

LETTER FROM FATHER FRASER

Aug. 5, 1914. Feast of Our Lady of the Snows.

Dear Mr. Editor,—In Rome the heat was anything like we have it here the prodigy we commemorate to day was certainly a great miracle. I wrote you a few weeks ago about a visit to a place newly opened up to the Faith and now I am on the war-path again over the mountains and through the valleys battling for the souls for whom Christ died; the souls of the heathen Chinese. On Saturday last I set out from Taichowfu, my central station, to visit another place newly opened up to the gospel. I have rented a house there and pay a catechist to look after our interest. It is a stronghold of Protestantism, but we have done wonderfully well for the few months we have been there and many are converts from the sects. Even my catechist and his wife are recent converts from Anglicanism. It is twenty miles from Taichowfu, a matter of a few minutes in America in a fast train but it took me seven hours to make the trip. I rose at 4, said Mass and at 6 mounted a portable chair carried by two poles by two men. I covered to keep out the sun and rain and looks like a little carriage without wheels. The poles are of bamboo and besides supporting the chair act also as springs. At every step one bobs up and down like a baby in its cradle. By the way Chinese cradles are simply baskets without rockers. The baby is bumped right and left but apparently likes it. It is quite pleasant to ride in a sedan chair more so than in a carriage. "No wonder," as a Scotch Catholic missionary expressed it, "it is riding on human flesh." But last Saturday it was anything but pleasant. The blazing sun, 150 degrees above zero, beat down on my tiny vehicle and made it hot as an oven. I would have descended and walked but the big boulders of which the path was made were scorching hot and polished smooth by the millions of barefooted Chinamen who passed over them thus rendering walking with boots impossible and with a glaring sun overhead dangerous from sunstrokes. But God is good to his missionaries. Quantities of watermelons could be had cheap in the shelters, which charitable persons have constructed every few miles along the road, and, big jars of tea, without milk or sugar, could be had for nothing. My chair bearers plodded on with wonderful endurance and I sat pent up within for seven hours! This is only half what they can do in a day. I have seen them carry me for twelve hours! These men are not, as workmen, they live in kind of hilly stables and do nothing else for a living but carry people. The Chinese are all inured to hardship. A few days ago some country boys passed the night in my house in order to receive Communion the next day. I went to see if they were comfortable and found them prepared to sleep on boards with a brick as a pillow. One day we could not find the sharpening stones, at last we found that a convert under instruction was using it for a pillow. Very few people have anything but hard beds to sleep on. On arriving at my destination, Da Zie, (Great Stone) I heard the confessions of a handful of recently baptized persons and next day, Sunday, preached a sermon to the hundred or more converts and pagans assembled to hear me. It was my first visit and I was much consoled to see the crowd. Thanks be to God and to my benefactors abroad!

After Mass a convert lady told me she was afraid to go home, that her husband had made a fuss on seeing her in the chapel and would certainly beat her on her return. The catechist told me she came every Sunday in spite of the beating. Only once she missed. It was when her husband sat at the door all day and threatened to kill her if she went out. He also said that the blood flowed from her head after the beating she got one Sunday. I would not be surprised if she gets martyred some day.

In the afternoon the heat was dreadful. The house we were in was covered with tiles that absorbed the scorching rays of the sun to such a degree that we below were nearly baked. I wonder that I did not get sick. I think our dear Lord protects in a special way His missionaries. We were also startled that afternoon by the news from mouth to mouth (there are no newspapers here) that arrived: the route that we had to traverse the next day was infested by brigands as a result of the withdrawal of the soldiers who were sent to fight a horde of bandits who had just killed sixty or seventy regulars and their leader in another city of my parish. I set my alarm for 4 o'clock but the Christians, who have no clocks, eager to hear Mass and receive Communion were pounding at the door at 3 o'clock.

At 5 o'clock we were away. The road led through lonely gullies and rugged mountains, fit place for highway robbery. We sat for a few moments in the resting place where the day before the passers by were robbed. I thought of taking a photo of a gracefully situated pagan temple but one does not like to lose time in such localities. The mistake of the Christians in coming at 3 in the morning instead of 4 saved us. An hour after our passage the robbers began their work. I took advantage of my forced idleness in the portable chair to say my breviary and just as I was borne over the iron bridge where travellers are generally at-

