

would, they well knew, barely furnish the necessities of life in the vast metropolis. As they had, however, almost resolved to risk all for the sake of their loved one, Frank, a letter came from Frank stating that he had been ordered West on business of importance for his firm and, being compelled to go immediately, the opportunity of making them a long anticipated visit was denied him.

A chill went to the heart of each patient, waiting woman as they read this letter. Something was wrong, they felt. That instinct which is said to guide woman aright, without direct knowledge, served now to raise a doubt as to the plausibility of the story. When, therefore, Ruth said, "Mother, could you spare me for a day while I go to New York?" Mrs. Ransom answered promptly. "How, Ruth, I cannot wait. You must find out what Frank has been doing."

"Ransom—Miss Ransom? No, I do not recall the name, but he seated Miss Ransom. What can I do for you?"

It was the private office of Newcome & Co., and a grey-haired, kindly gentleman spoke the words, as with old-time courtesy he placed a chair for her beside his desk.

"I have called," murmured the girl, her embarrassment overcome by the encouraging gentleness of the other's eyes. "I have called to inquire about my brother, Frank Ransom, who is in your employ and whom you have ordered West on business."

"Frank Ransom? Why Miss Ransom, we have no such young man with us; never had; but wait! I remember now we once did have a clerk by that name but he remained with us only a few months. And you are his sister?"

Ruth detected a note of sympathy in the last words and her face blanched. "Why, why, he told me—there must be some mistake; would you mind—saying why he left you?"

Mr. Newcome hemmed and hawed. It was a severe trial to look into the depths of those tender, pleading, blue eyes and admit that it was the questionable habits of her brother which had caused his speedy discharge. The facts did not come out all at once, but after a while, Ruth, by dint of persistent questioning, realized the sad truth—Her brother had for many months pursued a course of deception. He had been in the employ of Newcome & Co. but a brief time when it was discovered that his habits and associates were such as to make him unworthy of confidence. When repeated persuasion and reprimand from Mr. Newcome failed to bear good fruit, Frank was discharged, after which nothing had been seen nor heard of him. Ruth never forgot the fatherly kindness with which Mr. Newcome admitted these unpleasant facts, but it could not lessen the pain that the recital caused in her loving heart. With whirling brain Ruth left the office, proceeding with all possible speed to the address of Mrs. Ferry, the old lady with whom her brother had boarded. Here she learned of her drift from one position to another, each one less remunerative than the last, and that just a few days previous to his sister's coming he had informed Mrs. Ferry of his intention of leaving the city for good. "I am going West," he said. "Perhaps in that far away country I can begin life all over, and lift my head again." Ah, Miss, it was a sad sight to see how such a fine young man had come down in the world, and built up such an edification, too. Why, Miss, one time he showed me a grand gold medal he'd won at school and he told me it was never out of his keep. It was a beauty, with the prettiest crown of pearls set just above his name. "I'll never part with it," he said, "but wear it over my heart inside this case with Ruth's and mother's picture. When I make a man of myself I'll hang it on my watch-chain again."

"You gave us a rare treat this morning, Miss Ransom. It is not often that our poor little church hears such a voice. It was good of you to favor us, especially when your beautiful singing is in such demand."

"Oh, come now, Father O'Neill, that is some of your Irish flattery," exclaimed Ruth, as a smile grazed her lips. "It is an honor, and a great pleasure to sing in church again. It seems so long since I led the choir at home in the East. Since I took up concert work I have been a veritable tramp, but now that mother and I have settled for a while in this pretty Western town you must let me sing often in your dear little church. And now, Father, I am told you have some rare vestments and altar vestments that occasionally show the visitors. Will you let me look at them when you are at leisure?"

"Delighted, Miss Ransom. No better time than the present," cried the Father, whose great hobby was the collecting of elegant altar furnishings. Father O'Neill, on account of good health, had been compelled to resign the charge of a wealthy church in the East and in a picturesque hamlet among the Western hills had built a neat chapel to which his rich friends made frequent and valuable donations. With the eagerness of a schoolboy he promptly led the way to the sacristy where he unlocked a closet and a heavy iron safe. Soon Ruth, with all a woman's admiration for pretty things, was examining vestments of embroidered silk and satin and altar cloths of daintiest lace and linen.

