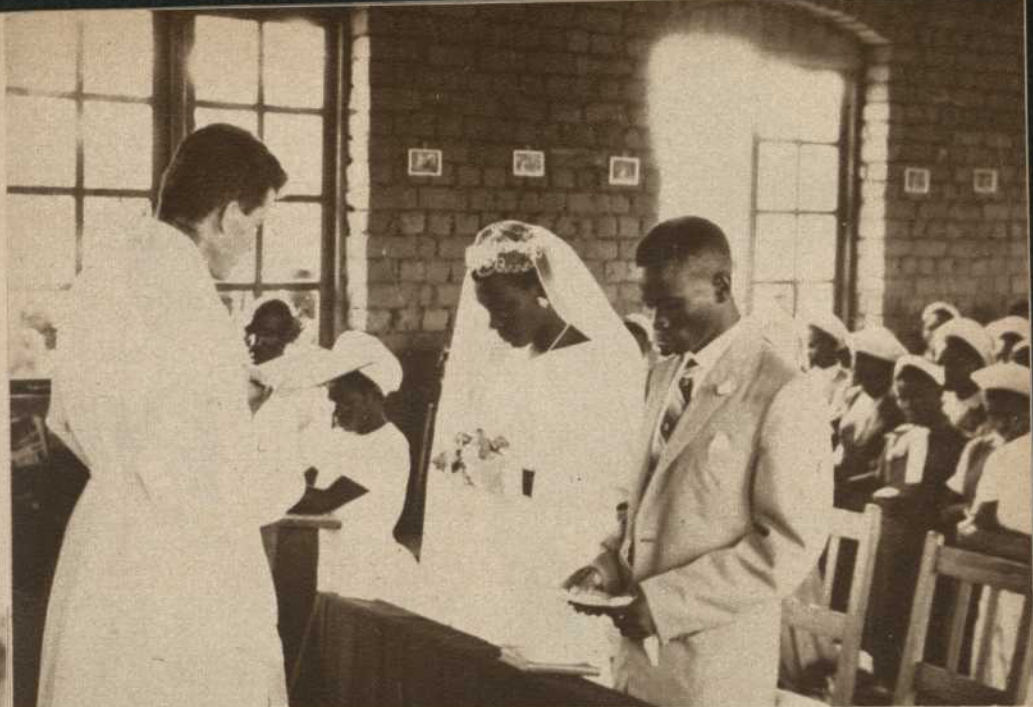


Distributing awards to Sunday school children, Taipei.



Oxen and drivers are patient and unhurried. Often, the latter unyoke the tired beasts, and haul the load to destination. To the right and to the left scurry pedicabs — types of conveyance introduced during the Japanese occupation and used as taxis. In and out of this traffic jam, dart cyclists carrying long bamboo poles, planks, boxes, baskets, and what nots. Huge modern buses have a hard time clearing their way through. The staccato of the hawkers' rattle tries to overpower the general rumour of tooting horns, creaking axles, and screeching brakes. Some fruit and vegetable vendors put up their stands in an angle of the bridge almost directly below my windows. What better place to meet the de-

mands of passing housewives? At certain hours of the day groups of students troop across, chattering and laughing as they go. Soldiers also pass, a wistful look on their weather-beaten faces. Will the threat of war never end? They seem weary of marches and manoeuvres. Civilians also cross the bridge, some alert and joyful, others listless and dejected. This throng unceasingly circulating through An Tung Street, how I long to have it make a rendez-vous with Truth! It daily passes by its doorstep unawares. Oh, if it only knew, doubtless it would swarm across the bridge in greater numbers and take the convent by storm.



KANYANGA, NORTHERN RHODESIA

Believe it or not, she is all dressed in white with an ankle-length dress, a net veil, and gloves. She looks very smart as she steps down from the vanette which has carried her to the Mission. Behind her is her husband-to-be, Mr. Roger Majura, professor at Chasefu school, wearing a steel-grey suit.

Who is she? Miss Mary Dominica Mtonga, the Standard III teacher at Kanyanga Girls' School. You can imagine what a happy day this is for all of us as it is the first time we assist at such a great marriage feast.

At about 9.45 A.M., on Easter Monday, the bridal procession starts

Here Comes the Bride!

by Peggy Chilembo,
Margaret and Ired Mtonga



from the convent to the church, passing all the way between two rows of girls in their bright yellow and blue uniforms. Behind the bridal pair come the groomsman and the bridesmaid, and on either side of them are two little flower-girls in long white taffeta dresses.

