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**COHEN GOES TO CONFESSION**  
(Continued from Page 12)

and a prisoner (German Jew went into conference. And the outcome was that Father Campbell, with Cohen in close attendance, stood beside the bed of each Catholic prisoner, holding his hand beneath the privacy of a blanket. As the chaplain named the sins both great and small that become only too familiar to priests from frequent repetition in the privacy of the confessional, Cohen, the dutiful interpreter, repeated each offense in German. If the penitent wished to confess that particular sin—such a simple process, once it had been thought of—he simply squeezed the chaplain's hand.

It was my privilege on Christmas Day to make the rounds of the wards with five members of the corps of Base 11—McGranahan, Callahan, Anderson, Tobin and Shields—all former members of Father Finn's famous Chicago Paulist Choir. Starting in at nine in the morning, they kept going all day with only a short time out for noon mess. So beautiful were their voices and their selections so reminiscent of happier days, that tears flowed from eyesless sockets and the mouths of the hard-boiled quivered.

"Stille Nacht"—Cohen, Director  
About four in the afternoon we found ourselves at the prisoner's ward. Simultaneously, each one halted and looked at the other until Callahan said: "Well, boys, it's Christmas Day." After they had sung "Adeste Fideles" and "Angels We Have Heard on High," Cohen announced that the prisoners would like to show their appreciation by singing the world-famed German Christmas Carol.

Never do I hear the strains of "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht" without visualizing that group of prisoner patients, gathered about a bravely decorated Christmas tree, their singing directed by the little Berlin Jew with the big Christian heart.

**When Emperors Read Gospel to People**

One of the old chroniclers, Albertus Argentinensis, relates that at the Christmas Mass celebrated "at cock-crow" the Emperor Charles-magne stood with drawn sword and read the Gospel, "A decree went forth from Caesar Augustus."  
This was an ancient custom, according to which the Emperor, or any sovereign who should be present in the Papal chapel on Christmas night, used to read the fifth lesson in the office, with his sword drawn.

**Patronize Our Advertisers**

**They Never Heard of Christmas!**

Yet They Were a People Only 150 Miles from One of America's Largest Cities—A Reminiscence of a Phase of American Life of 50 Years Ago

It will be all but impossible to find today in any part of the United States a whole community of Christians to whom Christmas and its observance are unknown. Even those who still refuse to accept its Catholic significance as a religious festival have nevertheless become familiar with the name and at least a faint notion of the event which it recalls. This knowledge of the day on which we commemorate the Nativity of the Saviour has been spread first of all by the Catholic Church; but business has helped to introduce the name, if not its meaning, to regions and populations that are for the most part still inaccessible to her.  
Makers and vendors of almost every class of wares have exploited Christmas for their own material profit and without regard to its religious import. It is commerce, not Christianity, that they would advance when they spend millions to advertise Christmas in print, on the radio and by the sequence of their salesmen. In every nook and corner of the country these merchandisers have carried this Catholic word (for it is in par excellence a Catholic word), and with it they have carried to not a few Americans a grasp of its Catholic connotations.

**A Christmas-less People**

It would be all but impossible, I repeat, to find nowadays in any section of the United States a considerable Christian people who know no more of Christmas than they know (let us say) of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Yet such people here were the thousands less than fifty years ago. Some I know in my childhood, and strange to say, they dwell within 150 miles of St. Louis, the metropolis of the early Catholic settlement of Upper Louisiana.

In pursuit of his calling of a contractor, my father went in the late eighties to a region of hills in which a new village was being built—never mind in which direction from St. Louis. Deep in the woods and ringed about by mountains was a little settlement which dated back to the first years of the nineteenth century. Some of the inhabitants, indeed, were descendants of settlers who were there when Napoleon ceded Louisiana to Jefferson. With us went into this backwoods six other Catholic families. All around us was Protestantism.

