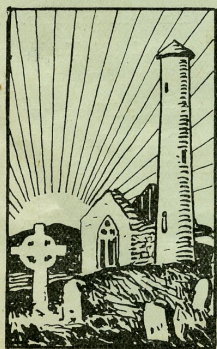


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THE AFRICAN MISSIONARY



GOING THEREFORE TEACH YE ALL NATIONS
MATT. 28. 19.



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The African Missionary.

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January, 1929.

EDITORIAL.

The Joy of Christmas.

IF there is one thing more in evidence to mark off the Feast of Christmas from the other great festivals of the year, it is the universal note of joy and gladness that fills the heart at the approach of the Holy Season. Whatever may be the conditions of our lives, in wealth or poverty, in health or sickness, care-free or burdened with many troubles, the Christmas season brings a refreshing and gladdening message to every one of us. Nor is the joy merely of the external order, for to each one comes at least some degree of personal happiness which we treasure in our inmost souls while the charm of Christmas lasts.

Peace and Love.

AND a charm surely surrounds the recurring anniversary of the Infant Saviour's birth. Does the peace proclaimed by angels on Christ's first natal day return again to fill men's hearts? Or is it that our thoughts are captured and feelings subdued by a glimpse of the straw-strewn manger and the mystery Child, its occupant—that pathetic picture of impotent majesty, of awful loneliness to which the human heart must needs go out in sympathy and love?

Perhaps that is the peace of the angels, for love is peace.

Yes, love is the key to the riddle of the universal joy of Christmas—the love of God for man, and its complement, man's love for God. The former culminates in the mystery of Christ taking our flesh, born into the

world in the guise of infant helplessness; and around the cradle of His birth we gather to do Him homage. His childlike form hiding His divinity does not repel us, rather His baby tenderness draws us near, so that a perfect blend of love, human and divine, hovers around the Christmas Crib. That is the atmosphere of Christmas the world over wherever hearts beat responsive to the gospel of Christ.

Ever a Child.

BEYOND the passing emotions which its annual recurrence occasions, Christmas means much in our lives. Its shadow lingers on long after the Crib has disappeared, stretches out to meet the glow of another advent, hovers over us during the entire year, for the Child is ever with us in the universal brotherhood of which He

Nihil Obstat—Censor Deputatus. Imprimatur: ✠ DANIEL COHALAN.

is the eldest member. He is ever calling to us, holding out those tiny hands of pleading, lisping His love-message in our ears. During the year we see Him under many other aspects—preaching to the multitudes, healing all manner of disease, suffering, even dying—but it is as the Babe of Bethlehem He first captured our love, and to that conception of Him we always turn when love would speak its message to His Heart.

Vacant Places Round the Crib.

So much does this spirit of Christmas pervade our lives that we can scarcely conceive an existence without its quickening influence. Into all the phases of our being it enters, warming, sweetening, gladdening. The past is hallowed by its memories, the present is purified and ennobled by its saving truths, the future is brightened by the promise of happiness which the Christ Child holds in His keeping. For such are the blessings of Christianity which the first Christmas brought to a sadly waiting world.

But the pity of it is that so few are privileged to enter into the spirit of Christmas; all the more so that we who enjoy its blessings are to some extent responsible for the void in the lives of those who know not the Babe of the Crib. For it is our duty, as it should be our joy, to proclaim Christ to those who know Him not, to carry the story of His love to those who do not believe in His Name. That is our duty as friends and followers of Christ, who call ourselves Christians.

Only One in a Hundred.

While we, in happiness and prayerful joy, celebrate the feast of Christmas in a few days' time, how many men and women throughout the world will feel no joyous thrill in the mystery of the Crib. If we travel in spirit through the length and breadth

of Africa only one in every hundred of its teeming millions will share the transports that fill the Christian heart. For the other ninety-nine have never heard of the Crib, and their lives are consequently empty of its blessings. What a world of difference it makes in their lives! Only those who have seen paganism in its grim reality can realise the blessedness of our happy lot, can measure the gulf that divides the pagan and the Christian.

To come to the relief of suffer-



ing humanity is a glorious work, but to bring the blessings of Christianity to the suffering pagan is a divine undertaking. For the pagan needs the refreshing presence of the Child Redeemer as much as his more civilised brother. He can appreciate the charm of the two-thousand-year-old drama of Bethlehem, he can respond to the graces which the Infant Saviour bestows on His adorers, and kneeling beside his African Crib, his heart, too, will swell

with that more than human joy as his love blends with the divine, making him brother to God's own Son.

Missionaries of Christmas.

To bring those Christmas joys into the lives of the African pagans is the work of our Missionaries. Cost what it may, they are determined to share with the African people the blessings which the Stable of Bethlehem introduced to the world. Even as we write these lines twelve more of our Irish priests are on their way to the West Coast to join their apostolic brothers. Twelve more Missionaries for Africa! It is but a comparatively small number of course where Missionaries are wanted by the hundred, where converts can be numbered by the thousand, where pagans are reckoned in millions. But they carry to their task what more than outweighs the lack of numbers, for Jesus Himself accompanies them to take up His abode in Bethlehem-like poverty among the African people.

Wherever the Missionary goes he will set up the Crib, and from that Crib will go forth the love-message of the Infant Saviour—a message that will attract a simple if misguided people, that will draw to Him hearts empty of love that they may be filled with divine peace and joy and gladness. And when he sees his entire people gathered in love around the Crib the Missionary's task is well-nigh done.

In our thoughts let us follow our Missionaries to West Africa. By our prayers and charity let us help them to multiply those Christmas Cribs through the towns and villages of the Negro land. And when we ourselves kneel before the newborn Babe on Christmas morning His welcome smile and assured blessing will be ample reward for our missionary generosity.

THE "ULO" FEAST.

A PAGAN CELEBRATION AT ASABA, NIGERIA.
By THE MOST REV. BISHOP BRODERICK, A.M., V.A.

BANG! Bang!! Bang!!! went the guns of this town of 12,000 Ibo-speaking Nigerians, at the early hour of 4 a.m., to arouse the sleeping populace for the "fiery" procession to the waters of the lordly Niger.

From time immemorial their ancestors celebrated this feast every two years. This overwhelmingly pagan town fondly believes that it was to the institution of this feast their forbears owed the preservation of their lives when a deadly plague threatened to blot out their very names.

Early this morning I looked closely at these

the second time it was religiously carried round the head, this point of ritual having been carefully attended to before leaving the interior of their houses and their immediate precincts, and then, with a last "Gbakule" the evil-laden wood was hurled into the river to be swept away, ever farther away, in the waters that know no return.

Instantly the crowds hurry gladly homewards—all evils left behind—to a triduum of feasting and dancing and merry-making.

"Why should fire be chosen for this procession," I enquired of a septuagenarian Catholic.



"THE AFRICAN MISSIONARY"
Greets its Promoters and Readers
with
A Happy Christmas
and
A Glad New Year



helter-skelter thousands of people, young and old, rich and poor—each waving a piece of lighted faggot, each chanting his own litany of evils from which he would be delivered, drowned in one unvarying refrain: "Afe 'Tita 'gbakule" (body trouble go away), amidst the sounding of bugles, the blowing of huge ivory horns, the beating of drums, and the roaring of many drums.

It was truly a most impressive sight. As the crowds approached their great river Niger, some eight hundred yards distant, their enthusiasm and religious fervour knew no bounds. The most solemn moment had arrived—the lighted wood bearing in itself all their evils of soul and body was to be cast into the bosom of the Niger. For

"Fire," said he, "is a thorough cleanser, the seat of life, the heart of every living thing. Fire and water can never agree."

Whatever the true explanation, the fact remains that such processional litanies have their roots deep down in the souls of this primitive populace and bear unmistakable witness to the desire of all people to be preserved from evil and to be guarded by a propitiated Spirit.

Would that Asaba's pagan thousands would only turn to our Mission Church where alone they can find true enlightenment and where too they can be cleansed from the greatest of all evils—sin in all its forms.



The Provincial's Page.

HOW I SPENT CHRISTMAS IN 1927.

WELL, I spent it at Asaba, in Western Nigeria. Asaba is a town of about 10,000 inhabitants and is situated prettily on the banks of the lordly Niger. It is His Lordship, Dr. Broderick's residence, and, therefore, the headquarters of the Vicariate or Bishopric of Western Nigeria. Asaba was the headquarters, too, of the great Niger Company who are now removed to Burutu which is at the mouth of one of the Niger's myriad outlets to the sea.

May I state that it was at Burutu I landed in my desire to study and know by experience our Irish territory of Western Nigeria. Thence I passed in a launch through the intricate creeks that cut into a million parcels the swampy mangrove forests of the South, until I reached Warri, which is the first principal Mission station of the Vicariate. To continue my digression, may I add that I met His Lordship here who had kindly come to meet me and drive me to Asaba, which is 160 miles farther north. Asaba is reached by a motorable road skirted by beautiful African vegetation and forests that are as endless as they are impenetrable.

