

THE CHARM OF THE DESERT

By Rev. Dr. Wilhelm Baron von Caplaine

The excavations made in the desert of Lybia by the noted archeologist, Monsignor Kaufman of Frankfurt-on-the-Main, are the subject of a new book published by his cousin and companion, T. C. Ewald-Falls, and called "The Charm of the Desert."

Monsignor Kaufman's work in the desert of Lybia in 1905 enriched Christian archeology immensely and gained for him the reputation of being one of the world's foremost archeologists. Particularly important was the discovery and establishment of the identity of the tomb of St. Menas, for more than one thousand years a famous Christian sanctuary stood in Northern Africa.

All of Egypt, with its bishops and priests, took part in the consecration of this church and the first building later proving too small was augmented and a wonderful basilica erected by the Emperor Arcadius. Pilgrims came from near and far to visit the tomb and many miracles occurred. Even Alexandria is said to have lost its glory by comparison with the great throngs that flocked to this basilica.

The coming of Islam and its floating population saw the end of Christianity in Lybia. The town that had sprung up around the tomb was destroyed and other Christian colonies were wiped out. Most of the vestiges of Christianity were buried in the desert sands. Few witnesses of the Christian occupancy of Lybia were preserved, the most famous of these being the very old fortified monastery of the Monophysite Copts of Wadi-Natron in the desert west of Cairo.

It was about one thousand years after the tomb of Menas had disappeared that it was discovered by Monsignor Kaufmann. He was on an expedition through the North-eastern part of the Lybian desert.

This desert was in ancient times much smaller than it is now. The sphinx and the pyramids near Cairo, which are now surrounded by desert sand, were up to the time of the Christian era as free and uncovered as in a cultivated land. Between the Nile and Barka, where today the Auladali bedouins, with their horses and camels, roam, there were once Christian settlements and fertile, well-tilled lands.

Monsignor Kaufmann's discovery of the fragments of an old pilgrim's bottle with an image of St. Menas, surrounded by camels, arrested his attention, and caused him to begin excavations. After two years of active work the German excavators succeeded in freeing the buildings from sand and dust. The Menas tomb, the basilica erected above it, an imperial palace and a large group of other buildings were recognizable. That the memory of the old sanctuary had not been forgotten in local traditions was proved by the fact that the name given the place by the Auladali bedouins, was "Karum Abu Mina," or the "Vineyard of Father Menas."

Monsignor Kaufmann was compelled at first to carry on the work with whatever resources he could command personally. The town of Frankfurt and the German Professor Bodes gave him some aid and later as the authenticity of the revelations was established, he was increasingly assisted by benefactors.

The new Ewald-Falls' work has very interesting descriptions of Monsignor Kaufmann's travels across the desert, of his visits to the monastery castles in Wadi-Natron, of the discovery of the Menas tomb and of life among the Auladali bedouins. The book follows lines similar to "Three Years in the Desert of Lybia," written by the same author which is now out of print.

CATHOLIC SHRINES

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS SHRINE

By Joseph J. Dornoy

The story of the foundation of this pilgrimage chapel, which has become a refuge for the afflicted, is full of rare interest, and contains a shining example of aid obtained through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin.

In November, 1836, John Batt, a native of Alsace, sailed from Havre, France, for America with his wife and eight children. In a few days a terrible storm arose and the sailing vessel, Marie, was in danger of destruction. The sails and masts were torn off, the rigging blown away and other parts of the ship wrecked. The pious and God-fearing man, who was seeking a home in the new world with his family, always had deep love and veneration for the Mother of God. In his hour of extreme peril he called on Mary, Help of Christians and Star of the Sea, invoking her aid and protection. He solemnly promised if the Blessed Virgin would save him and his family in their great

danger he would, on arrival in America, erect a shrine in her honor.

His prayers were answered. The storm subsided and although experienced seamen said the vessel couldn't last until they reached land, they managed to reach the Irish coast, where, after a few weeks, they sailed again and arrived at New York on the Feast of the Purification, February 2, 1837. Mr. Batt began to fulfill his promise as soon thereafter as his means allowed. He had taken his family to what is now the suburbs of Buffalo and in 1851 donated three acres of land to Right Rev. John Timon, Bishop of that diocese, and erected a small brick shrine chapel.