The natives of this region, or their forebears, had drifted thither with a tide of emigration that had its source in the Carolinas. Westward through Tennessee and Kentucky they had come by slow perilous marches. Despoiling the towns on the banks of the Mississippi most of them French and Catholic—these American pioneers trekked many miles beyond the river to the rugged highlands, there to remain for nearly three-fourths of a century as remote from current civilization as if they had been in Dahomey. It was not until after the Civil War that a railroad penetrated their fastnesses. In my childhood hundreds of old men and women among them had yet to behold a train.

**"Old Man" Gulliver**

Most of these natives were Methodists of a holier sect, or Presbyterians of a dour persuasion, or Baptists of one of the two principal varieties—Hard Shell or Soft Shell. I have no recollection of Episcopalians or Congregationalists or even Campbellites in that ballroom. Names of units of Irish origin were common enough. I remember McCoy, Callahan, Cayce (pronounced Casey), Garrett, Higgins, Murphy, Murtree, etc. Not infrequently the given name of a male was a sort of corrective for the Irish patronymic he bore. Thus I knew a Calvin McCoy and a Luther Murphy. There were Scotch names and English names—Walter, Gregor, McArdie, Menefee, Deat, Gibson, Gray, Green, Wilson and the like.

There was even a Gulliver, and of him I have an especially acute recollection. In one of Appleton's readers—the fourth, I think—there was an abridgement of Lemuel Gulliver's adventures in Lilliput. When I was yet too young to read books, I commanded the services of a self-sacrificing sister. She went painfully through the story for me, perhaps a hundred times. Later I learned of "Old Man" Gulliver, who lived in the woods a mile from the settlement. He was well past eighty, I should say, and had a long white hair on his shoulders. My infantile mind at once identified him with Swift's hero, and I was often tempted (I recall) to search for more details of Lilliput. My brothers and sisters—all but one older than I—fostered my delusion for a long time, and recounted (supposedly on the authority of my ancient neighbor a good many interesting particulars of our Gulliver and the Lilliputians. At last when my Mother set me right, the rectification cost me no little hapiness. And so it was too concerning Santa Claus. And this mention of Santa Claus brings back to my theme. A week or two before each Christmas that we passed in this Arcady, my father imported to our home a burden of toys, candles, cakes and fruits. There were raisins and currants in our bread at this season—and pains and distresses in our midriffs, too; but that's not the story. The natives were as unfamiliar with currants and raisins as they were with Christmas, so that on one occasion a youngster to whom my Mother offered a cake containing these fruits spat out on the ground that it was insectiferous. That, however, is not his word.

**Marvel at Christmas Tree**

In the misty dawn of my life I had my first Christmas tree. It became a marvel for miles around. Cedars, of course, were no curiosity in those parts. The hills were blotched with their green. It was the toys and the tinsel that drew not only the boys and girls of the neighborhood, but also the men and women—some of them ten times my age. It was then I perceived these simple folk's utter ignorance of Christmas. In after times I came to know that for them neither the institution nor the name had existed here. They were of the seven Catholic families. The protestants of their progenitors had long before anathematized and rejected Romish superstitions like Christmas, but these denizens of the hills had lost this tradition of opposition.

**Never in the few years that I remained among them did they adopt the feast on their own account, but they were by no means loath to share its festive observance with us. That was notably true of their offspring. These refused none of our sweetmeats. They became as Catholic in their longing for the return of the day as we were. Their elders (especially the men) must acquiesce in any abhorrence of Father's eggnog that rested on their own account, but they were by no means loath to share the Season. I am sure it was as new and strange to these simple folk as his religion was, but much more popular with them. The Catholic children—perhaps thirty of both sexes and various ages—helped to fix the word "Christmas" in the vocabularies of these primitive Protestant natives. We greeted them on the festival with "Merry Christmas," and sometimes gave them Christmas presents. Many years later a Catholic church was built—and still stands in the settlement of which I write. Only last autumn I went a day's journey to see it—and found that full half of the townspeople are Catholics!**

**A Tribute To a People**

Let me record of these backwoods-men of my childhood that they were gentle, generous, honest, clean-hearted, good Christians according to their lights. Never did we suffer at their hands an injustice or an aggression—our persons, our property, our rights, our consciences were always sacred to them. As I write this tribute to them, I suffer a pang at the recollection of the liberties I took with their apples and their water-melons!

