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## ANCIENT CHINA,

We dislike to appear captious, yet there is one thing difficult for us to understand. Scarcely a dispatch comes from China that does not give news of the Protestant missions and missionaries, while seldom a line appears with regard to the fate of the hundreds of Catholic priests and nuns at work in that country. There are about seven times more Catholics in China than there are Protestants, and, while few Americans are laboring in the Chinese field, the Associated Press ought to know that Catholics are interested in one another the world over. Whatever news American Catholics now receive comes chiefly through French and German sources.

The greatest statesmen of Europe, even those who have long forgotten the Bibles they read in early youth, are to-day seriously wondering if the world does not stand upon the brink of that Armageddon long ago predicted by St. John. Dispatches of the morning show that China has 1,000,000 men under arms and shortly may have 40,000,000 more. On one side France, Russia and Germany stand allied; on the other, England, the United States and Japan. Russia, it now becomes apparent, is a seething volcano ready to burst upon China at a moment's notice—even perhaps without notice. All told, she has a trained army of 400,000 men now marching down toward the border. It is a moment of peril. No man can foresee the result should the Powers fall to war among themselves. It might give China an opportunity of vomiting half her 490,000,000 people across the face of Europe.

The suggestion that China may overrun Europe may not prove so ridiculous as at first sight it seems. It was by pretty much similar hordes Pagan Rome was overrun and crushed in the fourth and fifth centuries. From the beginning of the Christian Era, Russia, China and neighboring lands, have been centres of storm, pouring fierce peoples upon the West, utterly wiping out its boasted civilization. The like may happen again. God still directs the destinies of empires, kingdoms and republics. One hundred years hence Europe may again be buried in the night of another Dark Age. Again it may be the province of the Church to Christianize and civilize by peaceful means a multitude of barbaric hordes as long ago she did the Goth, the Huns, the Lombards and the Vals. We cannot know His purpose. One thing, however, we do know, and that is that apparently we have come squarely up against a critical period in the history of the world. Those who ponder much on the past and future, to-day must feel profoundly interested in the present. In some way we feel that it is the beginning of a new era.

## ST. PHILIP OF JESUS.

(Sacred Heart Review.)

A correspondent of the New York *Sun* pointed out, the other day, the little known and yet significant fact that the first martyr who shed his blood for Christ in Japan was one of the much vilified Filipino friars, and also a native of North America. A church in his honor was opened in Mexico on Feb. 5, 1897, the third centenary of his martyrdom. All the secular priests of the United States, on Feb. 5, say the Mass and the divine office of St. Philip of Jesus, as he is called. We give below a short sketch of his life. On the baptismal font in the cathedral of the city of Mexico is the following inscription:—"In this font was baptized the glorious Japanese martyr, St. Philip of Jesus, a native of this city of Mexico, and its patron." The comment of the *Sun's* correspondent on the martyrdom of this friar is worth remembering:—"About a quarter of a century before the 'Mayflower' sailed, and about two centuries before the colonies threw off the British yoke, the New World gave the Old a Christian martyr."

Felipe las Casas was born in 1572. His early life was not edifying. Many were the tears and prayers of his mother for his conversion. Hoping that he would do better if he were removed from his evil companions, his father sent him to Manila, where he had large commercial interests, but his life in the Philippines was no better than it had been in Mexico. He squandered his fortune, almost

ruined his health, and found himself in as desperate straits as was the prodigal of the gospel. Then, like another Augustine, he gave up his wicked life, turned to God and resolved to serve him with his whole heart and soul for the rest of his life, and he did. He became a Franciscan friar, entering their convent in the city of Manila, and by word and example he encouraged all he came in contact with to be true followers of Jesus Christ.

After an absence of several years, he left Cavité to visit Mexico to see his parents, but the sailing vessel had to stop at the Japanese port of Urando for repairs. The arrival of himself and his fellow friars was interpreted as an attempt of the missionaries to prepare Japan for future subjugation by Spain. It served the Emperor Taicosama with a pretext for ordering the execution of the Franciscan friars at Ozaca and Meaco. The tips of the ears of the missionaries were cut off and they were started on their journey, lasting a month, to the place of execution. When they reached the hill where they were to die and saw the twenty-six crosses prepared for them, and the executioners with their spears and iron bands, and the crowds of Japanese waiting for the execution, the martyrs astonished the pagans by a tremendous shout of joy. Philip could be heard above the rest, as he stretched out his hand toward the cross on which he was to die, and cried, "Hail, precious cross, on which the Redeemer of the world died for me: O blessed seafaring, O fortunate vessel, whose shipwreck has been for me the cause of such great gain!"