The Kanyanga Girls' choir sings during the High Mass which is celebrated by Reverend Father Zimmermann, W.F., in charge of Kanyanga Mission. We are especially impressed by the "ring ceremony" as this has not yet entered into our African customs.

Upon leaving the church we follow the newly-wedded couple to the

school dining-hall where a banquet has been prepared for all the guests. The menu consists of rice, fowl, oven-baked biscuits, pumpkin-fritters, and hot cocoa. This is a delicious meal for us, one that we seldom enjoy. Best of all is the creamy three-layer cake set in the middle of the table; the biggest we have ever seen and ever hope to see.

Among the guests seated at the table of honour is Senior Chief Magodi, Chief of the Watumbuka tribe of this district. How pleased we are to see he has accepted our invitation! While everyone is eating inside, groups of pupils have formed circles outside near the dining-hall and they are singing and dancing

to the rhythm of the tom-tom. This musical entertainment adds African local colour to the feast.

After the banquet, our happy people leave for Cimbirima Village, the home of the *Thenga*. A *Thenga* is a man chosen by the bridegroom to ask the parents of the bride to consent to give their daughter to the proposer. In our tribe all pro-

posals for marriage are made through an interpreter. When the groom's village is too far away, it is our custom to hold the wedding feast at the village of the *Thenga*.

When the time comes to start off for the village, our Principal allows fourteen of us to go along, as we are relatives or friends of Miss Mtonga. Upon our arrival we notice

Great Chief Magodi IV distributes marks to the pupils of Kanyanga.
Sister Marie of Lourdes (Irene Champagne, Montreal) Superior,
and Sister Jane of Valois, Principal.



that a great crowd has already gathered and that a goat has been killed to be offered to the newly married pair as a gift. The people of the bride's village have brought a cow for the same purpose, but when they realize that the other village is offering but a small goat, they decide to take their cow back home. Usually the two villages try to give gifts of equal value, always animals of course. If one village offers a cheaper gift, this one is killed and eaten and the more expensive one is given back to the owner.

Now that the question of gifts is settled, a group of men begins the *Muganda* a typical African dance in which men only take part. These men are costumed and carry sticks and *Mabaja*. (African musical instruments made from gourds.) Two men beat a huge drum called *Muganda* hence the name of the dance. This entertainment is one of our favourites. It cannot be compared to the graceful European waltz, but we enjoy this brisk type of dancing much more.

In order to give the dancers a rest, the villagers call for *Majuli*. What is *Majuli*? It is a type of oral competition between the people from the bride's village and the people from the bridegroom's village. Both villages choose a speaker whose task is to congratulate the couple as best as he can. While the speaker

called a *Mutowera* is delivering his speech, he throws pennies in all directions, and a mad scramble follows. Everyone dashes here and there to catch a penny which is then given to the bride. The speaker must not let this running around interfere with his oration. He continues talking away as if he were wound up for twenty-four hours.

During all this time the bride and her husband are seated at a small table in the middle of the circle. All those who are lucky enough to catch a penny go over to the table and deposit their small token in a plate set before the bride. Upon receiving these pennies, the bride is supposed to cry. Our teacher, Mary Dominica, did not cry because she did not see the use of it. Many people were displeased at seeing her so happy because according to our customs, the girl who gets married is supposed to be sad on her wedding day. Why? Well, she is leaving her parents, her home and an easy life to begin another kind of life which most of the time turns out to be quite difficult.

At six o'clock the feast is over, so we girls direct our steps toward Kanyanga. All in all, we had a wonderful time, but we are happy to go back to the peace and quiet of the Mission where we shall continue learning how we can best prepare ourselves for the kind of life God intends us to live in the future.





Dance of the ancients.



The Ancient Order of Chopsticks

by Sister Mary of the Redemption¹, M.I.C.

find that *Amaterasu Omikami*, the sun goddess, was in the habit of using two slim wooden sticks as eating utensils.