In 1853, on the Feast of the Holy Rosary, this chapel was dedicated by the Rev. A. Neumann, pastor of Williamsville, under the title "Our Lady Help of Christians." In 1871 a structure was built from stones taken from the old Williamsville church in which the venerable Bishop Neumann, of Philadelphia, had often celebrated Mass while still pastor of Williamsville and the surrounding country.

In the course of time the little Shrine of Our Lady became a great place of pilgrimage and many who have received aid from the Blessed Virgin there have presented votive offerings which partially line the shrine chapel.

Father Francis X. Scherer has been in charge of the Shrine since 1893 and pilgrimages to it have increased from year to year. These take place principally on the feast days of Our Lady which are observed with great solemnity, with multitudes seeking help and relief from all kinds of sickness and distress.

The Shrine is situated in the town of Cheektowaga, N. Y., (Forks P. O.) at the corner of Genesee street and Union road, two miles east of Pine Hill, a suburb of Buffalo and is reached by interurban cars from that city.

"ON ACTIVE SERVICE"

When the Great War was at its height and stern facts made us realize that the conflict was to be long and bitter, the whole nation was placed on a "service" basis. Every adult was "registered for national purposes." Personal service became the test of our interest in the titanic struggle. Life was then worth but the amount of service given to the Cause. Yet alone the soldier in our training camps or on the battlefield was on "active service"—while we "kept the home fires burning," we gave his very life as the price of victory.

In the "Great War" of the militant Church, should it not be the duty of every Catholic "to be registered for Catholic purposes?" The recognition of this duty is our willingness to serve in the ranks of Christ's great army.

The missionary endeavor of the "Sisters of Service" offers to our Catholic womanhood the honor of "active service." Like the Master and with the Master they wish to give to the cause of the salvation of souls their very life. This is the greatest honor and greatest joy of a soul truly devoted to God and His Church.

Facing the mission fields of our "Great West," where the harvest is plentiful and the workers so few, they will have but one ambition, that of the Virgin Mother, their ideal and their help. To God and to His Church they will say by their life service: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy Word."

"Sisters of Service," 2 Wellesley Place, Toronto. Correspondence is invited.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

There are many little things in life that escape our observation, yet they give most eloquent testimony to the truths to which we all cling unflinchingly if we are to gain the great goal of existence. Especially in our day there are broadcast systems and theories that would upset the founded calculations of the ages and plumb the depths of materialism introduce us to new ideas whose acceptance would subvert existing order and place a premium on destructive action.

Some deny the reality of a God. Yet the very sands of the seashore, the towering mountains, the mighty waves that roll upon the shore, all proclaim the Divinity and give to us testimony from nature itself that there not only exists a God but that He rules this great universe and is the Master of life and death.

As we gaze in admiration into the vast expanse of the heavens and behold the stars twinkling in the ethereal vastness, did it ever occur to us that these little lights that throw their brilliancy into space have been put there by God. Have we ever reflected that each star, planet and heavenly body has its sphere of activity, its orbit within which it exerts a potent influence? Surely such order must have behind it some ruling intelligence, for order denotes intelligence and intelligence is found only in a person. Hence there must be some supreme, overruling intelligent person and that supreme Being we call God.

Likewise, the moving things of heaven and earth are not in motion because of any inherent principle that set them going in the beginning. They all were set in motion. The planets have their motion. The tiniest star has its orbit which it traces year in and year out through the centuries. Animal life has its motion as has intellectual life. Vegetation also has its motive powers. There must have been some first moving principle which itself is unmoved from eternity and that first moving principle itself unmoved is God.

As we take our recreations on the seashores or in the hills what better time to contemplate the things that God has given us for the proclamation of His existence and presence among us. While great tomes illumine the mind of the theologian and deep philosophical treatises open up new vistas to the reflecting research of the student, these profound studies, essential as they are, are in a wise way necessary for the attainment of the eternal truth of the existence of the Godhead. No, there are around and about us from the rising to the setting of the sun evidences that lead us to God. In the waking and sleeping hours of the night, those evidences are still present. And to gain the goal of existence, it is totally unessential that we delve into the abysses of theological thought. God made the way for us the roadway over which we must go, life eternal and He has in His goodness been mindful of the least among his children. Before their constant gaze He has placed milestones that show them whither they are going and whence they came.