I have left the most beautiful till the last," he smilingly said, as Ruth completed her survey of these. "Here is a chalice that I prize most of all. It is made from old gold and jewels donated by my parishioners and friends. Today I used it for the first time. See, we have placed the gems just as they came from their original settings. Here is a diamond from a birthday ring. This ruby was in a bracelet given by our organist. But I like this little crown of pearls, and the story connected with it is interesting. Some time ago I was called to attend a young man at the

Blue Crest Hospital here. Grace apparently long dead, had been awakened in his heart. For many a day he had not received the sacraments, and he led a wild, reckless life for years. But believing death to be approaching he sent for me. Well, I frequently visited him and was glad to discover that a real change of heart had taken place. His sorrow for the past was most edifying. The usher and the doctors and nurses had pulled him through all right. I interested myself in securing a position for him at Creston, near here, and to-morrow, with health restored, he goes to fill it. One day, hearing of my projected chalice, he drew from his breast pocket a large gold medal set with pearls. 'Father,' he said, 'this medal was won by me at dear old St. Edward's when life held out glad promise to my youth—a promise, alas, that through fault of my own, has never been realized. I prize this next to pictures of my mother and sister that I wear with it above my heart, but you have done so much for me that you must take it for your chalice. When its gold touches the Precious Blood of Our Lord, it will speak my gratitude to Him for calling a poor lost sheep back to the fold.' 'A Father, you know all,' gasped his bearer. 'You have guessed the truth—that this is my brother, my poor, erring brother that mother and I have sought for years in vain! Oh, he told you of us, did he not? But where is he? Tell me at once that I may go to him—that I may take him to our mother's arms that have waited for him so long!'

Fears made even more benignant the gentle smile with which the priest replied. 'Yes, I do know all. True, I never expected to meet the beloved, sister of whom poor Frank Ransom spoke to me so often, but Providence has surely sent you to this place. When I heard you sing this morning, and was told your name I was struck with the coincidence and resolved to investigate. That was why I sent you a message requesting you to call on me this afternoon. Now be calm. I have sent for Frank, too, and he waits for you in my study there. You will find him changed, no doubt, but a woman's love makes every allowance. There, do not stop to thank me. That is the door; go in, I will come to you later.'

And so it came about that Frank Ransom found the peace and strength to which his wayward spirit had so long been a stranger.

A pretty cottage, nesting among the hills of a Western town, shelters the reunited family. The aged mother grows young again in the presence of her recovered son, slowly but surely regaining his standing among his fellow-men. Ruth, her glorious voice more beautiful than ever with its new notes of happiness, is thrilling great audiences with her birdlike melodies; but the applause of the multitude is not so dear as the welcome tribute of the returned prodigal whose restoration was brought about, as it were, from the heart of a chalice—Lydia Stirling Flintham in *The Rosary Magazine*.

"A REAL ROMANCE OF RELIGION."

THE WONDERFUL VITALITY OF CATHOLICITY IN JAPAN.

Under the above quoted heading *The Tribune*, (New York), publishes a most interesting article written by William T. Ellis and copyrighted by Joseph B. Bowles. It is built around the incident of "The Finding of the Christians," with which Catholic readers are more or less familiar. The writer, however, introduces other points, coming from a non-Catholic source, are noteworthy. He says: "Of all the stirring stories that an investigator of religious conditions uncovers in Japan, no other is quite so dramatic or important as that of the rise, submergence, and, after centuries, the emergence of the Roman Catholic Church there. It is one of the romances of religion.

Any narrative of Roman Catholic mission work in Japan must go back to the year 1549, when Francis Xavier, now canonized, with the flaming zeal that has made his name a synonyme for aggressive piety, landed on those shores and planted the cross there. Xavier was led to Japan by a Japanese fugitive whom he had baptized in India. A phenomenal success attended his labors, and those of the other priests who followed him, his own term of residence lasting two and a half years. Ere long converts began to enter the Church at the rate of 10,000 a year, coming from all classes of society—noblemen, Buddhist priests, scholars and peasants. By the year 1582 there were 133 Jesuit missionaries in Japan, a larger number than there are at the present time, and the Christians numbered more than 60,000. Twenty years later the number had passed the million mark, despite the beginnings of persecution. At this period splendid embassies were sent by Christian princes of Japan to the Pope at Rome.

Japanese politics, the enmity of Buddhistists . . . created an antagonism to the Church which was first manifested in 1587. The fires of persecution smoldered until 1596, when they broke out fiercely. All the authority of the Government was exercised to blot out Christianity. The most ingenious methods were devised to discover Christians and to cause them to recant. Thousands were imprisoned, slain by the sword, or crucified.