While the fork appeared on the festive boards of the West as late as in the fifteenth century, the ancient order of chopsticks existed in the East for nearly two thousand years. Mention of it is made in an ancient Chinese book three hundred years before the Christian era, and in Japan's oldest volume, the *Kojiki*, Chronicle of Ancient Things, we

As almost all things Oriental, the chopsticks have their legends. According to one of these, in the misty long ago, a Chinese princess strolling in her enclosed garden watched the birds feasting on insects or fruit. Admiring the dexterity with which they picked up food with their beaks, she had her retainers fashion two thin sticks of wood about eight inches long. How elated she was, when, holding them between her index finger and her thumb, she succeeded in conveying

¹ Basillise Maillet, St. Louis, Kent Co., N.B.

rice and vegetables to her mouth! The chopsticks were born. Of high ancestry they can boast to be, since an imperial princess brought them into being.

Japanese mythology presents a legend of another sort — that of the Growing Chopsticks. It seems that *Amaterasu Omikami* once visited the town of Sugizaka, in the Shiga Prefecture. There, she was offered a banquet at the close of which having planted her chopsticks into

the ground, they immediately grew into tall cryptomeria trees. Unfounded as such legends seem, there still may be in them some particle of truth. Does not *hashi*, the Japanese word for chopsticks, also mean a bird's beak or a bridge? Symbolically then, the chopstick is a bridge over which the food travels from the dish to the mouth.

Just as the housewives of Europe and America have different kinds of silverware for use on different occa-

Even noodles pass over the bridge of the HASHI.





"Hold them this way, Taro Chan."

sions, so have the housewives of Japan, China, and Korea, different sizes and varieties of chopsticks.

Fashioned out of the red heart of the cryptomeria for common uses,

or out of ivory or rare woods for ceremonial circumstances, chopsticks are about half as thick as lead pencils and measure between six to ten inches in length. Longer sticks are used with bowls or deep dishes,

those of medium length for flat dishes, and the very short ones for cakes or sweets.

Even soup calls for chopsticks in Japan! Pieces of meat, of fish, or vegetables are deftly "fished", then the remaining liquid is sipped. Most food in the Orient is prepared in such a way that it may easily be handled with the *hashi*. Meat, fish, vegetables, are cut or diced. Rice,

the staple food cooked the Japanese way, tastes much better when eaten with chopsticks than with a fork, at least so the Japanese say. As for the foreigner, his first attempt at balancing sizable mouthfuls of rice on two sticks, usually results in spreading his dinner over his face and the table. In this as in many other things practice makes perfect.

Dainty manipulators of the HASHI.



Power of the Rosary

by Sister ANGELE OF THE SACRED HEART¹, M.I.C.

Caramaguey is not much of a village. Composed of a baker's dozen of drab cottages playing hide and seek with fruit-bearing trees and gaudy flamboyant, it lies at about two kilometres from Mercedes Central.

Set apart from important urban centres by poor communications, possessing no schools, the families of this *pueblo* live in ignorance and in extreme poverty.

A few months ago, we Sisters took up again a weekly course of Christian doctrine given at Caramaguey, course which we had been forced to discontinue because of the pressure of work in our own mission post of Manguito.

Laden with books, charts, pictures and other educational paraphernalia we visited the village regularly every Saturday morning in order to prepare sixty young and not so young pupils to make their First Holy Communion. In spite of our efforts, however, progress in religious science proved so slow that we had all but decided to delay the ceremony until next year.

In the first week of May we once more discussed the problem. Finally we came to the conclusion that it would never do to postpone Our Lord's first visit to these souls in such dire need of His grace to keep pure and holy. Our Lady's help was, therefore, enlisted. Her statue was ensconced in the fork of a large tree standing on the village green, and every Saturday the doctrine lesson was preceded by the recitation of the Rosary with simple explanation of the mysteries.

Thanks to the marvelous power of Mary's maternal intercession, as the *Aves* rose heavenward, graces of enlightenment fell gradually on the group. The young people started helping one another in the study of catechism, the literate repeating the lessons and prayers to their illiterate companions. Enthusiasm rose to a boiling point, so much so that the priests in charge of the district found the children sufficiently prepared to make their First Holy Communion on June 25. What joyful news this was for the whole *pueblo*! In gratitude to Our Blessed Mother, the inhabitants continued

¹ Desneiges Brault, Morinville, Alberta.

to recite the Rosary during the month of June, the statue of Our Lady of Caridad being carried to each home in turn.

On the eve of the great day, two priests came from Manguito to hear confessions and to see to the last minute preparations. Early on June 25, the First Communicant class gathered in front of the outdoor altar decked with roses where the Holy Sacrifice was offered.

