

Escape From Calvary

By The Marshalls

The man, Dismas, himself, seemed a shadow in the narrow doorway and waited in the party to break up. Waiting he thought about gold—the feet the gold, the gold of it, the many the strange things it could buy.

He was an escaped convict. He had heard the chill passing of the execution sentence, had known the darkness of the death cell until, bringing one guard and another, he had been taken to the gallows. He was hunted he knew. In the market place where there would be pockets a plenty to pick there would also be watchful eyes. Fear whispered in Dismas' ear and he fringed deeper into the darkness. Yet money he must have. Word had come from the wretched bank warden of Jerusalem where he had fled for hiding that within a day or two a caravan would leave the city. Two weeks he would have to wait. He might yet make his way.

The party broke up. The guards departed, hurrying down the street without a glance at Dismas. Cautiously he was up the stairs to the quiet room where men have drunk and eaten well who know what they may leave behind? A good clock perhaps. A jeweled dagger, drawn to appear a choice jewel across the table. Even a purse.

Dismas slipped the latch soundlessly and slipped into the room. It was large, suitably furnished, but without sign of occupancy. He approached the door to a second floor of the tabernacle and Dismas turned to go. If that wasn't a thief's life!

Then Dismas saw the table. Dismas was under the table in one alpha movement, out again as quickly. No, he could not risk stealth. He must break it out.

A clank of metal and Dismas was under the table in one alpha movement, out again as quickly. No, he could not risk stealth. He must break it out.

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would he know about the whip. I ask you, unless he'd been there?"

Dismas groaned in sudden understanding. The tall soldier booted him. "Cheer up. Tomorrow will be a holiday." He was jerked to his feet. "You'll be the center of attraction." Guffawing loudly, the soldier dragged Dismas down the stairs.

CLOUDS GATHERED darkly. The wind swept moaning over the hills. The scolding of the crowd now fell as a tense watchfulness. Beneath the tough cross on which he hung, Dismas felt the earth shake.

Not for him, he knew. Creation felt no horror at his execution, nor at the agonies of the other robber executed with him. Not at his dying did the earth tremble. Groaning, Dismas turned to look at the other who had been taken—the Man scourged at the pillar, stripped of his garments, crowned with thorns, hung between thieves.

That was the Man whom he had seen leave the upper chamber with his friends the day before. This was the Man from Whose Cup he had drunk yesterday when both had still been free.

Thoughts plodded heavily through Dismas' mind. He himself was dying justly; this Man, so far as he knew, had done no evil. Yet had he not claimed to be God? Could God die? "Vah!" the crowd had jeered. "Come down from the cross that we may see and believe." But the skies had not opened to pour forth rescuing angels.

LIGHTNING SPLIT the darkness of Calvary. Illumined the blood-stained face of Christ and the sign nailed above His head: "This is the King of Jews." Lightning, pierced the darkness and Dismas twisted suddenly, painfully toward Christ. "Lord," his voice rose hoarsely with urgency. "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom."

The still beautiful eyes lifted searchingly. The parched mouth formed the sweet promise: "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

There was darkness over all the earth, the dead rose from their tombs and waited, the veil of the temple was rent. A caravan, about to depart from Jerusalem, delayed its leaving. But it didn't matter, now. The thief had already made his get-away.

Mandarin To Join Faith

Wuchow, China.—(NC)—Wong Kwai Tong, four-term mandarin of Shumuk County, has asked the Rev. Mark Tennen, a Maryknoll Missioner from Pittsford, Vt., to send a large number of catechists to his village so that all his people can be instructed in the Catholic faith. The mandarin has let it be known about the countryside that he is going to become a Catholic.

The Robin At the Cross

By DOROTHY BLOUNT

Holy Scripture tells us that standing by the cross of Jesus were His Blessed Mother and Mary of Cleophas, the beloved Disciple St. John, and Mary Magdalene. But there is a legend that a little bird followed St. John and the Holy Women to Calvary; that this little bird was the robin and that he bravely did his best to comfort Our Lady.

The grateful bird, the story Holy Child had fed and played goes, remembering how the with him at Nazareth, fluttered up to the cross and, like another Veronica, tried with its wings to wipe away the sweat and tears from the Holy Face of the crucified Redeemer.

It is also said that the robin got its red breast struggling to draw out the cruel thorns from the Sacred Brow; and that for this kindness, Our Divine Lord blessed the robin as the Bird of God and promised it protection and happiness. That is the reason why "... No wanton boy disturbs the robin that sits on the Holy Face of the crucified Redeemer. Weasel or wild-cat will her young molest; All sacred deem the bird of ruddy breast."

We are also told that the robin remained near the Holy Sepulchre for three days, and then, joined in the angel's song on the first Easter morn.

China Missioners Lauded

South Bend, Ind.—(NC)—A tribute to the work of Catholic missionaries in China was coupled with a denunciation of Soviet interference by Hallett Abend, for 16 years chief Far Eastern correspondent for The New York Times, in an interview following a lecture he gave here.

Mr. Abend, who is a Protestant, said that more than 2,500,000 Chinese Catholics testify to the work of several thousand Catholic missionaries, who include many Americans. There are also 8,000 Protestant missionaries in China and about 1,000,000 Protestant Chinese, he added.

Charging that the Chinese communists always have been controlled by Moscow, Abend said Soviet interference in China is part of Russia's attempt to dominate the world.



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Do You Know This Prayer?

It's a prayer before Communion, by an old Irish woman, and it reads:

"My loving Lord, a thousand welcomes! O Son of Mary, I love You, indeed I do. Who am I at all that You should come next or near me? O God of Heaven! Make a little corner for me in Your Heart, and never while there's life in me let me lose my place there; and after death may I still hide there. Amen.

Have pity on me, O Blessed Mother! Talk to my God for me. Tell Him I'm a poor, ignorant creature, full of nothing but sin and misery, but that I love you, His own dear Mother, and that I am a poor servant, and for your sweet sake, to help and pity me. Amen."

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