I felt particularly happy in the consciousness of being in time for Christmas in the capital of one of our most important Vicariates. In a broader sense, I was ever so greedy of experience especially of the Missionary kind in that part of Africa with which I had so much to do. I am purposely omitting all reception details which on the part of both priests and people were quite charming, spontaneous, and natural.

You have heard of the man who for the trees could not see the wood. Well you may say of a traveller through Asaba that he passes by with-

out seeing the town on account of the houses. Everywhere in this part of Africa is giant vegetation or mighty forests. For instance, cut a field bare and in six months it is covered with growths of grass and plants frequently from ten to fifteen feet high. You can imagine, therefore, the work it means to keep land clear. Asaba, like most of the African towns, is a conglomeration of little villages hidden from the streets and from one another in virtue of the vegetation of the tropics. Hence you may pass through and have no notion of the magnitude of the place. As a happy result, of course, dirty slums are out of the question.

Notwithstanding this, our Mission buildings at Asaba are on exceptionally exposed grounds which occupy, about eight acres, four belonging to the Fathers and four to the Sisters. The Bishop's residence is a simple one-storey building with a serviceable covered verandah at the front and rear, and with five habitable apartments. The good Bishop desired me to find a benefactor to enable him to put to his house a second storey with a view to his being able to receive his visiting priests. *Qui habet aures audiendi, audiat.*

The boys' schools are able to accommodate 700 pupils, allowing each pupil governmental cubic feet. These schools are solidly built and have a nice appearance. The little church, which is far too small, though extremely neat, is kept very clean. The Sisters' buildings are on a smaller scale; their schools are even inadequate.

During the few days preceding Christmas, the Fathers were kept very busy examining the catechumens and training the choir of school-children. Ninety-six catechumens out of two

hundred under instruction passed their examination, and I was asked to baptise them. It was just what I coveted with my whole heart. I had observed the feelings of those who were admitted to and those who were refused the sacrament. The first I saw admitted was a little girl of ten. On hearing her success she left the room, ran out into the playground, and there started to dance with frenzy all the jazz and Charleston dances that have been taken heretofore from the African or will be taken from him until such time as the stock of native antics is exhausted. Apparently she wanted to rid herself of a joy that was too great for her poor little heart. The next successful candidate she took into her arms to hug and throw wildly into the air. The rejected ones, on the contrary, ran to the nearest pillar to cry in depressing desolation. It was, therefore, an immense joy for me to be privileged to baptise those well trained boys and girls who were unmistakably yearning for the graces of our holy religion.

At four o'clock in the morning of Christmas Eve voices were already heard in the grounds about the church; the catechumens were already thronging in with their sponsors. Eventually a quota of thirty-six was given me, the remainder were allotted to Father Tom Greene and to Father Paul, a native priest. I shall never forget the reverent attitude, the canny intelligence, the immense desire of that group of men and boys. They answered all the ritual questions with astonishing alertness as if they understood Latin, and lent themselves throughout the long ceremony with so complete an abandonment that it would seem they had lost all personal wish or desire to assume fully the will of the baptising priest. In these dispositions those young Africans were received into the Catholic Church, making me believe, if ever I doubted it, that the complete conversion of their race was only a matter of time.

After Baptism all the newly Baptised Christians assisted at Mass at which they received their First Communion.

The reader will now be able to picture the joy of Christmas Eve at Asaba, and at all the Mission stations of West Africa.

The Pontifical High Mass at midnight was another big surprise, for I couldn't realise without actual experience the perfection of the whole ceremony. The congregation stood, knelt, and sat according to the liturgical rules, and frequently sang portions of the Mass with a choir who were truly marvelous. The church was filled for all the Masses of Christmas day, and everybody went to Holy Communion. The people, too, were all nicely dressed. They were indeed happy and delightful congregations.

In the evening, after Benediction, the grounds presented a fantastic appearance, thanks to the gaudy colouring of the varied apparels; and of course all came to visit the Bishop and his priests, and came with naturalness and grace, the little boys and girls being very anxious to show us their new clothes and dresses.

Perhaps the thing that surprised me most has yet to be told. The whole town, pagan and Christian alike, observed Christmas and Christmas week as a holiday—which goes to show that the seventy per cent. pagan is under the complete influence of the thirty per cent. Catholic and Christian. Bands paraded the town, little boys and girls sang and danced, the old people met in simple public banquets, and in every mouth at every instant was the word Christmas.

I pronounce then without hesitation that the joys and spirit of Christmas were as manifest, in fact more apparent, in this town of pagan Africa as in any town or village in Ireland whose people have such an irresistible disinclination to express overtly their natural feelings. If the Irish people spend Christmas amid the internal joys of their hearts and homes, the Africans spend theirs amid external manifestations of rejoicings without reticence or human respect, in streets lit up by the beautiful hot sun and lined with orange trees pulled to the ground by the weight of luscious fruit.

No wonder, then, the Missionary who brings these glad tidings and things is so loved and respected, no wonder he feels so happy at Christmas in the many Asabas of Africa and of the entire pagan world.

MAURICE SLATTERY, A.M.

"SEAN THE RAKE."

By MARY T. McKENNA.

SEAN THE RAKE, as he was generally called, seated himself in the shelter of the bushy rath, and taking a stale crust from his pocket began to munch it leisurely. His thin bony hands were blue with the cold, and his deep-set grey eyes had a wolfish hungry look in them.

"Much Christmas and the New Year means to the like of me," he soliloquised as he glanced down into the valley, "all the world feasting and making merry, and I out on the hillside without a spot to lay me head."

He drew his ragged coat around him and proceeded slowly with his meagre repast.

"It'll freeze hard to-night," he mused, as he glanced at the vivid blue sky with its red and gold sunset, "and I wonder where I'll get shelter this blessed Christmas Eve for I haven't a shilling to pay for my lodgings."

A robin chirped a forlorn few notes above his head, a flock of sheep wound slowly through the pasture, and a herd of cows clustered mooing over a gate in anticipation of milking time.

"Aye, there is no pity for Sean the Rake in the world," he muttered, "not that I deserve much, but, after all, I am a human being. Ah, 'tis many a time my poor old mother warned me I would die an outcast and a beggar if I didn't mend me ways, but I was too headstrong to take her advice then, and now the real bad times are upon me, and I have no where to turn."

With a careless shrug he rose from his cramped position. The short winter sunset was fast giving way to dusk, and from more than one cottage in the quiet valley Christmas candles had begun to glimmer weakly in the gloaming.

Not a hundred yards distant in a lonely spot nestled a tiny cottage encircled by a white-thorn hedge. Sean the Rake's wolfish eyes rested on it thoughtfully for some minutes.

"'Tis there Nancy Nairn lives all to herself," he muttered, "and they say she has a little hoard laid by in the toe of her stocking. Now what does an auld body like that want with money? She has her pension to live on, and a few hens and a pig to pay her funeral expenses when she dies; she has no use for money at all, and here am I without a penny to keep body and soul together."

He peered hungrily down at the quiet cottage in its still isolation. There was not a solitary soul to be seen in the horizon—no one to watch where he went or what he did. Sean the Rake leaned on his stout ashplant for the space of a minute debating within himself. He had begged and drank, cajoled, and even swindled on small lines, but he had never robbed, and his whole spirit recoiled from the dastardly deed of plundering a half deaf, half blind old woman.

Then the tempter spoke again:—just drop in on her in a casual sort of way, and ask her for a little help as it is Christmas Eve; in the meantime keep your eyes open, and without hurting her you might be able to come by a pound or two.

Shambling slowly forward he made his way to Nancy Nairn's dwelling. Even as he slunk in at the side of the white thorn hedge he could see her lighting the Christmas candle. Very stealthily he stole up to the one panel window half hidden by the thatch.

A red turf fire was blazing on the hearth. It shone on the tiny dresser with its store of jugs and plates, and was reflected on the bright tins on the snowy walls. The old woman was evidently preparing supper for a white cloth was spread on the end of the deal table, and a kettle sang gaily on the hob.

He was about to step towards the door when he saw her reach cautiously behind a dish on the dresser. Scarcely daring to breathe he watched her take down a quaint spoutless tea-pot, and carry it carefully to the table.

Half furtively she glanced around the kitchen, then with thoughtful mien, and lips puckered up into a wrinkled line she put her hand into the tea-pot, and drew forth a small brown packet.

Holding it for an instant to her poor dim eyes she fumblingly untied it, disclosing as she did so the glint of yellow gold and a tidy roll of banknotes.