Afterwards, an act of consecration to Our Lady was recited, then the happy group sat down to a modest breakfast while the good people of the *pueblo* beamed with pride and joy. Before we left, all promised to keep up the good practice of the family Rosary.

Dear Lady of Caridad do have in tender keeping your people of Camaraguey who have recovered their fervour thanks to your Rosary.

Sister Angela of the Sacred Heart with a group of pupils.





CUBA

Floral Mystery

in a Cuban Garden

by Sister MARGARET OF THE INFANT JESUS¹, M.I.C.

Because of their numerous activities the missionaries of Cuba have little leisure to admire the beauties of nature. Is it surprising then, that they completely overlooked the presence of a floral mystery right in their garden?

True, some of the Sisters passing along the verandah early in the morning had caught a glimpse of certain white flowers near the garden entrance; but none had stopped to

study such a detail in the landscape.

For my part, I soon became intrigued by the row of cacti standing so grim and so rigid near the *convento*. Being a lover of flowers, I determined with the help of my companions to pry open the secret of the mysterious plants.

One evening as we walked in the garden, we discovered that the top branches of the hedge were packed with thick elongated buds somewhat



Sister Margaret of the Infant Jesus.

resembling those of lilies. We promised ourselves to feast our eyes on masses of bloom the next day; but we were disappointed, for no flowers appeared, and the cacti remained as enigmatic as ever.

Perhaps the strange elusive blooms preened in the dark and napped in the sunlight... A Sister who happened to go out into the garden one morn-

ing before the sun was up found, to her delight, quantities of sweet-smelling white flowers emerging from the leafless stalks. No sooner did the sun rise, however, than nothing remained but ugly buds sticking out of the trunks like so many adder heads. Thanks to the clues we possessed we were now ready to solve the whole mystery. Flashlights in

Each stem is crowned with large white blossoms.



hand we tiptoed into the garden at dusk. What a wonderful sight met our gaze! Each cactus was crowned with about twenty creamy-white flowers giving the stocky plant an airy touch of colour and grace. The large blossoms remained opened throughout the night perfuming the air within a radius of about one hundred feet.

Once again we admired the power of the Creator and the infinite variety of His works. For my part, I felt like adding a stanza to the *Benedicite* for the unrivalled beauty of the cactus blossom.

Cactus flowers are short-lived, the flowering period lasting rarely more than two or three weeks. The flowers then give way to a red edible fruit having somewhat the form and structure of a pear; the fruit of the night-blooming cactus is used in medicine.

In sheer number the cacti challenge imagination. So far, over 1,700 species, subspecies, and varieties have been classified. Despite their presence in the scattered areas of the world, all cacti regardless of present naturalization are of native American

origin. These plants of fantastic form and size have become remarkably adapted to continuous drought. Their leaves have been dropped for the most part, and the variously shaped stems and branches develop into reservoirs of water stored against the demands made by the heat. The spines also provide efficient insulation to the sensitive area, for moisture must be kept in and the heat kept out. Nature does not miss a trick!

Cinderella by day the cactus becomes for a short period Queen of the night. The most dramatic member of the *Cereus* Tribe is the least exposed to the public eye. May we not gather from it a lesson of humility and self-effacement? Despite its glamour, it is a distinct oddity even in the realm of the oddest characters.

From now on, when I tell my little pupils the story of the Garden of Eden, I will not fail to mention cacti which no doubt bloomed there beside the palm trees, the banana and the mango trees for the pleasure of our first parents.

SACRAMENT OF THE PRESENT MOMENT

AN ATMOSPHERE OF CRISIS takes people different ways. Some get so wrapped up in their work that they never look beyond the edge of their own cabbage-patch. Others think in continents, and are depressed, nowadays, by the exercise; what is the use of doing anything, when everything is going from bad to worse? The Christian ought to rise above both those temptations. His daily work, his common human duties, are a charge entrusted to him. He believes in the sacrament of the present moment; what might happen, what is likely to happen, he leaves in the hands of God.