One of the iron bands with which Philip was fastened to his cross became displaced, caught him about the neck, and he was slowly strangling, murmuring, all the while, as well as he could, "Jesus, Jesus;" one of the executioners put an end to his sufferings by driving a spear through his body, thus giving him the martyr's crown ahead of his twenty-five companions.

## AN AETHER VOYAGE.

BY AN ENGLISH BANKER.

Writer for the Review.

If it were possible to cast off for a time the trammels of our bodily frame, and to roam in space freely and rapidly as can now our spirit-entity—our mind—what a succession of marvellous spectacles should we behold, even if we confined our aether-voyage to the narrow limits of our own solar system.

First we would transport ourselves to that lifeless world, which, dead itself, and void of vital spark or any vestige of that mysterious principle—Life—is yet most beautiful in death, fair, surpassing fair, even as though she were in the virgin prime of her youth, and revelling in the living essence. But as we approach nearer and nearer to our lovely satellite, we find that though now cold and still, without air, without water, at one time in her history she was the scene of mighty and fiery perturbations. On all sides gigantic volcanic craters, enormously surpassing in size and extent any upon this earth, bear evidence that her entire globe must then have been one great furnace, furiously vomiting forth in all directions flaming cataracts of fire, massive incandescent rocks, and torrents of seething molten lava. But now all is cold and drear; the atmosphere which must then have surrounded it, and the water which doubtless also existed, all swept away into space, leaving but the lifeless skeleton of a dead world.

And now, leaving this cheerless, though from afar sweet and lovely orb, as we speed through the aether we describe a considerable number of diminutive planets, some only a few yards in diameter while others in the same orbit, as Pallas, the largest of these minor planets, is in volume more than two thousand times less than that of our Earth. But all these little shining orbs—remnants of a great planet which by some means or other, and for some great reason or other, was shattered into fragments—are revolving on their own axis, and at the same time are travelling at prodigious speed round the parent sun; so that, as we traverse their orbit, we see in all directions brilliant little shining globes careering round at a rate twenty times quicker than that of a cannon-ball.

Leaving this glittering cluster, we now arrive near that most magnificent spec-

tle of all in our system, or perhaps even in any other system, giant ringed and belted Saturn. Viewed through a powerful lens even from our distance of a thousand million miles, the noble planet presents a spectacle of surpassing wonder and grandeur; but now, arrived within close purview of his glory, the overwhelming and majestic sublimity of the wondrous scene must transfix the startled beholder with the profoundest awe and amazement.

Hanging there suspended in space, the great globe, encircled by a series of gigantic shining rings, the outer more than half-a-million miles in circumference and twenty thousand miles wide; and attended by a number of brilliant satellites of enormous proportions, the great belted sphere, with its aureola of glory, rivals almost a sun in lustrous splendour and magnificence. And if we alight upon the darker side of the planet, his night must be almost as day, for (except at the equator) the mighty rings, believed to be formed of diminutive satellites, as the sand of the sea-shore for multitude, lighted up by the hidden sun, will, except in the cone of the shadow, appear as prodigious illuminated arcs of dazzling light extending from horizon to horizon upwards towards the zenith.

But the brief limits of this article forbid further reference to the planetary wonders; perhaps some other opportunity may occur. Suffice it to say that, when the final Great Assize is over, and the Eternal Judge has allotted to those who have loved and served Him varied positions in the realms of glory, then will these beautified ones, in the company of their guardian angel who has been at their side throughout their life, be able for themselves to explore all these glories, and to visit all these strange and startling wonders.

## A BOY AND A FILE.

If a boy has any "mechanical faculty" if it comes to him to use tools, let him be thankful. Such a gift of nature—"gumption" it is sometimes called—deserves to be cultivated. It will serve its possessor many a good turn, though it may never serve him quite as well as it served a man who tells his story in *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*. He opened a door for himself in a really striking manner.

"When I was 14 years old," he says, "it became necessary for me to go out in the world and earn my share in the family expenses. I looked about with small success for a week or two, and then I saw a card hanging in a store window, 'Boy Wanted.'

"I pulled down my hair, brushed the front of my jacket, and walked in.

"Do you want a boy?" I asked of the clerk.

"Back office," he said.

"I walked back to the little den with a high partition around it, and pushing open a door, which I noticed was slightly ajar, cap in hand, I stepped in.

"It was a chilly day in November, and before I spoke to the proprietor, who was bending over a desk, I turned to close the door. It squeaked horribly as I pushed it shut, and then I found that it wouldn't latch. It had shrunk so that the socket which should have caught the latch was a trifle too high. I was a boy of some mechanical genius, and I noticed what the trouble was immediately.