The man's face at the window showed lean and tense, his deep-set eyes put on a hungry glare, his bearded lips smiled almost mockingly. Why, the money was his for the taking, he told himself in the evening stillness. One bound into the lonely kitchen, one sharp wrap of his trusty ash plant, and the half blind creature was stunned

and robbed. With a cat-like movement he crept cautiously to the open door.

She was standing now with her back to him, but facing the little Sacred Heart altar, the packet of notes and gold raised in a posture of offering to the sweet picture face of the God-man.

"'Tis all I have, Dear Lord," she was saying in a shrill quavering voice, "'tis all in this world I possess, but you are welcome to it, Dear Lord, welcome a thousand times over."

Softly, softly he crept inside the threshold grasping his ashplant with such a grip that his bony knuckles showed hard and white.

"Oh, Sacred Heart of my own sweet Jesus," she prayed, "'tis glad I am to have it to offer to You, glad I am to have worked and toiled all through my poor life to be able in the end to lend a helping hand in sending even one missionary to those millions of pagans in far away Africa."

Sean the Rake's grey eyes winced as he glanced from the woman's pale lined face to the picture of the gentle Saviour.

"Oh sweet Jesus, all my life I gave my little mite, my widow's mite, that the message of Thy love may be carried over the seas to the poor pagans living in darkness that they might hear of Thy mercy and compassion, that they might learn of Thy bitter agony in the garden, and Thy sorrowful death on the Cross."

Sean the Rake took one step towards her—then his feet seemed glued to the earth. He tried to raise his ash plant above her head, but his arm fell to his side like a dead log.

"Sweet little Infant Jesus, bless us and protect us this Christmas night," she went on softly, "and have mercy on all poor sinners, and stay their hands in each wicked deed, that peace and good will may reign abroad on your own sweet Christmas Feast."

Sean's bearded lips quivered, and he heaved a soft sigh.

Her poor lean toil-worn hands were now clasped in silent prayer, and her dim eyes raised lovingly to her Saviour.

"She is an auld saint, an auld saint," the man murmured as he glanced dubiously at his ashplant. Suddenly every muscle in his body grew taut, and he stood as one transfixed, for by the light of the Christmas candle he saw a face, a fair childlike face, framed in soft golden curls, pressed close to the one panelled window.

"God have mercy on me," he breathed, thumping his breast, and turning to fly through

the open doorway, but a woman stood in the threshold, a woman and a boy. The boy was tall and slim and fair, with deep blue eyes and a sunny smile.

"God save all here," the woman cried in low full tones.

"God and Mary save you," replied the old woman as she turned to greet her guests.

All three cast wondering glances at Sean the Rake as he slunk into the shadows.

"I came to ask you, Nancy Nairn, to spare me a bite and a sup this Christmas night, for 'tis cold and hungry I am," Sean said with a non-plussed air.

"Then you are welcome to Nancy Nairn's hearth, avic, this Christmas Eve," the old woman returned hospitably. "Come, take an air of the fire, the kettle is singing on the hob, and I'll have a bit of supper ready for you in no time."

"Sit down, sit down, Mary Quinn," she cried, leading the woman to the sughan chair. "I was tired waiting for yourself and Phelim—I thought you would never come. See here," she said,

slipping the little brown parcel of notes and gold into the boy's breast pocket, "that is Nancy Nairn's gift to her godson, Phelim Quinn. Now you have the wherewith to begin your studies, and buy your books. Phelim ashore," she cried softly, "may you be the great missionary among the pagans in Africa."

Sean watched the little by-play with increasing interest. Of course he should have known the woman was Tom Quinn's wife at the foot of the hill, and the fair young boy was Tom's son.

So poor Nancy was giving her life's savings to young Phelim in order that he might have the wherewith to become a missionary. It was just what an auld saint like her would do, she would make another saint of that fair young boy, aye, and he would make

saints of the pagans. Nancy's savings were surely invested in heaven's own bank, and she was in very truth one of the wise virgins.

Just an hour later Sean the Rake shambled down the white road towards the village. He felt warm and comforted after his good supper, and in his pocket reposed a two shilling piece, Nancy's Christmas gift.

Something like a lump rose in the man's throat as he turned the money over in his pocket. "She is the tender hearted old creature," he muttered,

(Continued at foot of next page).

A CHILD AT THE TABERNACLE.

Jesus I am knocking,
Jesus are You there?
I only want to whisper
A tiny, weeny prayer.

Jesus, won't You listen?
I know You're always in.
Mammy said You'd answer me.
Please keep me from all sin.

Jesus, are You listening
To my little prayer?
And won't You take this pretty
flower
And keep it always near.

Please make me kind and gentle,
For I am sometimes wild;
But Mammy said You'd make me
Like You, meek and mild.

A. H.

NEGRO PRIEST BAPTISES OWN SISTER.

KETA (Gold Coast, West Africa). On his first visit home to Keta, after his recent ordination to the priesthood in Togo, Father Henry Kwakume baptised his own sister who had previously been an Anglican. This interesting personal ceremony was but one of the many functions performed by the young priest. His reception on arrival was a triumph of reverence and respect on the part of the natives for their countryman raised to the dignity of the priesthood. The school boys of the Denu walked eighteen miles to welcome him. At the solemn Mass on Sunday, October 7th, the size of the congregation necessitated the erection of two large sheds for its accommodation. At the blessing of the Mother Serapion



Father Henry Kwakume, the first Native Priest in Togoland, on the occasion of his First Mass.

Jubilee School by Fr. Kwakume in the afternoon many European officials and residents attended, including the District Commissioner.

Fr. Kwakume, ordained in the Vicariate of Togo on September 23rd, is the first Native Priest in Togo, though he comes from the Keta district in the neighbouring Gold Coast country. He is the nephew of the Paramount Chief of the country, Togbi Fia Sri II.

The Jubilee School, blessed by Fr. Kwakume, is so named in honour of the Silver Jubilee of Mother Serapion. The corner stone was laid by the Governor of the Gold Coast on February 22nd of the present year.

(Fides Service).

"SEAN THE RAKE."—continued.

"'tis the like of her would make you remember God and His goodness, 'tis the like of her would make one sorry for his sins."

Even as he stopped to glance in at the village church among the trees, where worships were passing in and out preparing for the Feast by making their peace with God, a tall dark figure brushed hurriedly against him.

"Whom have I here," demanded a gay almost boyish voice, as the young curate stopped abruptly before him.

"Sean the Rake, your reverence," the man returned a trifle shamefacedly.

"Well, Sean," cried young Fr. Cassidy, putting a kindly hand on the tramp's shoulder, "are you going to prepare for Christmas by going to Confession?"

"'Tis ten long years since I was there," Sean returned tentatively, "I'd hardly know how to begin now."

"I'll help you through, there is no need to fear," Fr. Cassidy whispered encouragingly.

"I'll do my best," the tramp muttered anxiously, "I'll have a long sorry story to tell

you, Father, of all I did in them past ten years, but what is worse than all is the terrible, terrible thing I very nearly done to-night."

"Come, my son," the priest said gently, "God did not despise the penitent thief on the cross, he forgave and blessed him. He is waiting to-night to welcome you to His Beloved Sacred Heart, for He Himself has told us that there is joy in heaven at one sinner doing penance."

It was a truly contrite Sean who crept from the confessional, and many a fervent act of thanksgiving he made that he had not touched a hair of old Nancy Nairn's head. "Sure only for her praying like that and bringing young Phelim Quinn to give him the money to become a missionary, God knows what way things would have ended," he told himself with a shudder.

Very fervently Sean resolved to begin life anew, and with Fr. Cassidy's aid he kept his resolve. To-day in a quiet convent garden a silent old man works diligently among the flowers and shrubs. He is keenly interested in the African Missions, and especially in a Fr. Phelim Quinn toiling for Christ in far away Liberia. Many a shilling he sends to help in the great work, and his every subscription bears the name of "Sean the Rake."



PROMOTERS' CORNER



HE Christmas Season is almost here, and it is my very pleasant duty to wish all our Promoters a Very Happy Christmas. Soon the Divine Child will be with us again in the Crib, and new-born into our hearts, and His coming will have a very special meaning for our Promoters and helpers. During the year they have co-operated in a work most dear to His Heart, a work that is essentially His work, and because of which He came on earth—the spreading of the Gospel of love among men. It is but natural to suppose that all



Miss Kitty Furlong,
Presentation Convent,
Wexford.

energetic co-operation of the new, the number of our readers has increased considerably. It is our hope that a further increase will mark the coming year. Now that the "A.M." is being published every month, and at a lower price, we feel sure that none of our readers will desert the cause of the Missions, and we trust that Promoters will maintain the zeal and activity which they displayed during the past year. New Promoters, too, will surely come to our assistance, adding their weight to the Missionary movement on behalf of Africa.