By the close of the seventeenth century the Church which the Roman Catholic missionaries had reared throughout the islands at the expense of immeasurable devotion and sacrifice, had disappeared. Its buildings had been destroyed and its outward signs obliterated. So far as men could see, Christianity had perished utterly from Japan.

Before Japan was opened to commerce with the world by Commodore Perry's mission the Pope sent a band of missionaries to the Loo Choo Islands which the Chinese could re-enter Japan. With the signing of the treaties in 1858 these men took up their residence

in the port cities of Yokohama and Nagasaki, a Church being built in the former city in 1862. Three years later a Church was dedicated in Nagasaki, which had been a Christian stronghold before the persecution, to the memory of the 26 martyrs who had suffered death in that city in 1597.

Within a month occurred a dramatic event, for which Pope Pius IX. proclaimed a special feast, to be celebrated perpetually in Japan, under the title of "The Finding of the Christians." On that occasion, to the amazement and joy of the officiating priest thousands of Christians came forward to welcome the missionary and to acknowledge themselves to be Christians.

"The persistence of the faith, despite two centuries of persecution, is little short of miraculous. It was found that families had preserved certain prayers and the rite (sacrament) of baptism, and a few Christian books and emblems. The ways in which this was done were most ingenious. Sometimes crosses and pictures of the Virgin were placed in shrines and then locked. Over the door of the shrine was placed a warning that it must never be opened. The pictures were hidden in Christian and heathen worshiped, the latter, of course, all ignorantly. Certain of these shrines, because, of the passage of time, favorite places of worship, and as clear belief passed into dim tradition, nobody knew definitely to whom these shrines were erected, or why. Some of the favorite Japanese deities have since proved to be Christian personalities! Only with the opening of many shrines in recent years has the real nature of their contents been discovered.

This momentous chapter of religious history has several bearings, but at the present critical period in Japan's religious life it is an important evidence to the fidelity of the Japanese character. Those who question whether the native Christians will hold out should meditate upon the fact that this unparalleled page in the Church's annals to learn a lesson in heroism and steadfastness that is nothing less than thrilling.

RENEWAL OF PERSECUTION.

Lulled into a sense of security by the coming of the missionaries, the Christians openly avowed themselves. But in 1868 the present Emperor created the ancient anti-Christian edicts, in the following proclamations: "The evil sect called Christian is strictly prohibited. Suspicious persons should be reported to the proper officers and rewards will be given." "With respect to the Christian sect, the existing prohibition must be strictly observed. Evil sects are strictly prohibited."

For several years the Christians who refused to forswear their faith were again called upon to pass through the fires of persecution. They were exiled and imprisoned and tortured to the number of more than six thousand—two thousand again paying "the last full measure of devotion. Full religious liberty was granted, however, in 1873, and since then the Roman Catholic Church has made remarkable progress in Japan, especially among the poor and lowly, to whom it has particularly ministered.

There are 243 Roman Catholic missionaries in Japan, all members of the Society of Jesus, and practically all French. Some antagonism was shown to them during the late war, because of France's alliance with Russia, but this generally has been overcome by the tact of the missionaries themselves. The self-sacrifice and zeal of these men is praised by everybody. A frequent subject of remark is the manner in which they share the poverty of the natives among whom they live. One of the Fathers himself says on this point: "The mission requires that its workers should live unobtrusively in the poorest and most unhygienic quarters, and so, aside from lodging, it allows only 25 yen (\$11.50) a month to European missionaries. It is misery to those who have no private means. Nevertheless, there are several who must content themselves with this pittance and live on such modest resources. Strange to relate, it is just these last who succeed best in evangelization. The Japanese people, generally the poor, listen more readily to an apostle who lives a life of privation than to one who has a modest competence."

Repeatedly I have heard the contrast made between the style of living adopted by the Roman Catholics and that of the Protestant missionaries, and always in favor of the former.

Of Roman Catholic churches in Japan usually more are prepossessing in appearance than the Protestant—there are 145, with 385 preaching stations in addition. The membership is now 60,000, ministered to by 243 missionaries, 119 of whom are priests and 124 nuns. There are 33 Japanese priests and 269 native helpers.

