

**MGR. VAY DE VAYA'S LECTURE**

Monsignor Count Peter Vay de Vaya, who lately visited several Hungarian settlements in the west, hearing confessions, preaching, listening to the impressions of his fellow countrymen, and giving them practical advice, returned to Winnipeg on Thursday morning, the 4th inst. As he could not remain more than one day here, Sir Daniel McMillan, our courteous Lieutenant Governor, had arranged a dinner at Government House for that very evening, "to meet Mgr. Vay de Vaya." The guests were: Rev. Dr. Beliveau, who in the absence of the Archbishop and the Vicar General, now in Montreal, represented the ecclesiastical authority, Rev. Fathers Cahill, Cherrier, Dugas, S.J., Drummond, S.J., Woodcutter (missionary to the Hungarians), Rev. C. W. Gordon, (Ralph Connor), Chief Justice Dubuc, Col. Evans, C.B., Surgeon-Major Devine, D.S.O., Mr. N. Bawlf, Mr. James Fisher, and Mr. C. C. Chipman. After dinner the party were driven to the hall of St. Mary's School, where the Catholic Club had made all the preparations for the lecture. In spite of the blustering, snowy weather the hall was comfortably filled by a very representative audience. Mr. F. W. Russell, president of the Catholic Club, acted as chairman and introduced the distinguished lecturer in a well turned speech, dwelling on the honor of welcoming, in the name of the Catholics of Winnipeg, one who was known throughout the whole world as a noble and zealous churchman. Monsignor Vay de Vaya, who had previously got the small table removed so that the platform was perfectly free from all obstructions, then came forward. In his bright violet cassock, with a silk cloak of the same color falling around him and just sweeping the boards, with his pectoral chain and cross, and several brilliant orders glittering on his breast, he was the embodiment of easy dignity and grace. His fine, ascetic face and slender but stately figure are enhanced by a frank, intellectual style of speech that makes him very fascinating. A few, a very few of his consonants have a slightly foreign burr, but his vowels, his intonations and his charming colloquialisms are thoroughly English and show his familiarity with the best society in England.

He began by saying that the Occidental nations have many false notions about the Far East in general and about the "yellow peril" in particular. His purpose was to correct some of these errors by relating his own personal observations in Siberia, Manchuria, China and Korea.

When he came to the frontier of the Russian possessions in the east, he was told that no Catholic priest would be allowed to cross it. He replied that he would enter Siberia as a Catholic priest or not at all. Having previously met the Tsar and Tsarina in Berlin, London, and elsewhere, he applied to the Emperor of all the Russias himself, who kindly invited him to his pretty summer residence at Peterhof. Mgr. Vay de Vaya's description of their Majesties' simple English country life in such a villa as a retired Birmingham merchant might have was a condensation of the graphic report of this interview which he published last April in Pearson's magazine.

The Tsar received him most graciously, gave him a passport for all his vast dominions and provided him with a special private car and cook for the whole journey across Siberia. In this car there was a bedroom, a library, a chapel and a kitchen. The Trans-Siberian railway he found to be the most complete and comfortable, though not a paying concern.

At this point of the lecture, the lights having been turned down, many very fine pictures were thrown upon the white wall by a stereopticon in the skilful hands of Mr. Wilkie. These views were photographs taken by the Count himself. While they remained visible the lecturer, sitting on one side, talked in a simple, conversational tone with a rare blending of humor and deep earnestness, occasionally rising to indicate with a pointer some particular object.

**SIBERIA**

was not, as is commonly supposed, a waste land covered with snow. The characteristics of the three divisions of Siberia, eastern, western and central, were noted; western Siberia was spoken of as very beautiful; central Siberia as having excellent soil, and a great future before it; and eastern as rich in gold, silver and other minerals. The Siberian people, he said, are not Slavs, but Mongolians and Tartars; they lead a nomadic life; are tall, well built and intelligent, and have always been free. His opinion of the Siberian towns was not so favorable, the people from all parts had come

to grab land and make money, the moral standards were not high. The leading characteristics were gold and dirt. To exemplify this, the Monsignor told how when in the gorgeously gilded room of a hotel, he asked for the water that was not there, they brought him an infinitesimal quantity of it in a cream jug.