The work of Africa's conversion must go on. All who help behind the lines are



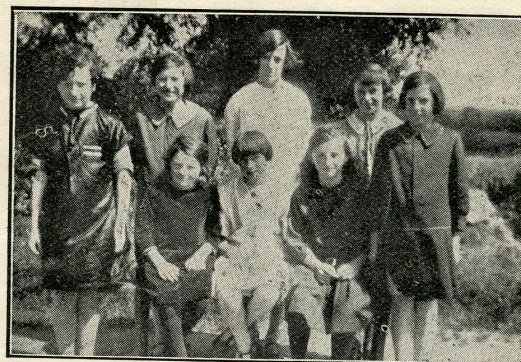
The Boarders at St. Peter's Convent, Athlone, delight in the "A.M."

those who interest themselves in this work of the Child-God will have a very special place in His Heart, a very special share in the blessings He brings on earth on Xmas morning. And we pray that our faithful Promoters will be blessed by the dear little Babe of Bethlehem on His Xmas coming.



Some of our zealous promoters in Convent of Mercy, Tuam.

We take this opportunity, too, to thank them, one and all, for what they have done for us during 1928. Thanks to the continued efforts of the old Promoters and the



Eight enthusiastic helpers from Castlegannon N.S., Mullinavat, Co. Waterford.

affecting the success of the soldier-apostles. By organising these co-workers of our Missionaries Promoters are rendering invaluable service — they are widening and strengthening the forces that will help eventually to bring Africa to the feet of Jesus.

We look forward, therefore, with well grounded hope to the New Year. Once again we thank you all for your generous co-operation in our Missionary work, and we beg of God to make your Christmas a blessed one and your New Year joyous and happy.

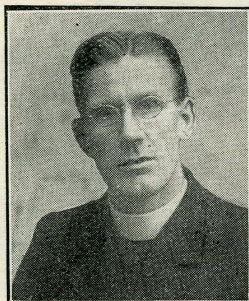


Miss Imelda Malone, Ennis.

What Our Missionaries Say—

AMONG THE LEPERS.

Outcast from the society of their fellow men, the lepers have one constant friend, the Missionary who sees a soul to be saved beneath even the repulsive form of the victim of this loathsome disease. For many years Fr. Porter has ministered to the leper settlement of Igbuzo, most of whose inmates are now christians, and all look forward, with pleasure, to his parochial visits.



REV. W. PORTER, A.M.

"Last evening Fathers Farrington, McSweeney and I went down to the leper settlement. A week previously a number of catechumens had been examined, and now after a short retreat they were prepared for the great day of baptism.

We had a long evening with the lepers — Fathers Farrington and McSweeney baptising, the one the men, the other the women. I took on my usual work of hearing the confessions. All were to receive Holy Communion on the following day.

It was truly a work which must have delighted the Heart of Our Divine Lord—to see those poor souls freed from the slavery of sin, and made subject to the sweet yoke of His Gospel. I was delighted this morning to see their little chapel filled beyond its limits, and to see almost every christian man and woman receive Holy Communion.

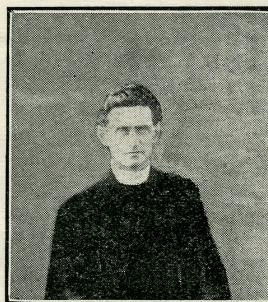
I say nothing of the dark side of the picture, for there were many things there naturally revolting to human nature. But there is a law of compensation even in spiritual things which makes one overlook such trifles."

W. PORTER, A.M.

THE MAGIC BOX.

Fr. O'Connell, who has seen eight years of strenuous labour in the battle for souls in the front lines in Western

Nigeria, sends us the following letter. We are sure it will give our Readers a peep into the lives of our Missionaries who are holding their posts among Nigeria's sun-scorched hills.



REV. P. O'CONNELL, A.M.

"It was Sunday at Ikamu. Catechism and evening devotions were over; the palavers—mostly domestic perplexities—on the list for hearing were put off until the morrow when I should have more time to listen to the rambling, and, probably, boring complaints of the parties concerned. I had ample for the day, and then, too, I had accepted the invitation to visit the village of a kind old chief.

After a hasty cup of tea I headed for the village in question, accompanied by my catechist and some christians. As usual I took the gramophone and football—with these I invariably succeed in attracting a crowd. Arrived at the market place I soon had the 'magic box' in action, and, as expected, men, women, and children swarmed around me. With open mouthed astonishment they gazed on the mysterious box that could sing, talk, and laugh. From all sides came the exclamation—'Idam oyinbo' (White man's magic) The 'Laughing Policeman' overshadowed all that went before, and drove young and old alike frantic with excitement.

They pushed and jostled one another to obtain a more commanding view. Mothers raised their babes aloft that they too might get a peep, while venturesome lads, with monkey-like agility, climbed on to the surrounding trees, and perched themselves on the branches. The Chief and a few of the Elders squatting on mats in front of me insisted on touching the magic box. Touch

it they did—a deathlike silence hung over the expectant crowd.—Nothing happened!

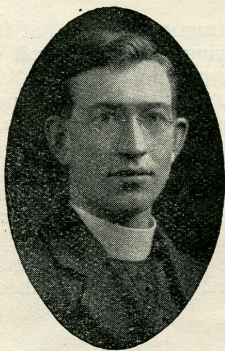
Unfortunately a fast approaching tornado brought our open air concert to an abrupt end. However, before the crowd began to disperse I spoke to them about our Holy Mother the Church—gave them the love-story of Calvary. Few though my words were they bore fruit—we have now in the place eight newly listed catechumens.

In blinding rain I wended my way back to the Mission, but had no sooner arrived than a pagan rushed in to implore me to visit his little son, who, he said, was 'sick too much.' Out into the tornado again, and on to the hovel hut where I found the boy making his last fight for life. Nothing could be done to save him, so I baptised him at once. He is now with the angels in heaven."

P. O'CONNELL, A.M.

HIS TUMBLLED-DOWN SHACK.

Father Dervan is a one-year-old Missionary, and is already finding fun in the trenches. As he says himself, "good days are coming." But when he builds his new house we cannot imagine him singing: "Oh! I want to go back to that tumbled down shack." Perhaps our readers will tell him close his eyes and see what God will send him.



REV. J. DERVAN, A.M.

"Oh! you should see it—my tumbled down shack. Here I am living in the midst of the Ishan tribe in a beehive shaped hut. It stings too—a veritable playground for the blood-sucking mosquito. It is neither sun-proof nor rain-proof—a helmet continually on provides against the treacherous sun, dodging and side stepping avoids the leaks. Could you see me sometimes you'd imagine I was going through all the wild gyrations of an African dance. I have a little money on hands, but not yet enough to start the new house.

"Yesterday I visited a bush-school, and found the boys reading lessons aloud. One sentence ran—"You have immortalised me" said the King to the sculptor."

"Teacher: 'Boys, what is the meaning of "you have immortalised me"'"

"Boys: 'You have spoiled me.'"

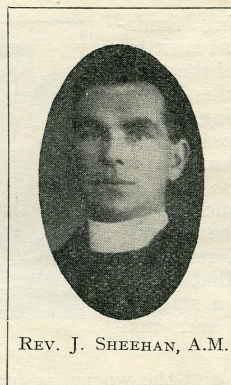
"Teacher (indignantly) 'No: you have scandalised me.'"

"But, perhaps the boys were right!"

J. DERVAN, A.M.

WOMAN AGAIN!

Fr. Sheehan, who is well to the fore as a Missionary soldier—having toiled for five years among the most primitive tribe in the interior of Nigeria—sends us the following drama from the heart of the African bush. Polygamy is not only the greatest obstacle to the conversion of the African, but it carries in its train the darkest and foulest of deeds.



REV. J. SHEEHAN, A.M.

"Oshemi wanted to be a 'big-man,' that is, a man of importance. A man's social position here is judged by the number of wives he has. Oshemi had a number already—but he was ambitious, and unscrupulous. By trickery and treats (the African does not waste his time throwing 'glad eyes') he succeeded in getting possession of one more woman—the wife of an unfortunate neighbour called Mandu.

"Mandu begged and implored for justice, but Oshemi only laughed and mocked him in true pagan style. That day Mandu strolled through the African bush, nursing revenge in his heart—his eyes searching savagely the thick undergrowth. No white man will ever discover the awful secrets that the African bush holds concealed in its bosom. There grow herbs whose deadly essence can kill in so many minutes or in as many weeks.

"Oshemi fell sick somehow—a mysterious sickness. His whole body quivered and ached. 'Poisoned,' he gasped—and poisoned he was, doomed to a lingering and torturing death.

