

The Literary Cavalcade

Hunan Harvest

By John O'Connor

Three things in Hunan Harvest have needed saying for many years . . .

The first is the finality of the missionary's separation from the flesh and blood. It is a tearing-up of roots, a quick crucifixion for Christ.

The second truth about mission reality is . . . that for most missionaries his day-by-day routine is hum-drum, commonplace, and trivial.

The third . . . is a message I would like to write in words of living flame across the skies of our day: missionaries are needed in EVERY GENERATION. Each pagan generation has only one chance to hear the message of Christ.

Thus writes Archbishop Cushing of Boston in his eloquent and succinct introduction to HUNAN HARVEST by Father Thérèse Maguire of the Passionist Order.

A few weeks ago this corner reviewed Guerrilla Padre by Father Haggerty of the Philippines. No two books on the activity of missionaries ever stood in greater contrast. While Father Haggerty's had the thrill of the chase under the very eyes of the enemy, it must be remembered that the men in the Philippines rove about in an area in which cathedrals and universities, churches and schools have been known for centuries.

But Father Maguire and the heroic Passionists who set out with him on that day that seems so long ago, stepped into a country where the language was strange, the food odd, and the customs beyond understanding. As a true picture of the real missionary's day and year — this is the clearest one to come along.

Here are the heartbreaks and the long spans of time when not a familiar voice is heard nor a friendly face seen. Trips that now take three hours by plane used to take three weeks or three months or more on the amazing but maddening burrows. And besides facing the problems of recalcitrant donkeys, bad food, worn hands and the drudgery of monotonous — the Passionist has to be a medical man! Torture and martyrdom has been the lot of a number of them. Men have died before bandit chiefs and before Communist axes, for the harvests of Hunan have not been unbloody in our own times.

It was a forboding of this that seemed to hover over the young Passionists who sailed from San Francisco nearly a generation ago on the President Wilson. The final parting — as it was for some of them — tugged hard at the heart and the emotions.

. . . all the fond, remembered joys of the buried yester years stretched out detaining hands. Were not the Master calling, the past would have pleaded successfully that late July afternoon . . . at the foot of San Francisco's hills.

The past slipped over the horizon and the eager soldiers of the Christ, each carrying the shield of their great Order, went forward into the burning millions in the Orient. Some founded flourishing missions; some broke ground for their successors; some returned home ill; and some lived to die for Him for whom they had lived. This past week the Fr. Paul Maguire is the Passionist. The Mission is organized by a doctor now — and they wear a Red Star on their wooden caps. Essentially they differ only in numbers from those of the warrior bandits whose forces roamed over China from the chill waters of Amur to the red plains of Szechwan.

But the Passionists will return. Others will follow the paths of such men as Father Maguire. The seed of the martyrs will grow, watered as it has been by the blood of Fathers Holbein, Seybold, and Covejon. No power, human or satanic, can stay them. No power ever did.

The author touches on the missionary's task with rare fidelity: . . . There are only hours of repellent study, days of travel, months of seemingly unrequited effort. . . . There is now and then, like a flash of blinding pain, that terrifying loneliness which comes in the midst of crowds. Above all there is this to confess: the insatiable heart hunger — more agonizing than any physical hurt — to gather these, my people, to the fold!

Father Maguire writes with restraint. He is capable, as a former editor, of writing a flaming message . . . but he tries to be chosen the harder course. He has written a true, unvarnished picture of missionary life. He has reconsidered perfectly the main field to be harvested in the generations to come . . . For China in the future — and our missions will move and more and more find themselves drawn to the sleeping giant that will someday shake the earth.

Nonagenarian



William George Bruce, N.S.C., prominent leader for many years in Catholic Action movements, civic affairs, and publishing, marks his ninetieth birthday, March 17. The "young" nonagenarian is founder of The Bruce Publishing Company of Milwaukee, a house which has come to be recognized as one of the outstanding Catholic book publishers in the United States.

Papal Warrior Dead at 99

Lost of Canada Group Which Fought in 1870

Montreal — (NC) — The death here of Georges Charbonneau, 99, last surviving member of Canada's first detachment of Pontifical Zouaves, recalled the worldwide rally of volunteers to defend the temporal kingdom of Pope Pius IX against the Italians in 1868.

When Bishop Ignatius Bourget of Montreal appealed for Canadians to join the international organization of French, Belgian, Italian, English, Scotch and Irish volunteer soldiers raised to help the Pope, Mr. Charbonneau enlisted and took part in the historic departure ceremony of February 19, 1868, when 15,000 persons bade the Canadian unit fare well in Notre Dame Church here.

He was in Rome in 1870 when the Zouaves were overwhelmed through treachery by the Piedmontese and fired upon under the white flag at the Porta Pia. The coveted papal decoration, the Bene Merenti medal, was conferred upon him by Pope Pius IX.

Know It?