The prisons in Siberia are not as bad as depicted, when one contrasts the ordinary mode of life among the Russian peasants. The prisoners, if they desire, may be released in Siberia where they are given lands to work whereon they may settle. The political agitators, university students, etc., are the class that feel their exile there most severely. From a commercial point of view Americans are the most successful in Siberia, Englishmen come next, and all the small cheap, nasty articles are "made in Germany."

**MANCHURIA**

is very rich in natural resources. While the northern part of the country is rather rough, central Manchuria is a beautiful land, very hilly, and is rich in mines. The Manchus inhabiting these districts are a tall and strong people. Southern Manchuria is inhabited by Chinese and is a veritable flower garden.

The lecturer's description of his adventures on his visit to Mukden, was one of the most entertaining parts of his talk. The Chinese at that time would not allow the railway to approach nearer to the city than 28 miles, considering the railroad the invention of evil spirits. So the Count had to sit cross-legged on a very uncomfortable sort of tray driven by two mules. Finding the position quite untenable on account of the roughness of the road, he changed places with the muleteer and bestrode one of the mules. As the rain fell in torrents, he was soon covered with mud and when a band of highway robbers appeared and asked the driver who the European was, the wily Chinaman, anxious not to lose his fare, replied that he was a poor priest going to ask his bishop at Mukden for some money; when he returned would be the time to rifle his pockets. The brigands retired in disgust. And when Mgr. Vay de Vaya did return the governor of Mukden provided him with an escort of Cossacks. These wild horsemen used to stop at every wayside inn, ostensibly to water their horses but really to "liquor up." Soon they were in high spirits, racing their horses one against the other. As they were nearing Mukden, the brigands, who had been lying in wait for the return of the priest, seeing this cavalcade galloping furiously to meet them, turned tail and fled.

The lecturer, while exhibiting the views of Manchurian architecture, gave, with the skill of an artist and a connoisseur, an elaborate analysis of the characteristics of Chinese art, the chief features being fine proportions, symmetry of decoration, beautiful carved work and the combination of art with the surrounding nature. One of the tombs shown is among the three or four best pieces of Asiatic architecture extant. Mukden, like most cities in the Far East, was suffering from an epidemic of cholera when he visited it, 200 or 300 dying daily, out of a population of 110,000. There were no sanitary provisions whatever for the stamping out of the disease. The tribulations and dangers of the missionary fathers and sisters of charity who conduct orphanages in the Far East were recounted very sympathetically.

**WITH DOWAGER EMPRESS**

While in Pekin Count Vay de Vaya was personally invited to meet the Emperor and Empress Dowager, a most exceptional favor, when one considers that all doors and windows must be shut wherever the Imperial family may be passing. Any Chinaman found on the street on such an occasion is immediately beheaded. The Chinese Imperial Court, the Count stated, was by far the most impressive of any he had ever visited in the principal capitals throughout the world. Seven magnificent courtyards, seven beautiful arcades and seven bridges, all in vari-colored marble, must be passed before the Imperial throne is reached, the reason for this being to impress the visitor that he is approaching the holy person of their Majesties. Before the Imperial thrones there are stones set up, which indicate just how near mandarins of the respective classes may approach. The building in which the speaker met their Majesties contained only the throne, the decorations being confined to a profusion of every conceivable sort of flower and fruit in silver dishes. The Chinese are very devoted to the fashion of flower language, each variety bespeaking the attributes of their Majesties.

In his description of their Majesties, the lecturer dwelt on the characteristics of the Dowager Empress, who sat very grave on her throne, but was evi-

dently a very clever woman. She wore the Manchu hairdress, which was built up on the lines of a windmill with a bunch of chrysanthemums on each firmly braided strand of hair. The visit to the Imperial garden and orchard was touched on, but one of the most amusing narrations of the evening was, the description of the imperial dinner. There were 100 courses, which cost many thousand dollars, but not one was palatable to an Occidental. The first dish was a soup made from sharks' teeth which had been boiled into a green jelly; the second "egg of great antiquity," the Chinese keeping the eggs sometimes for 48 and 50 years like precious wine, while another course consisted of the hind leg of a "chou," or puppy, killed when very young. Notwithstanding the money expended the Count was still quite hungry when he started for Pekin and the simple rice and water he was given at a Catholic orphanage on the way was the most delicious meal he had ever tasted.