"His wives fled. His friends shunned him. At last in desperation he crawled to the 'kind whiteman,' the local Missionary, to seek aid and consolation. The 'kind whiteman' spoke to him about God; Oshemi begged for baptism, and so became a little child once more.

"Providence hovers over even the African bush. There It found Oshemi, the sinner; there It punished him; there, too, It cleansed him, and claimed him as Its own."

J. SHEEHAN, A.M.

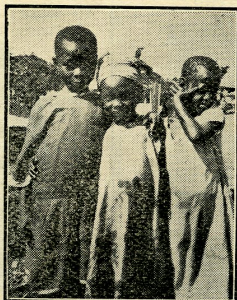
(Continued on page 15).

Save the Kiddies

BY REV. J. LUPTON, A.M.

THE birth of a child in a house at home is an occasion of joy ; the birth of twins quite a festive event ; but in West Africa it is vastly different. Twins are regarded with horror and dread, and are quickly dispatched and buried in a cursed spot.

Mankind being fundamentally one, this view point is extraordinary. Still, other parts of the world show ideas just as queer ; the Chinese use white as a sign of mourning, and the Japanese back a horse into a narrow stable instead of leading him into it. It must be said in fairness that the Japanese method has much to recommend it—if the horse be urgently needed time is saved. I remember reading in a book once that Hindu philosophers can conceive a stage of existence between being and non-



being, presence and absence, etc., and there may be people in this world to whom two and two do not necessarily make four.

It is not a kink in the black man's mind that makes him hastily destroy twins, but simply the spur of an intense religious emotion. Most negro customs, such as cannibalism, totemism, king-killing, infanticide, which to us appear unreasonable or even abominable, may be traced back to religion.

Negroes desire children, and the women would never have tolerated twin destruction were it not for their mistaken idea that the coming of twins into this world is disastrous, signifying either the result of some secret sins of parties concerned, or else the appearance of a bad spirit in the guise of a child. "It is all very well for animals to produce several at a time, but a woman should only give birth to one ; hence if two appear there's something wrong—the world is out of joint, and disaster threatens not only the parents, but the whole town." So they reason.

When such an event occurs in an Ijaw town, the ju-jus are quickly covered with a mat, otherwise their strength would go, the mother is conveyed to a house outside the town and kept prisoner there, any clothes she wore at the time being destroyed. In my last Ijaw tour some months ago the catechist and I lighted on a case of twins, just after birth. Despite many threats the babies were washed, baptised, and temporarily placed under the care of some christian woman—the mother refusing to nurse them. One has died since, but we hope to save the other.

Twin destruction is not universal in Nigeria. Some tribes, like the Igara, near the junction of the Niger and the Benue rivers, welcome them gladly ; others, like the Sobo, save the first-born and destroy the other.

The Anglic Society is started in many Stations of this Vicariate, christian men and women keeping watch for dying children, and even adults, and baptising them. Twin-deliverance, however, is carefully hidden and not talked about ; and it takes keen vigilance on the part of the native catechists to track out a case, and be at hand at the psychological moment ; even then they are almost invariably prevented by the pagans.

Of course the Government law forbids twin destruction, and even provides houses of refuge among the Ika people for mother and babies ; still destruction of the unwanted ones goes on unabated.

Our Christmas Greetings and Thanks.

On this happy occasion we beg to compliment our benefactors and helpers at home and abroad. A personal letter is clearly impossible, for in Ireland we have a host of friends of whom we are justly proud. We had to do with over 20,000 Irish families this very year who all sent us their Missionary Shilling, we had to do, besides, with a goodly number of generous benefactors who with their encouragement sent us a share of their wordly goods. We pray God now to bless them all, the big and small givers, all alike, for all have given with a willing heart, and with the blessing of a prayer. May the Divine Babe give them plenty, give them health, happiness, and length of days.

Our benefactors have been the Providence of our four Missions in West Africa, and the funds we need this present year will all come in, come in from North, South, East, and West, come in as shillings from the people, and as more considerable gifts from those who have wordly goods, and a Christ-like heart. We thank them for what they have done, and mean to do for us, and wish them again a Happy Christmas.

Let us greet, too, those who have helped us spiritually, and by pen and mouth. Our helpers are legion. We met a Parish Priest recently who told us with pride that every family in his care had joined our Missionary Shilling Society. Indeed we owe ever so much to the goodness of the Irish priests; may their Christmas be holy and happy.

We greet the self-sacrificing helpers we have in every convent all over the land—we wish them the joys and blessings of Christmas. They all are apostles, and will get the reward of those who fight and strive for the propagation of our Holy Faith.

We compliment the little band of teachers who befriend us everywhere. They could not be better, they are holy in person, and loyal to the Catholic Church.

We salute the numerous helpers who in town and country think of us, pray for us, bring our charities to the notice of their friends. We thank them and greet them in the presence of the Good God for Whom they have worked.

We forget nobody. We pray for all. Three times in the week we personally offer up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for our Friends of the Missionary Shilling Society, and in all our community prayers, in all our Masses, we are ever faithful to those members, and to all our generous benefactors. Even in addition to the three weekly Masses we shall in future say a Mass on the first Tuesday of the month in honour of the Apostles for all who directly or indirectly help us to spread the knowledge of our work and charity, and add, let it be only one family, to our Shilling Mission Society. For the light they will eventually give the African pagan, God will be supplicated by me through the Mass to give them light in all their problems of life, and in all their difficulties.

We salute our confreres of the Missions for it is their noble deeds for Christ that inspired all our benefactors and helpers. May God give them a happy Xmas away in their far off homes which alas, are often surrounded by terrible climatic dangers. May God ward off these dangers, and keep those Mission homes safe—away from the evils of soul and body.

We mean to forget nobody, and we trust we are not too bold when we wish our Irish Bishops the blessings of the Holy Season, when we salute and congratulate in a special way their Lordships of Cork, Dromore, Tuam, and Galway, who are the staunchest of Protectors, and the best of friends.

To Bishops, priests, and people, to friends at home and abroad, to the confrere Bishops and priests of our four African Vicariates, to all be the joys of Christmas, and the blessings of a Holy, Prosperous New Year.

MAURICE SLATTERY, A.M., Prov.

Out of Evil Cometh Good.

SISTER PATRICIA WRITES FROM WEST AFRICA.

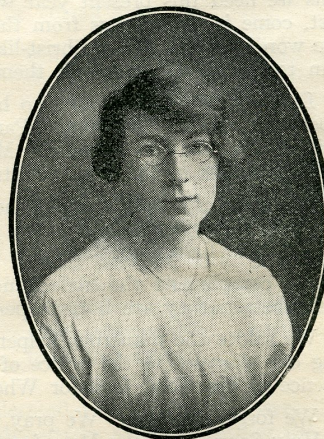
The Convent,
Cape Coast,
Gold Coast.

DEAR FATHER SLATTERY,

By this time I expect you are back from Africa and I hope your health has not suffered too much from your long journeys. We saw in the *Universe* that you went to Rome after returning from Africa.

I have read with much interest your account of your visit to Africa in the "A.M.," which is sent me, and I am sure that your visitation of the Missions will have done much good. It is only when we are actually here that we can realise what life on the Mission really is. It is now a year since I left Ireland, and I think never has a year passed so quickly or been so full of novelty. Of course I was sorry to have missed you here, but all the time I thought you would call on your way back from Nigeria until I got your letter from Accra saying the steamer would not wait. However, I was happy to know that you had seen Cape Coast, and seen where I am to work, and met all the Sisters and Fathers here. They are all quite well as is also His Lordship. The Cathedral has gone up very quickly since you were here; the roof and ceiling are now finished and the floor is being begun—so we expect to be in it by the end of next month.

As you have already seen our College it is not necessary to describe it. It is small certainly, but all beginnings are small, and for the present it fulfils its purpose. I was disappointed, you know, when I read your beautiful description of Achimota that you had not referred, by way of contrast, to our Catholic Women's Training College at Cape Coast—Achimota on a small scale! Since the Men's Training College was transferred from Accra a year ago they do very little outside the training of teachers at Achimota. The plans are already prepared for a Catholic Men's



Miss Nora Loughnane, B.A., H.Ed.Dip.—now Sister Patricia.

Training College at Elmina, and when the Cathedral is finished the building will be begun.

During the holidays I had the pleasure of seeing Accra and all its wonders. This came about quite unexpectedly. As you are aware, our College is not yet approved, being the first that has been opened for girls—on the suggestion of the authorities, however. About May I began to think it was too bad to work without any earthly recognition, so as modestly as I could, I made the Director of Education aware of my existence. The result was a visit from that gentleman and an invitation to act as a member of a committee of ladies who were to meet at the Educational Office to discuss the important question of the education of women teachers.