Monsignor Ronald Knox in *Lightning Meditations*

Our Dear Departed

His Eminence Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, Cardinal Protector of our Community; Right Reverend L. I. T. Landry, D.P., **Rimouski**; Father Robert Valois, C.S.V., **Joliette**; Mother Marie de Sainte Rose, Superior General of the Sisters of Holy Cross; Mother Marie de Sainte Lucienne, Provincial Superior, Holy Cross Sisters, **Nominingue**; Sister Marie Martha, Sisters of Saint Ann, sister of our Sister Saint Pierre aux Liens; Mrs. J. O. Tessier, **Woonsocket, R. I.**, mother of our Sister Saint Julie; Mrs. Joseph Roy, **Paincourt, Ontario**, mother of our Sisters Anna Marie and Marie Angeline; Mr. Esdras Terrien, **Ottawa**, father of our Sister Marie Delia; Mrs. J. O. Mailly, **St. Pierre les Becquets**, mother of our Sister Marie Fabiola; Mr. Albert Saucier, **Verdun**, father of our Sisters Saint Alberte and Marie Françoise; Mr. Charles St. Pierre, **Manseau**, father of our Sister Saint Pierre Nolasque; Mr. Patrice Laquerre, **Saint Casimir**, father of our Sister Celine Therese; Mr. Jacques Philie, **Saint Hyacinthe**, brother of our Sister Francoise Romaine; Mr. Romeo Chalut, **Montreal**, foster father of our Sister Florence of the Sacred Heart; Mr. Octave Guenette, **Saint Anne des Plaines**, brother of our Sister Saint Matthew; Mr. Joseph Robitaille, **Saint Ursule**, brother of our Sister Saint Justine; Mr. Raoul Alary, **Montreal**, brother of our Sister Saint Melanie; Mr. Roland Crevier, **Montreal**, brother of our Sister Marie de l'Enfant Jesus; Mr. Lucien Cantin, **Quebec**, brother of our Sister Marie Ruth; Mr. Arthur Marsan, **Montreal**, brother of our Sister Marie Stanislaus; Mr. A. Corbeil, **Montreal**, brother of our Sister Saint Emile; Mr. Yves Liautaud, **Haiti**, brother of our Sister Saint Olga; Mrs. Honoré Fortier **St. Bernard of Dorchester**, grandmother of our Sister Raymond Marie; Mr. J. Marie Tremblay, **Roberval**; Mr. Jean Paul Lord, **South Shawinigan**; Mr. Eugene Poirier, **Montreal**; Miss Marie Joseph Champagne, **Giffard**; Mr. Apollinaire Champagne, **Saint Prosper of Dorchester**; Mrs. Alma Saint-Pierre, **Saint Helene of Kamouraska**; Mrs. Alderic Castonguay, Mrs. J. Lamarche, Mr. Victor Brochu, Miss Antoinette Noel, Mr. Napoleon Demange, **Montreal**; Mrs. Joseph Brunet, Mr. Gustave Landry, **Bordeaux**; Mrs. A. Begin, **Tetreaultville**; Mr. Philippe Labbe, **Cité Laflèche**; Mrs. Lucien Sevigny, **Joliette**; Mrs. Joseph Lusignan, **Belœilville**; Mrs. Arthur Maurice, **Saint Valerien**; Mrs. Jacques Mireault, **Saint Marie Salomé**; Mr. and Mrs. Lachapelle, **Granby**; Mrs. Joseph Charland, **Saint Chrysostom**; Mr. Elcé Lanoie, **Saint Guillaume d'Upton**; Mrs. Joseph Gagnon, **Nominingue**; Mrs. J. B. Paradis, Mr. Luc Gendron, **Trois Rivières**; Mr. Raoul Duchesne, Mr. Donat Bellemare, Mr. Denis Villemure, **Yamachiche**; Mrs. Antonin Casault, **Montmagny**; Mrs. Daniel Bernier, **Cap Saint Ignace**; Mr. Raymond Plamondon, **St. Raymond**; Mr. L. P. Marcoux, **Scott Junction**; Mrs. Joseph Tremblay, **Ivanhoe, Bagotville**; Mrs. Alpha Trottier, **St. Pierre les Becquets**; Mr. Auguste Gagnon, **Mont Joli**; Mr. Ludger Soucy, **St. Antonin**; Mrs. Alphonse LeBel, **St. Octave des Metis**; Mrs. Philias Dufour, **Jonquiere**; Mr. Georges Girard, **Kenogami**; Mrs. Glorifie Paiement, **Roxboro**; Mrs. Octave Dumont, **Lawrence, Mass.**; Mr. Edouard Caron, **Brunswick, Me.**; Mr. Victor E. LeClair, **Lewiston, Me.**; Mr. Emilien Dubois, M. Gedeon Vallieres, **Verdun**; Mrs. Loretta Charland Simpson, **Notre Dame de Grace**.

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