(Answers on Page 16)

If you answer all five, you're perfect; three or four, good; if only one or two, not so good.

1. What was the name of the woman whom Henry VIII severed England from the fold of the Church?

2. What adjective is used with such words as "altar," "mass," etc., to signify dedication to our Blessed Mother?

3. Pontius Pilate ordered that the "guilt" of the innocent Jesus be posted on the Cross of His execution. What is the meaning in English of the initials I.N.R.I., which appear on the crucifix?

4. Name the husbands of these Biblical women:

- Sara — Rebecca
- Rachel — Susanna
- Ruth — Sapphira

5. Identify the following saints, two of them martyrs:

(a) A captain of the Roman army who, while still a catechumen, cut his military cloak in half to cover a starving beggar.

(b) A king of Denmark, nephew of the English king of the same name who, to teach his Sattering courtiers the limitations of a mortal ruler's power, commanded the tide to stop at the feet of his throne.

(c) A captain of Emperor Decretian's royal guard who, presumably killed by arrows, appeared later to show his cruel persecutor.

LIBRARY SIGNPOST

By REV. BENEDICT EHMANN

Soldiers of God in Wartime

I would like my readers to see this review of the latest Maryknoll book, CHUNGKING LISTENING POST, by Father Mark Toulson, from the CHICAGO DAILY NEWS:

During the years of China's fight against the Japanese invaders, a small band of men and women fought a war of their own. They were not warriors, and what they battled against were not human enemies, but disease, hunger, filth and despair.

They were the Catholic missionaries — priests and nuns, from all parts of the world — many of whom died in the fulfillment of their duties. This book is a record of their adventures, their courage and their selflessness.

Father Toulson of Maryknoll Mission did about everything a soldier of humanity could do on a foreign post. Once he ran a clandestine radio station when the Japanese took possession of the locale and suppressed. At other times he was teacher, surgeon, physician and guide, broken being spiritual father to hundreds of natives.

Not all the adventures Father Toulson relates were his own. There is the curious story of the priest who drove a herd of pigs into a starving town which the Japanese had embargoed; that of missionaries who were tormented by being kept from sleep for two weeks; stories of bombings, fights, floods and losses, and of modest Father Jackson who refused three times to be made a bishop, until the Pope threatened to suspend him.

These priests ignored differences in race, nationalities and occupations. Like St. Francis, they found good in everybody. They knew no enemies although they were under constant threat of death. While nations were out to destroy each other, these selfless clergymen centered all the messengers of good will into a real brotherhood of men.

That's a striking story that Fr. John A. O'Shea of Notre Dame U. contributes to the March Reader's Digest about Dr. Albert Schweitzer, a Protestant medical missionary in equatorial Africa. Here is a man of profound attainments in music, a world authority on the music of Bach and a great organist, and of an extraordinary gift for scholarly labor, but yielding it all to a consuming desire to serve the Negro race so as to atone in some measure for what the white race has done against it. The preparation he put himself to, the way he won over his fiancée, the fear and the appalling hardships, the tenacity of purpose against overpowering odds, are evidences of the finest missionary spirit, such as should put the complacent mediocre spirit of some of us to shame. It is not that this pure flame of sacrificing love does not burn on the altar of Christian faith; Dr. Schweitzer does not believe in the Divinity of Christ; in fact, his book The Quest of the Historical Jesus is erroneous and therefore forbidden reading for Catholics. May his missionary example bring souls to Christ in answer for those to whom his writings on Christ have been a stumbling-block.

While we're on the missionary theme, here's another item of special interest. It's a book just out, called GUERRILLA PADRE IN MINDANAO, and it's told by the "guerrilla padre" himself, Father Edward Haggerty, S.J. The style is crisp and dramatic, and the account is full of breath-taking adventures just as they were experienced during the terrifying days of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines.

There are two new magazine ventures which deserve well from Catholic families. The Family Signet is published by Our Sunday Visitor, at Huntington, Indiana, for two dollars a year. Its articles now the spotlight on all kinds of marriage and domestic problems. It is written in a sprightly vein, and is just the right size for popular attention. . . . Catholic Youth is a quarterly for the young, devoted publisher at St. Louis, Mo., for one dollar a year. It is geared to the needs of sixth grade up through high school. All the year 'round something to suit their taste: fiction, sports, current events, current problems, religion, etc., and it is splendidly illustrated. It is in charge of the enterprising Fr. Louis Galen, who is one of the guiding spirits of the world-famous Catholic Signet. Parents, teachers and youth leaders can't go wrong in the magazine for their young folk.

Parents who want their reading about the current events and social conditions of our times, and who want to have their heads examined or else their hearts, for one or other is out of order. Many books are in circulation that never appear in the ordinary advertising or reviewing columns, and there is no possibility of buying them at home in any volume for this. Many of them are cheap affairs, well written and produced on a formula; and because the last time many of them are only for the moment.

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