The meetings took three days, and suggestions were drawn up for the approval of the Government. The proposal was that a Central Training College (for Government Schools) be opened, and that the Missions be allowed to train their own teachers. As our College was in its second year I claimed recognition for it; so the Directors pro-

mised to have the students examined before December for a certificate. I felt there was something gained.

During the first week of September two ladies, one an organiser of the Infant Schools, the other of Female Education, were sent to Cape Coast to examine the students and incidentally all the girls' schools. They examined the students in practical teaching—of Infant and Standard Classes, and were pleased with them. They went into all the details of their life—as only ladies can. I have not yet got a report of their visit, but I am hoping that six girls will get their certificates and be allowed to teach next year.

Now this is the 12th October, and I am finishing this letter at Elmina, where I have come for a few days, as the students have a week's holidays at this time. I am looking down at what I have been told Father Hurst used to call "a bit of Co. Kerry," the little green hill beside the blue expanse of ocean on which to-day there is scarcely a ripple.

I had a letter from my sister this week; she is very good as she never forgets to write me. I cannot say that of myself—as far as I can see, the life of a Missionary does not admit of much correspondence. Not that we forget, for sometimes I find myself sitting under the big cedar in Ardfoyle, or wandering through the woods of Cloughballymore, or over the green fields of Shanaglish, or kneeling beside the grave of two brave boys.* But I am not lonely. From the beginning I have felt quite at home in Africa, and I only hope that God will give me enough strength to continue.

I expect you were surprised when you heard I was coming here. I was not, or at least I did not mind where I was sent.

Now I wish to assure you, Father, that I have not forgotten to pray for your intentions, and I am happy to think that sometimes you give me a remembrance in the Holy Mass.

With very best wishes from

Yours very sincerely in Christ,

SISTER PATRICIA.

*The touching allusion to the graves of two brave boys refers to the graves of Sister Patricia's two brothers—the Loughnane boys—who were so cruelly mutilated and put to death in Galway by the Black and Tans during the awful winter of 1920. Sister Patricia, who was then a newly qualified national teacher, in the noble, self-sacrificing spirit of her martyred brothers, soon afterwards entered the Missionary Convent at Ardfoyle, Cork, where on her profession she took the name of Sister Patricia to perpetuate the name of her elder martyred brother, Patrick. She is a distinguished graduate of the National University.

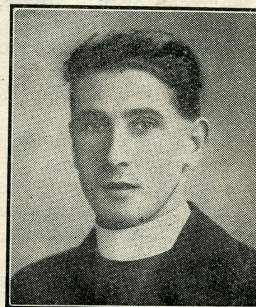
May the African Missions boast very soon of many more such beautiful vocations from the National University, and the Irish Training Colleges.

WHAT OUR MISSIONARIES SAY.

(Continued from page 11).

HARVEST GRAIN.

Fr. Hurst left us but a year ago for the Missions, and the following letter full of grain from the Mission-field, shows us that he is already receiving the consolation that comes from the Master's harvest. We are sure that our readers, too, join with the Darkies in wishing him many happy Feast-days in Africa.



REV. P. HURST, A.M.

" 'Good morning, Fader.'

" 'Good morning, children.'

" 'We come wish you a happy feast day, and to-morrow we come your Mass so we pray God give you plenty, plenty feast days with us—we like you work always with us.'

" 'I was certainly touched and thanked them for their kind prayers.'

Yes, they realise what the Fathers means to them, and they venerate their 'Fader' as people at home do their 'Soggarth Aroon.'

We have just completed a tour of the southern portion of our district where we have thirty stations, each having a little community of from forty to one hundred. There is one Head Catechist for the whole district, and six sub-catechists and teachers. The remaining twenty-four stations are still without catechists—they cannot pay for one, neither can we.

"The number of candidates for baptism was beyond all expectations. We found it impossible to get through all the stations—to the great disappointment of many who craved to be baptised before we left them. One old woman who had been put off from time to time implored us with tears—she said she knew all her catechism this time. Only by seeing her name written down as candidate for the next time was she partially consoled.

"On May 17th we baptised thirty people, men and women, young and old. The seed is springing up quickly, but the reapers—two Fathers and a few Catechists—cannot hope to cope with a district of 10,000 square miles. Had we but sufficient priests and means, what a fine addition to the fold of Christ would be the numbers who cannot at present have our attention. But God's grace is strong, and the hearts of the faithful generous. Christianity is slowly but surely sending its benign rays over poor Dark Africa."

P. HURST, A.M.

DUAN NOULAS.

Ir fíor-uafal an duan noulas ran a ríobh an ríle Salto Milton .i. Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity. Tá blas binn na ríobhóir ar na rímaoiníte atá ann, agus b'féidir náir m'íre d'áinn anoir eulaíte éadais de phór Saedilse do cup ar iomnnt díob.

I lár sairbhíon an gheimhíre a rugaó ar Slánuigheóir agus a cuiread i n-éadaisib é, agus págaó 'na luide i mainnéar arail. Agus, féad, do gab eagra agus uatbár an náuiríom an naoréan, agus go mbead rí combáirdeac leir do baim rí dí a fallamg áluinn gneanta, mar ba léir dí nac aon am é rín a beir á zopad féim pé bog-éar na gneime.

Adt annran do gab uafán agus eagra aríir i a pád go raib páile an Crutuígheóir com gair ran dí ag péadaint ar a clám-luit, agus do meall rí an t-aeir caom i do ceilt pé'n ríneadta geal a támg anuar uiréi mar b'rac b'án beannuíte maigóme ag poluad a peacáí mí-náiréac.

Cun gac eagra do baint dí do cuir an Crutuígheóir amgeal na ríobhóir anuar i b'fuirim cuilm agus ríat b'raoréadta na ríobhóir na gab aige. Cosad ná cat annran ní raib i n-aon áit ar fud an domáin. Dí gac cláiréam agus gac cóir t'poda cupéa i leat-caoió. O'fan na ríste ciúim r'ocair pé mar a cuigroir go raib an t-áir-Tigearna féim i ládair.

Da ciúim i an oróce nuair a támg p'ionnra na Soillre le péim na ríobhóir do cup ar bun : an gaoit ciúimighe le neair an iongna a bí uiréi, i ag p'ogad na ríairge mine agus ag m'irint i zocgar r'geala dí ar lúéáir m'ór.

Iar b'áinne an lae, leir an iongna agus an alléad a bí oréa do r'ao na péitíní mar a bí acu ag r'p'eadairnaig san beann acu ar Réalt na Marone féim, agus ní m'íreóadair gur labair an Tigearna agus b'ubairt leo g'luairéad.

Agus cé go raib gile an lae ann, ní raib an g'nat-g'luairéad pé'n n'g'ém, agus do cláuirig rí a n-ágar le náiré agus ceann-pé, mar náir g'ad do'n domán a lag-polar féim aríir go deo ó támg gile na gile agus g'rian na n'g'rian.

Rom b'peacáó an lae bí na n-aoráirí ag comrád le n-a céile ar an macáiré. Ir beag dá comne a bí acu go raib an t-aoráiré uile-comáctac t'agairte anuar le g'rad díob cun comnuid na mearg.

Ag r'airé a t'p'ead díob, féad, do euladair go h-obann a leitéro rín de céol náir féim uime ná uoime ar t'eadair aríam ; agus g'ut neamhá ríor-binn ag r'eadairt do'n céol gur líon a g'p'oré le h-áir agus le h-aorínear.

Annran do lár polar neamhá 'n-a t'óimpeall : g'aeite f'ada geala ag r'inead amac t'p'io an oróce, agus i lár an t'polar go léir amgíl agus áir-aingíl ag féimnt go maorá m'ínte ar t'eadairt c'p'ot ag comórad Oighe díg na b'p'airéar.

Dá b'ranfáó a leitéro rín de céol naomta i b'p'ad agann o'eadóad an peacáó lobhac ó'n t'p'ogal, agus o'ímtéad an t-l'p'monn féim ar neam-níó.

Ad ní h-amláir a b'ed pé go fóill. An naoréan geal g'radmair atá 'na luide annro, caitér pé éiric ar g'oir do díol ar an g'p'oir z'éarfa, agus mar rín g'óiré do cup i n-áiré do féim agus uímn-ne.

ENTIRE VILLAGE CONVERTED.

ASSIUT (UPPER EGYPT).—Great strides in reclaiming the dissident schismatics for the Catholic Church are evident in the mass conversion of an entire village in Upper Egypt.

The village Head, together with thirty-six inhabitants, were reconciled on October 9th, and the remaining population are being instructed and given the necessary preparation.

Egypt has a total of 173,000 Catholics out of a population of 12,750,000.—(*Fides Service*).

AFRICAN NATIVES SWARM NUNS.