The speaker then outlined with fervent words the work of this orphanage in picking out of the streets the infants that have been abandoned by the Chinese through poverty rather than cruelty.

Mgr. Vay de Vaya told of his undertaking at the earnest request of the sisters to raise money by lecturing for the establishment of orphanages, adding that he hoped in about a year's time to found one on the coast of Korea. Catholic missionaries, he said, very seldom convert grown-up people; but they can do good by saving children, lifting up those who are on the streets. The Chinaman believes strongly, and when brought up from his childhood as a Christian is a very good Christian.

Here the lights were turned on and some members of the club took up a collection in which several bank notes might have been seen.

**KOREA**

was the last subject considered in the lecture. The speaker dwelt on the great possibilities in that country, which is destined to be the frontier state of the great Asiatic market of the future. The people are naturally clever and readily grasp spiritual, metaphysical and Christian ideas. The pictures of Korean scenes were quaintly amusing, the people being very primitive in their customs, as illustrated by men and oxen carrying heavy loads and using no vehicles, having no roads, and no streets. Views were given of their merchants selling goods by the wayside, without shops. The lecturer told of their use of money and how he had to have two mules to carry about \$20 in copper coins. He described their laundry method, which consists in wrapping the white garments, which are the only ones they wear, round a sort of rolling-pin and drumming with these sticks all day long and for a whole week. The rub-a-dub of this homely, but most efficient process may be heard at all hours issuing from every house. People say that a certain Korean emperor devised this laundry method as a means of keeping the women out of mischief.

It is the ambition of the Monsignor, after he has established orphanages, to inaugurate an electrical and also industrial schools. The present frontier, landmark of Occidental civilization in Asia is a great institution conducted by the Jesuit Fathers that has developed from a humble little orphanage at Zikawei, near Shanghai. This institution, with its meteorological observations, has been a great boon to commerce in the Far East, saving ships continually, and on one occasion saving the German fleet from annihilation by warning it of a typhoon that would strike the straits of Formosa. Count Vay de Vaya was the first Catholic priest the Emperor of Korea ever met, and the latter showed deep interest in the work of the orphanages, about which he had never heard.

The lecture closed with an appeal that the Christian peoples support the orphanage work in the Far East. It was not strange that the Orientals should have rather a low opinion of Occidentals, for the latter had come to them as warriors, fighting for their own advantage or engaging in questionable enterprises. It was the duty of Christian nations to elevate this standard by supporting Christian works among those scandalized peoples.

Father Drummond moved a hearty vote of thanks for what he considered the most remarkable lecture he had ever heard. There was nothing commonplace in it, and it was replete with fine points the full bearing of which it would take his hearers some pondering to appreciate at their true value. Here was the descendant of a hundred earls in the oldest aristocracy of Europe, proving himself to be one of the most original of men. Mgr. Vay de Vaya had realized that the great institution

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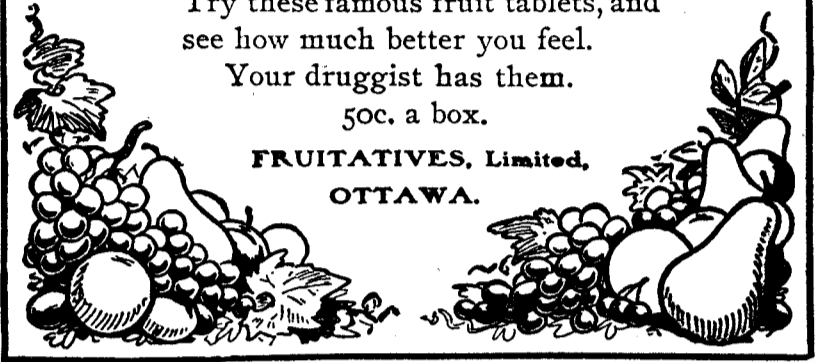
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of God and the uplifting of the Orient. Monsignor Vay de Vaya left the next day for Ottawa, where he remained two days and then went to Montreal. After a short sojourn there he will sail for home. He hopes to return here next year on his way to Korea.