One of the favorite arguments for the Incarnation is that God would come when the charity of the world was growing cold and the needs of mankind could be most fully satisfied with His advent into the world. And at the time of Christ's coming we all know from history the sad condition of the world. Slavery was rampant; woman was degraded and the conditions surrounding society were worse than deplorable. Kingdoms, dynasties and monarchies had fallen already into the discard and their own history was for centuries buried in oblivion due to the degradation that had fallen on mankind and the consequent weakening of the social and family fabric.

And this was largely due to the systems of thought and action that had eaten their way into high places and low making a mockery of the moral law and substituting that of man. Naturally in the course of time without moral safeguards society was bound to retrogress and leave in its wake wrecked thrones, kingdoms and monarchies and build its own sepulchre.

But what a change came with the coming of Christ! The world was transformed. The catacombs tell the story of martyrs by the tens of thousands, the confessors by the myriads, the virgins who saw the light and followed it giving their bodies to save their souls. And the blood of martyrs has been the seed of Christians. During the centuries, long records of faithful have trod the doleful way of persecution and death for an ideal. And that ideal was God and religion.

There were always, however, besetting the path of the righteous snares and pitfalls. But they were made stepping stones to higher things. Hence our glorious martyrology and hidden saints who from time to time as the testimony justifies are brought out for the edification and emulation of man kind as well as for the glorification and exaltation of the ideal for which they lived and died.

In our day the same obstacles obstruct our path. The atheist, the rationalist, the scientific sociologist, the downright materialist with a horde of others seek to palm off their wares on an unsuspecting world. The Church like a giant beaconlight illumines our way amid this plethora of false standards, set for the downfall of the unwary and the unsuspecting. Perhaps, never was there more ephemeral thought than exists today.

When the tides of materialism threaten to invade, there is but one thing for mankind to do and that is to read in earth and heaven the proofs that a God exists and hold unflinchingly to religious truth, the anchor of goodness and righteous citizenship. When new systems are flaunted in contempt the old and tried, let us take thought whether the old have not served humanity long and well and appraise the new according to the ethical code which has been given to us by God on Sinai.

During these precious days, let us make a reevaluation of life, its duties and responsibilities and in the light of faith, adjust all our thoughts, words and actions. This is sound wisdom. The more the world conquers us with its ambitions, its disappointments, its shallow triumphs, the less we approximate the ideal of the Man of Nazareth who came into the world lowly and left it in ignominy. He is our true ideal. The world has his sworn enemy. It is today.—The Pilot.

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OBITUARY

MRS. MARGARET MCGRATH

Mrs. Margaret McGrath passed away in Collingwood at the home of Mrs. M. J. Gaughan on August the 3rd, at the advanced age of eighty-four years and ten months. She was the youngest daughter of John Malone and May Curtin and was born in Brock Township in October, 1848. She married Martin L. McGrath in 1870 and moved to Penetanguishen, living there for ten years engaged in the mercantile business, then moving to Sheguandah on the Manitoulin Island, opening a general store there and continuing in business until Mr. McGrath's health failed. They sold out in March, 1893, and he died on April 15th of the same year; then Mrs. McGrath moved to Little Current and remained there until the year 1914 when she made her home with the Community of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate of St. Joseph's Industrial School, Spanish, Ont., remaining there until last May.

Her remains were taken to Little Current by her daughter, Mrs. C. R. Atkinson, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Gaughan, and her funeral Mass was said by Rev. Father Papineau, S. J., her beloved pastor, priest for many years, and her remains laid to rest beside those of her husband in the family plot in St. Vincent de Paul's Cemetery, Little Current.

The deceased has several nephews in the priesthood, amongst them being Rev. Fathers Stanislaus and John McGrath, Toronto, Rev. Wm. Roach, Toronto, Rev. Thomas Roach, Owen Sound, and Fathers James and Timothy Malone, Southern States, and is the last of a large family of four sons and three daughters. She was an ardent Catholic and generous to the Church and all charities and will be missed by her old friends.

The Church of St. Vincent de Paul in Little Current, Manitoulin, contains many mementoes of her piety and generosity.

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SAVED THROUGH HIS ROSARY

Daniel Hogan was leaving town on a long trip. He was some distance from home when he remembered he had forgotten his rosary. His mother had told him never to go on a journey without his beads, so he asked his brother who was accompanying him to return for them.