MUMIAS (KENYA COLONY, EAST AFRICA).—A huge crowd of East African natives literally swarmed the Mission compound of Kakamega, Kenya Colony, as thickly as the ever-present locusts of this equatorial section of East Africa, to catch a glimpse of the newly arrived five Ursuline Nuns, the first Sisters ever seen in the Prefecture of Kavironda. The Sisters came from Gergen, Holland, and arrived in Kavironda on September 24th. They will work under the Fathers of Mill Hill, who are in charge of the recently established Prefecture.—(*Fides Service*).

FOUR EPIDEMICS IN SIX MONTHS.

KINA (KATANGA, BELGIAN CONGO).—In the heart of Africa, hundreds of miles from the coast, a Belgian Franciscan—Father Hilarion Stocky, medical missionary, has met four epidemics in six months. Working since May, in co-operation with the Government medical service in the Kibara country, he found small-pox raging on his arrival. The whole population had to be vaccinated to stem the plague. It was followed by an epidemic of grippe, which in turn was succeeded by rubeola, a disease of the country which happily brought no deaths. However, in September the grippe returned with dire results; in one village the mortality was 30 per cent.

This series of visitations is not extraordinary in the Kibara country, authorities state. Lack of hygiene, the natural unhealthiness of the place, and the isolation of the people by their division into tiny groups, lost in the bush, make heroic demands upon the Government and upon the Missionaries for the conquest of disease.—(*Fides Service*).

SEMINARY SPARKLES

DROMANTINE,
In winter time.

DEAR PAT,

I am glad you took so much to our freshmen as a result of my last letter; they have by now melted into the general scheme of things, however, and no longer exist as a class apart. That is all as it should be because class-distinctions ruin community life in a college.

Nominally there are four grades of advancement here ranging from first to fourth divines, but actually everybody attends the same lectures and reads the same lesson. This order of things is affected by an arrangement in the studies which I could scarcely hope to go into here.

Your fixed idea that the study hall resembles the Grand Inquisition is rather amusing—nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, contrary to what you think, it is the so-called geniuses who have by far the hardest time, as of course it is presumed that they do very little work. I have often thanked the Lord for being a slow-coach, I assure you!

Professors as a whole, are, I think, a very misjudged race; it is wrong to regard them as being "out-to-kill" the whole time. Most of them err of course in being too sceptical, after all it is possible that zeal *may* be the cause of a man's skipping the "small-print"—few soldiers notice flies in a cavalry charge.

Also it is quite possible to ask a question in class from a higher motive than just to kill time or feign interest. There are occasions when even the geniuses on the floor will fail to follow the genius in the chair. I often "don't quite catch" myself, but lordie! I'd never dare to interrupt by asking a question—at least not till we're at table, and then the fun begins.

Now don't imagine that I'm going to go into the subject of "grub"—you have suggested more than once that students in Missionary colleges are starved—all I can say is, just wait until you *see* me. A man may become a saint on starvation diet, he can scarcely hope to become a Sandow. An African Missionary needs to be both. However as I say I am not considering that particular side of meal-time; but the open debates which make people forget really what they are eating.

The thing will start quite simply by someone's remarking "Wasn't that a strange opinion with regard to that problem in class to-day." It seems quite a harmless remark and yet in four seconds as many tongues are wagging for and against.

Oh, if the Cardinals at Rome or the Bishops of Ireland could only sit at our tables for a week all their perplexing difficulties would be settled for ever. True, nobody would have pronounced a dogmatic statement (and certainly nobody would have accepted it if he did), still such a mass of illuminating information should easily lead an unbiased spectator to a final solution!

Some are dogmatic about everything, others are not dogmatic about anything; and in such discussions one is about as irritating as the other.

It is tiresome enough when your opponent will not admit that two and two make four; but when he goes farther and after denying that one and one make two, even hints that two halves may not make a whole, then one feels . . . well, like saying things.

I'm not in a position to argue myself, having read only one year's theology; but there are some who manage to do so on less (probably they have done Pelmanism also). Now for fear of getting publicity for an unsolicited testimonial I'd better say here that I don't hold with elaborate system of memory training. They already suppose what they set out to accomplish because one requires quite a good deal both of memory and concentration to carry them through; besides, no system can supply intelligence.

I knew a student who memorised a long poem of five stanzas to supply him with the names, dates and events of the Popes of the first seven centuries. Being asked for the popes of a single century he forgot how that particular verse began, and the result was a prize mix-up—and a failure in history. Still I find the study very interesting, but it is not easy, and it is a good thing there is no time allowed for feelings on **this, or indeed on any other matter.**

Now please don't take me up wrongly—some people unfortunately do—my feeling for you will still persist, and in return I hope you won't need Pelmanism in order to remember

Your old friend,

JOHN.



The First Xmas and Xmas 1928

Jesus had a poor home on the night of His birth, but it cannot have been much worse than the "cattle shed" in which He now dwells out in West Africa.

When you hear the story of His birth in a cave, in the stable of Bethlehem, you instinctively say:—

"Oh! if I had lived then and had been there I'd have done so-and-so.

Well, Just do now what you say you would have done on that first Christmas night. Send a donation to enable Bishop Broderick to erect a decent home for that same Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

See the miserable hut, read the priest's description of it—it is even worse than the stable of Bethlehem.

★
Read what a Missionary from Nigeria (West Africa wrote to me about it:—

"If you saw what serves as a Church and School here in my Mission yard you would call it a **cattle shed**, it looks so little like a Church. This shed is about 15 feet wide and a little more than twice as long, with the result that on Sundays the people have to kneel outside under a temporary protection of palm branches. It has **no doors** and **no windows**; only holes in the mud walls. When I saw it for the first time I felt sad because I could not keep the Blessed Sacrament in it. Afterwards I walled off six or eight feet where **Our Blessed Lord** is contented to



IS THIS A FITTING HOME
FOR JESUS?

dwell, though little boys, pagan as well as Christian, are learning their lessons in front of the screen. The Sanctuary is also the Sacristy, and you can well imagine its size when its whole length to the something that looks like an Altar rails is only seven feet. **The floor even of the Sanctuary is of clay.** What of the seats? Just two short sticks stuck in the ground which support a long pole laid across them. You now understand why I ask you to assist us in raising funds to erect a decent Church. To erect a moderate-size Church out here would take:—

70,000 BRICKS

£1 10s. 0d. will buy 1,000 bricks.

For 15/- you can put 500 bricks in the new Sanctuary.

For 5/- _____ 160 bricks _____

For 2/6 _____ 80 bricks _____

OUR CHRISTMAS GIFT TO YOU

On Xmas Day THREE MASSES will be offered for all those who send at least 2s. 6d. to buy 80 Bricks for the new church.

Jesus does not ask you to "leave all and follow Him." He only asks you to put a few bricks in the walls of the Home that the Missionaries are building for Him in Nigeria. If God has blessed you with this world's goods, I know you will not limit it to 80.

Daily you make acts of charity, daily you ask God's blessing on yourself and your family and friends; believe me the best way to show the sincerity of your love is by deeds rather than by words, and the surest way of drawing down God's blessing is by works of charity; and of all charities the greatest is—helping the work for which our Saviour was born lived, and died, the salvation of souls.

Before the old year has passed away for ever give one other proof of your gratitude to the New Born Babe of Bethlehem; help the labourers in the vineyard with your prayers and alms; let your resolution ring loudly in the ears of the dying year; **take up your pen now and write it.**

Below you see "Your Xmas Message for the Infant Jesus." Read it, fill in the amount of your donation, the number of bricks you wish to buy—80, 160, 500, or 1,000.

Sign your name and address, cut out the "Message" and forward it, with your donation, to:—Auntie, African Mission College, Newry, before the 21st December—but better do it now, to-morrow you may forget!

XMAS LETTER TO THE INFANT JESUS.

Dear Infant Jesus,

I cannot go myself to pagan lands to make Thee known to the millions who never yet heard Thy Sacred Name, but I will pray for Thy Missionaries that through them the whole world may be converted to Thy Most Sacred Heart.

In sympathy with Thee for the poor abode You had on the night of your birth in the cold stable of Bethlehem, I am sending your Missionaries a Christmas gift (£ s. d.) to purchase..... Bricks for the erection of a Home for Thee in Africa.

(Here write your) Name.....
and Address.....

Fill in (1) amount of your donation, (2) number of Bricks, (3) name and full address.

Then cut out the letter, and send it with your donation to:—

Auntie, African Mission College, Newry.

Within a few days you may expect a reply from me, and look out for your name on donor's list published in these columns monthly. On Xmas morning your letter for the Infant Jesus, along with any petitions you desire to send in, will be placed on the altar during the time the Three Masses are being said.

Again I earnestly beg of all who have zeal for the spread of the Kingdom of Christ on earth to make this small sacrifice.

Wishing all my readers a Bright and Merry Xmas and Glad New Year. As ever, AUNTIE.

PÓGNAD.