tacked I thought it a strange coincidence to be reciting the psalm: "The Lord is my protector, whom shall I fear? Whilist those who injure me approach to eat my flesh, my enemies to trouble me, they have become infirm and fallen. If armies arise against me, my heart will not fear. . . for He has hidden me in His tabernacle and protected me in the day of evils." (My own translation as I have not an English Bible with me.) Here is what happened. Twenty or so robbers stopped all the people going both ways, made them sit in a pagan temple until they numbered eighty. Rich and poor, even beggars, were all captured for fear the news would spread. They were all relieved of their money and good clothing and then allowed to go. Chinese highwaymen will not kill or strike you unless you offer resistance. One brigand exchanged his ragged coat for that of a well-to-do captive. They are also decent; a pair of trousers are left with each person. I fully expected to meet them that day, and for that reason left behind my portable altar with its chalice, holy oils and other sacred things. I also put my watch and most of the money I had in an inside pocket, leaving a few dimes in an outer pocket which I intended to offer them for I do not think they would search a foreigner. They don't know where his pockets are, and as for his clothes they would be worse than useless as people would know they were stolen. The young man who carried my valise was robbed of his little belongings on his return trip yesterday. I was amused and pleased to listen to a conversation between the two men who shouldered my chair. It was about a Catholic woman and her little boy whom I baptized in the spring and whom they had carried to their distant home a few months ago after their instruction in my catechumenate had been finished. It appears that she would descend from the chair every now and then and walk to relieve their hardship, which was a nuisance of act of charity, for a woman and her little boy five years old would not bear of riding whilst his mother walked. These men used all the adjectives in their vocabulary to express their admiration of these newly regenerated Christians. Thanks again to the RECORD subscribers and readers who have enabled me to support the women and children during their preparation for baptism. What a great influence for good and how many converts will be made by the hundreds of others I have of late been able to bring into the fold.

At 11 o'clock I arrived in the city in which I am writing, having made twenty miles that morning in six hours. I was pleased to see the work of the new church progressing nicely—the church of which you remember I laid the corner stone last March—and hope to finish it in about a month. We have no lightning rods here, but yesterday just before a thunderstorm I hung a miraculous medal on the cross, which is much higher than any other building in the city in the hope that Our Lady will protect the church. To have it struck by lightning would be a great blow to our holy religion. The people here think it a punishment from the god of lightning whom they adore. Yesterday I sent a helper to buy a lot in a town thirteen miles from here. The wall around the lot I told you about in a town ten miles in another direction is I hear completed. Your readers will be glad to hear that their money is being put into circulation for the glory of God. I hope that the rumors which are being spread are not true, namely that the robber rebel who vanquished the regular soldiers a few days ago is to enter this city and with bombs blow up the dwelling of its richest citizen, a mortal enemy of his. Five hundred soldiers have just arrived from the capital to bring him to task. I hear he likes the Catholic mission for its charity so there is not much to fear; besides are we not always in the arms of a most loving God.

Yours sincerely, J. M. FRASER, P. S.—Address as usual Taichowfu. I will be back there in a month. My curate left here for that city this morning. To avoid the brigands he is taking a round about route—twelve hours in a chair, then three days by three different steamers! Such is life on the missions. J. M. F.

A LONG AND STEADY STRUGGLE "It has often been charged against the Irish," says the Catholic sentinel, "that they are a mercurial people, flighty and incapable of sustained effort. Their successful contest for self government is a triumphant refutation of the charge. It is difficult to find a parallel in the annals of any other nation ancient, or modern, for the patient and unremitting labor which the Irish people for a hundred years have devoted to the acquisition of self government. They have developed political leadership of high

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"THE PEASANT POPE"

While Pius X. felt proud of the title of "the Peasant Pope" and never, never concealed his lowly origin, he would on no account permit anything approaching a reflection on humble birth. This has been proved by the well deserved rebuke he gave a deputation of French Catholics who came a few months after his election to the Papacy and petitioned Pius X. to give to their diocese a Bishop of aristocratic blood. "That means," rejoined the Holy Father, "that if I were proposed as Bishop of your diocese a short time ago, you would have refused me. Now go home and wait for the Bishop the Pope may send you." And well might Pius X. feel convinced he was in good company as far as humble birth went. The father of Popes Adrian IV., Urban IV., John XXII., Benedict XII., Sixtus IV., Sixtus V. and Adrian VII. were respectively a beggarman, a cobbler, a tripe seller, a miller, a fisherman, a small market gardener and a ship carpenter. Philadelphia Standard and Times.

Menace Jolts From Decent Protestants

The Menace issued on May 9, carried to its subscribers the plaintive confidences of its business manager who confessed that subscription receipts were falling off disastrously and the paper couldn't last much longer unless income improved. For our part we bear the news with fortitude. If the Menace disappears, the Protestant church can go on unweaved in the Christian way of vindicating itself—"Opreaking the truth in love." Its readers may think that they will about the Menace's truth, but they have evidently discovered unmistakable proof that it's short on love.—The Continent. (Presbyterian)

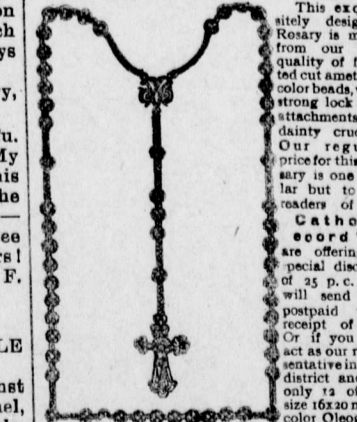
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'TIS A BAD WIND," ETC.

Appropos of the revival of interest in religious things resulting from the war in which France is engaged, the Monitor of Newark, N. J., says: "Many a Frenchman died with the Sacraments during this war, who, in other circumstances would be indifferent to religion and its ministrations."

DIED

LALLY.—At Cornwall, Ont., on Sept. 30, 1914, Mr. John Lally, in his sixtieth year. May his soul rest in peace!

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