In publication and in education the Roman Catholic mission in Japan lags far behind others, although it has three boys' schools, with an enrollment of 800 pupils, and girls' schools with 500 pupils. In direct evangelization, the figures already given show the creditable work of the Fathers. But it is in works of charity and philanthropy that the Roman Catholics lead all other religious bodies in Japan. All the Protestant missions together have 18 orphanages and homes, with 303 inmates, while the Jesuits have 1,152 inmates in 14 institutions. Of hospitals and dispensaries the Protestants have 13, and the Roman Catholics the same number. The former treated last year 600 "in" patients, with no figures given for "out" patients; the Catholics treated 200 "in" patients, and the enormous total of 49,650 "out" patients. Prominent among the charities of the latter must be mentioned the leper hospitals at Gotemba and Kuna-moto. In visiting the hospitals and the sick, the missionaries are tireless. In a word, I may sum up the present situation with respect to Roman Catholic missions by saying that while from preference they work quietly and in obscurity, taking no vacations, doing no advertising, I have found substantial evidence of their presence and labor

in every part of Japan I have visited; and no-where have I heard of a man of them, by Protestants or by Japanese, other than in terms of praise.

"THE FINDING OF THE CHRISTIANS."

The "dramatic event" of 1865, so briefly referred to by Mr. Ellis, is the subject of a wondrous narrative by M. Bernard Petitjean, a native of France, who, having joined the Society of Foreign Missions in Paris, was sent out to Japan in 1860. This illustrious missionary, whose name will ever be indissolubly bound up with the history of the Japanese Church, built the memorial edifice at Nagasaki. Of "The Finding of the Christians" he says: "On March 17, 1865, about 12:30 some fifteen persons were standing at the church door. Urged no doubt by my angel guardian, I went and opened the door. I had scarce time to say a 'Pater' when three women, between fifty and sixty years of age, knelt down beside me and said in a low voice, placing their hands upon their hearts: 'The hearts of all of us here do not differ from yours.'"

"Indeed!" I exclaimed. "Whence do you come?"

They mentioned their village, adding: "At home everybody is the same as we are."

Blessed be Thou, O God! for the happiness which filled my soul. What a reward for five years of barren ministry! I was obliged to answer all their questions, and to talk to them of "O Deus," "O Yaso Sama" and "Santa Maria Sama," by which names they designated God, Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin. The view of the statue of the Madonna and the Child, recalled Christmas to them, which they said they had celebrated in the eleventh month. They asked me if we were not at the seventeenth day of the time of Sadness (i. e., Lent). Nor was St. Joseph unknown to them; they called him "O Yaso Samana yo fu," the adoptive father of the Lord.

In the midst of this volley of questions I was heard; immediately all dispersed. But as soon as the newcomers were recognized, all returned, laughing at their fright.

"They are all people of our village," they said. "They have the same hearts as we have."

However, we had to separate for fear of awakening the suspicions of the officials whose visit we feared. On Monday, Tuesday and Good Friday, April 13 and 14, 1865, fifteen hundred people visited the church at Nagasaki. The presbytery was invaded; the faithful took the opportunity to satisfy their devotion before the crucifix.

During the early days of May the missionaries learned of the existence of two thousand five hundred Christians scattered in the neighborhood of the city. On May 15 there arrived a delegation from an island not very far from here. After a short interview we dismissed them, detaining only the catechist and the leader of the pilgrimage. The catechist, named Peter, gave us the most valuable information. Let me say that his formula for baptism does not differ at all from ours, and that he pronounces it very distinctly. He declares that there are many Christians and that they are all over Japan. He cited in particular one place where there are over one thousand families. He then asked about the Great Chief of the Kingdom of Rome, whose name he desired to know. When I told him that the Vicar of Christ, the saintly Pope Pius IX., would be very happy to learn the consoling news given us by himself and his countrymen, he gave full expression to his joy. Nevertheless, before leaving he wished to make quite sure that we were the true successors of the ancient missionaries.

"Have you no children?" he asked timidly.

"You and all your brethren, Christian and heathen, of Japan, are all the children whom God has given to us. Other children, we cannot have. The priest must, like the first apostles, remain all his life unmarried."

At this reply Peter and his companion bent their heads to the ground and cried out: "They are celibate! Thank God!"

Next day an entire Christian village invited a visit from the missionaries. Two days later 600 more Christians sent a deputation to Nagasaki. By June 8 the missionaries had learned of the existence of 25 Christian settlements, before leaving he wished to make direct relation with them.

Thus—says M. Launay—in spite of the absence of all exterior help, without any sacraments—except baptism—by the action of God in the first place, and in the next place, by the faithful transmission in families of the teaching and the example of the Japanese Christians and martyrs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the sacred fire of the true faith, or spark of this fire,

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