Tabair par 'san uimhro cúgamh trí buaiseanna 10/-, 5/-, 2/6, ar na trí aistíde (sgeílín, alt no oán) is fearr a beas feileamhac dom.

Beid ort na niaslaí so do dóimlíonad:—

I. Trí pingne do cur cúgam le sac sgeal an son an B.B.C.

II. Sgríob ar éadob amháin do'n bráiréar.

IV. Is cuma cé'n aos atá tú. Beid páilte roimh sgeílín an duine óis, an duine fásta nó sean-duine.

NOBLAIG SONA DUIT.

NOBLAIG 'SAN AIFRIC.

I.

Maoin noolas inran aifric

Roim eiríge na grém' pan rpéir

Tá mo péiréilín beas aomuro

Lán le daoimib dúb' go léir

Táro as gurde roim an mamhréar

Maestnúsao ar an leasb oíl

Cáimig nuar ar uet a déar

Cun beir slánuisceoir an t-Saothail.

II.

Maoin noolas inran aifric

Tá an t-aifricann binn dá léigead

Tá na daoime dúb' as éirteact

As tabairt buidéalair do mac dé

Go bfuil pasairt teact ra veiréad

Go tóí Roimh móir an Dub-deó

Go bfuil solur an fíor-Éireoir

Lapta ann anoir go deó.

III.

Maoin noolas inran aifric

Milte eile pór san Oia

Táir éir céasta bliadna pado

Ó bheir lora, ar an tuisge

San don t-péiréal, san don altóir

Tá pé fíor, a mhuirir ir tuisge,

Go bfuil cumact an diabail láirir

Pór imear na daoime noib.

IV.

Maoin noolas inran aifric

Bronntanar cúgam ar pásail

Ó nac oim 'bí an t-áear

—Cáimig pé ar inirpail

Asur ceapto beir ann a imear tú?

—Culair aifricann salanta nuad

Ir go leór péiríní póganta

Le tabairt do na páirteib dúb'.

V.

Maoin noolas inran aifric

Leir na páirteib boet' aifric

Caime ar an t-céast oirde noolas

Ar an t-geas a cáimig Críost

Cun an t-Soirseúil nuad do psairéad

Imear na daoime dúb' ir bán

Cun éarabáint a sháol san ceóra

Beiréad é mar torasán.

VI.

Maoin noolas inran aifric

Cáim pan péiréal 'noir liom péim

Cáim as cummeadh ar mo cáirteib

Tá i n-éiríonn 'bpaio i gcéim

Ó dá tuisgead ríao an odoi

Tá ampreo fuibail oirde' ir lae

Deapad ríao go leor do'n aifric

Ar pan torasán mhic-dé.

CÁITLÍN NÍ LOINGSIÚ,
Clochar na Trócaire Cuaim.

BOOK REVIEWS.

Why did Father Gavan Duffy cross Africa?

He tells us himself it was because it was in his way—to New York. A fortunate chance that necessitated his going to New York, and that threw him in the company of the "Wee King," for to it we owe the charming story "Let's Go."

Father Gavan Duffy is Ireland's best known Missionary in India, the author of several delightful books, the editor of "The New Hope," when he is at home (in India), the proto-advocate of a world organisation for native Catechists for the Missions—and many other things besides. It was in the capacity of proto-advocate that he entered Africa, in a motor truck of the "Wee King's" he crossed it, and he emerged from it an author again.

"Let's Go," therefore, is an account of that unique journey through forest and river, over lake and mountain, right through the heart of Africa from East to West, and it is told from a Missionary point of view. That is to say that Fr. Gavan Duffy made it a point to see all that was to be seen in the time available of the working of the Missionary army in the many missions on his route. As his stay in any of the missions was often a question of hours, at most of days, he readily admits that this account may often lack accuracy (as indeed it does occasionally), yet he has managed to convey in 500 pages an astonishing amount of history, a rich compendium of missionary activity, a fairly complete synopsis of the present state of the Equatorial missions in Africa, through a delightful chain of incidents told in his own inimitable style—a style that makes even his "heavy" material a pleasure to the reader.

During that tour he interviewed several Missionary Bishops, came in contact with hundreds of Missionaries, saw their plans, their difficulties, their hopes, and he gives them all to us in his book.

The outstanding impression left by "Let's Go" is the bright prospects of the apostolate in Africa. The "Dark Continent," he believes, "offers the best hopes for the Gospel; its people, though primitive, are easily approached, kindly disposed, and generous of heart, and they are of the stuff that makes good Christians. Difficulties are there, of course, arising out of the colonising policy of European powers, out of the Mohammedan advance, out of the backward state of the country (such as travel and transport difficulties), out of the unhealthy enervating climate, etc., etc., but in spite of all these formidable barriers, Africa presents tremendous possibilities for the spread of the Gospel.

But, alas, there is an *if*. Africa, he believes, could be quickly converted if sufficient Missionaries were available, and if their efforts were not hampered at every turn by the lamentable lack of resources. The eyes of the world are turned elsewhere, he complains sadly, whilst the harvest is rotting in Africa. Golden opportunities are slipping by, and the most promising field of Missionary enterprise is being neglected. Africa continues to remain the "Dark Continent" because Catholics will not bring to it the Light of Faith.

Fr. Gavan Duffy's long years of missionary experience enables him to put his finger on the most pressing and immediate need of the missions in Africa, as in all other missionary countries—the native Catechists. They are

the forerunner of the Missionary, his eyes and ears to open the path of the Gospel, his right hand to carry out the details of extensive organisation, his necessity for even limited achievement, his pledge of success. But they are not available, because catechists are flesh and blood, they must eat and drink, must have, at least, a minimum to support their useful lives, and that minimum for the numbers required the mission cannot supply, and outside aid is not forthcoming.

As a result the missions cannot advance as rapidly as they should, whole tribes are often left uncultivated, or are captured by Mohammedan or Protestant influence. And the Missionary must look on almost in despair, because his hands are full and his purse empty.

Fr. Gavan Duffy visited several of our Society's missions in West Africa. Of the work accomplished he speaks in the highest praise, the generosity and good will of the people he frankly admires, but the "harassed look" on the faces of the missionaries leaves him sad.

For the worry is the same that tortures all missionary endeavour in Africa—worry about ways and means to carry on the apostolate—a sufficient number of Catechists is not available—pagan tribes are begging for instruction—the limited number of Missionaries cannot meet the demand for their services—and they are spent in efforts to reach as many as they can of Africa's millions. In Nigeria, Gold Coast, Ivory Coast, Liberia—all along the line it is the same story, millions waiting to be saved, and the missionaries, powerless to cope with the rich possibilities of the situation, straining at the chain of poverty that confines them to limited achievement.

And when the book is finished we lay it down, saddened by the terrible problem, yearly growing more acute, of the fate of Africa's millions. But not before we are charmed at the glimpse of Africa that it gives us, at the heroic tale of its toiling workers, gladdened, too, by the hopes it holds out, and the wonderful future that would be Africa's if the Catholic world took up Fr. Gavan Duffy's cry—"Let's Go" and started to enlighten the "Dark Continent."

S. W. H.

(*Let's Go*. By Fr. T. Gavan Duffy. Printed by Colm O'Lochlainn, Dublin. Published by Sheed and Ward. Price 10s. 6d.)

Life in Many Lands. By Rose Lynch. Printed by the "Lee Press," Cork. Price 2s. 6d. Burns, Oates and Washbourne.

In a series of short sketches the author takes us to many delightful places, weaving stories of real life amid scenes which she describes from personal experience. Beside the pathetic figure of the old "Field Marshal" in his beautiful Tyrolean setting the reader is given vivid pen-pictures of faith in Lisieux, Rome, and Lourdes, with a glimpse at far-famed Carthage—once the pride of Africa. Only one echo of strife and struggle in the battle scared town of Arras, and all is peace again amid the sunshine and snow of Switzerland, and the Alps; and we come to rest at last in Cork at Fr. Ryan's hospitable hearth.

The "Lee Press" may be congratulated on a well-printed volume, with its artistically coloured cover, and Miss Lynch has added to her reputation as an author,

S. W. H.

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Our Irish Missions are **eleven times** as large as Ireland, with a population of 17,000,000 souls.

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For more particular information please apply to:—The Editor, or to—

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- 2.—A special Mass will be offered up every Saturday by the Provincial, in honour of Our Blessed Lady, and the Little Flower, that God may protect your home during your Membership.
- 3.—A special Mass will be offered up every Wednesday by the Provincial, in honour of St. Joseph, head of the Holy Family, that your homes may be like his, humble and christian.
- 4.—A special Mass in honour of the Apostles will be offered up on the First Tuesday of the month, by the Provincial, for all those who get others to join the "Missionary Shilling" Society.
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