He entered the station as the train was steaming in and took a seat in a compartment next to the engine. As the train was starting, Daniel saw his brother at the end of the platform, and in order to secure his rosary he jumped out and ran to meet him, and then ran back in time to board the last carriage of the train. Finding that he was alone he lay down to sleep and had been asleep for about an hour when a violent shock threw him to the floor. Terrified he regained his feet and jumped from the carriage.

A shocking sight met his gaze. His train had collided with a freight, and apparently no one except himself had escaped unhurt. The front carriage in which he had been at first was a heap of wreckage, and he trembled as he thought how very near he had been to a terrible death. He thanked God fervently for his miraculous escape which he owed to his devotion to the Rosary.—The Sentinel of The Blessed Sacrament.

A MYSTERY OF LOVE

On reading the story of Christ in the Gospels one often is struck at the miraculous power exhibited by the Saviour in the most casual way. A simple Man, without the trappings of court or the panoply of luxury. He went about humbly, healing the sick and raising the dead. Without advertising or self-seeking He wrought wonders that astounded and amazed the learned and confounded the proud.

There is, however, one incident which seems to overshadow all the other manifestations of power: it is the miracle of love in the Holy Eucharist. Christ might have decided to erect a marvelous palace in which He would appear at times, or wherein He might reside for all time. He might have drawn upon His omnipotence to make this abode the most dazzling imaginable in order to overawe and to draw men. In a word, He easily might have reduced His yearning for men to any one of an indefinite number of compelling forms. But love does not act in that way. Love strikes at the heart; it shuns display and eschews superficial attractions.

Christ chose the Tabernacle as the home of His love.

The humility of God is as awesome as His power: abasing Himself to the form, with reverence we say it, almost of a nonentity. Under the simple appearance of bread, closed in a small receptacle, ignored by many, laughed at by the wise and usually abandoned even by His own followers, the miracle of the hidden God surpasses belief. With power to annihilate, He refrains from striking. With infinite loveliness, He yet refuses to force the human will to love. Capable of setting forth the most enticing allurements to those whom He would win, He remains in a state of utter simplicity, content to be loved by the chosen few, willing to suffer the contempt and the scorn of the unbeliever, and, what is far more poignant, the neglect of the so-called believer.

Many of our churches are open throughout the day. How few avail themselves of the high privilege of a visit to this imprisoned Lover! Rushing hither and thither, panting after distractions, lost in a whirl of business and pleasure, even the faithful prove oblivious to the presence of Him whom they will cry and long for on their bed of death. Truly, the miracle of the Tabernacle is beyond our belief, but it should not escape our notice, even in the bustle of life. It is another kind of miracle how Christians, professing belief in this God of the altars, persist in ignoring Him, passing His abode without so much as a thought or a nod. Will not all this neglect be marked up against us on the terrible day of reckoning?—The Sentinel of The Blessed Sacrament.

DECEASED

LANGEVIN.—At Northfield Station, Ont., on July 14, 1923, Edward Langevin. May his soul rest in peace.

GOUTHRO.—At St. Joseph's Hospital, Glace Bay, N. S., on Friday, August 3, 1923, Wilmoth Gouthro, aged forty-five years. May his soul rest in peace.

CORCORAN.—At the family residence 149 Cowan Avenue, Toronto, Ont., on August 7, 1923, James L. Corcoran, a life-resident of Stratford, Ont. May his soul rest in peace.

STOREY.—Drowned July 10, 1923, Charlotte Isobell Storey, in her fourteenth year. Only daughter of William C. Storey, Toronto, and the late Mary Shelt Storey of this city. May her soul rest in peace.

RANKINE.—At the Victoria General Hospital, Halifax, on July 20, 1923, John J. Rankine of Inverness, N. S., aged fifty-four years. The funeral took place Monday, July 30th, from the family residence, Inverness, to Stella Maria Church, where Requiem Mass was sung by Rev. A. McDonald who also conducted the services at the grave. He leaves to mourn his loss his wife and five children, a son and sister, Sister M. Colletta of Mount St. Vincent, Halifax. May his soul rest in peace.

As the idea of the heart of a friend suggests the highest idea of his affection for us, so the idea of the Heart of Jesus suggests the highest idea of God's love for us. It brings very forcibly to our minds, then, the most transcendent ideas of charity, sympathy, tenderness, and compassion.

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