**Are You Going Home?**

Are you going home for Christmas, To all mothers heart with joy? Though you now are men and women You are still her girl or boy. Don't you know that she'll be lonely Christmas day if you're not there? Can't you see her sad tears falling, When she sees your vacant chair? Can't you see your dear old father, In his old familiar seat? Can't you hear him say to mother, That he's sad and cannot eat? Can't you see their dear eyes watch long, For you, through the window pane, Hoping they will see you coming, Once more down that old home lane? Sometimes, there will come a Christmas, It by chance, may be next year, When your father and your mother, Will be gone away from here. Oh, your parents love you dearly, And 'till all their hearts with cheer, If they see your smiling faces, When comes Christmas day each year. So, sit down and write a letter To them, and be sure to say, My dear parents I am coming, I'll be home, on Christmas day. —John A. Twamley.

**Christmas Once Outlawed**

In the course of the Puritan ascendancy in England an act of Parliament, in 1644, forbade the observance of Christmas, except as a day of fast and a market day. It was provided that shops should remain open, and plum puddings and mince pies were condemned as heathen. The act was resisted, and at Canterbury, there was a riot, but after the Restoration, Dissenters continued to call this day "Foolish."

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**St. Anthony's Best Known Shrine**  
The Atonement Friars at Graymoor in the Highlands-of-the-Hudson believe they are entirely right in saying that Saint Anthony's Shrine in the Church of Saint Francis on the Mount of the Atonement is the best known and most widely patronized of any Shrine in honor of the Wonder-Worker of Padua in the United States of America. Ever since St. Anthony's statue was set up in the Gospel Corner of the Sanctuary eighteen years ago, it has been the object of an increasing devotion on the part of his clients.  
Beginning with a rivulet, the petitions sent in for remembrance in the Graymoor Novena to Saint Anthony, have swollen into a perennial stream.  
**AMONG THE THOUSANDS OF THANKSGIVINGS RENDERED FOR FAVORS GRANTED THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF ST. ANTHONY THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MORE RECENT:**  
M. S., Brooklyn, N. Y.: "Sometime ago I sent you an offering for St. Anthony's Shrine and asked your prayers for my nephew who had a compound fracture of his arm and who had been set four times and after the last setting the X-ray showed the bones still out of place with an overlapping. The doctors could not do any more, and the plaster cast was left on for four weeks. When it was removed the arm was found to be in good condition and the bones properly joined together and the fragments all healed. The doctors were amazed as they expected the arm would need at least six months' treatment and they also expected to find a deformity, in fact the case was a complete surprise. We know that it is all due to the intercession of St. Anthony."  
M. B., Indiana: "Please accept this offering in thanksgiving to St. Anthony for a great favor received through his intercession. My wife started a Novena on Tuesday asking that I obtain work in one of the mines near home as I had to drive a distance of over eighty miles each day to the work I was then doing. On the next day I got work at the mine I had wanted to work in and just the day I had wished. My wife promised an offering from my first week's pay so I am sending it today. Please publish as that is the promise my wife made."  
Mrs. S. C., Centerville, Iowa: "I am enjoying check for St. Anthony's Bread as a thank offering for several great favors of an estate, safe delivery, successful operation, finding of lost money, and numerous smaller favors. We are also very happy over the return of a brother to the church after many years."  
R. H., Detroit, Mich.: "Kindly publish thanks to St. Anthony for two years, suffering with tuberculosis, but in my last week's return home to my family."  
A new Novena begins every Tuesday.  
**St. Anthony's Graymoor**  
DRAWER 51

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