"Where did you learn to close doors?" said the man at the desk.

"I turned round quickly.

"At home, sir."

"What do you want?"

"I came to see about the boy wanted," I answered.

"Oh!" said the man, with a grunt. He seemed rather gruff, but somehow his crisp speech didn't discourage me. "Sit down," he added, "I'm busy."

"I looked at the door.

"If you don't mind," said I, "and if a little noise won't disturb you, I'll fix that door while I'm waiting."

"Eh?" he said quickly. "All right, go ahead."

"I had been sharpening my skates that morning, and the short file I used was still in my pocket. In a few minutes I had filed down the brass socket so that the latch fitted nicely. I closed the door two or three times to see that it was right. When I put my file back in my pocket and turned round, the man at the desk

was staring at me.

"Any parents?" he asked.

"Mother," I answered.

"Have her come with you at two o'clock," he said, and turned back to his writing.

"At 25 I was a partner in the house, and at 35 I had a half interest. I always attributed the foundation of my good fortune to the only recommendation I then had in my possession—the file."

## SOME SECRETE SOCIETIES.

In casual conversation a short time since, the fact was learned that there is a considerable number of Catholic men who still retain membership in the Knights of Pythias.

This is not as it should be. Pythianism is as much under the ban of the Church as is Masonry. No Catholic can under any circumstances whatever, hold office in this society, nor can he in any way take an active part in its affairs, ritual or executive work. Catholics who do hold such office, and who interest themselves in Pythianism, cease by that fact to be Catholics. There is no priest, confessor or Bishop who can permit such membership, and whoever alleges permission received for such active membership asserts an evident falsehood. True in the years long since passed, the Church looked upon this society with indifference and Catholics were permitted to become members of it. Reports as to the dangerous nature of the society were sent so frequently to Rome that in the year 1895 it was decided to place the society under the same ban as Masonry.

The prohibition of membership in the societies of the Knights of Pythias, the Odd Fellows and the Sons of Temperance was absolute. Catholics were forbidden to join them under pain of excommunication and such as were already members were enjoined to sever at once all connection with them under pain of being refused participation in the sacraments of the Church.

There was positively no exception made in behalf of any person or locality.

The universality of the prohibition was represented to Rome as rigorous in the extreme, owing to the fact that many Catholic men who had acquired membership in these societies had done so in good faith and had already in virtue of moneys paid, acquired a right to financial aid in sickness or in the event of death. It was represented that to deprive such men of these acquired rights would be inflicting upon them too great a financial loss. In view of such representation Rome decided to make an exception to the universal law and to allow them through their continuance of membership to retain a purely financial membership in the societies in question.

The permission thus accorded gave to long standing members the right to continue in these societies for the benefits that would accrue from such membership, but continued the universal prohibition as to active membership.

The permission in question could not be enjoyed save by those who through their pastors, had obtained the right to make use of it. This right must be applied for and obtained from the Apostolic Delegate at Washington. Catholics who have joined these societies since the decree in question cannot obtain such privilege. With our explan-

ation it becomes evident that no Catholic can hold office in any of the condemned societies. They cannot attend their meetings nor assist at their degree work. Continuance to do so stamps them as apostates, and debars them from all claim to practical Catholicity. Further, it prevents them from remaining or becoming members of such Catholic societies as the Knights of Columbus or Hibernians, which demand practical Catholicity as an essential to membership.

It is to be hoped that many of those to whom this advice is addressed will at once sever their connection with the societies in question, and be, in fact, what they are in profession—practical Catholics.—Providence Visitor.

## MEDALS OR BOOKS.

Rev. Dr. McSweeney of St. Mary's, Md., has started a crusade against the awarding of medals at school commencements.

The poor literary quality and the high prices of most of the books produced by Catholic publishers from ten to twenty five years ago for the school premium trade, induced many of our institutions of late years to give to students deserving of distinction certificates, wreaths, cash prizes and medals instead of them.

As consequences of this change, many fewer books have been sold within the past decade of years and medals, etc., have become so common as to have lost their value in esteem.

Moreover Catholic literature has been deprived of an enormous circulation and the money spent for other premiums has been practically wasted. Now, good editions of fine volumes can be had at fair prices and they should once more be the guerdon of diligence in study.

In books there is an infinite variety, an imperishable value, a perpetual interest, a force for good making an ever-widening circle of influence. What is a gold medal costing \$50 to a library of fifty well selected volumes? Dross, dead metal, a useless bauble that always finds its way to the dusty trinket box. What is it in worth, in power, in stimulating and ennobling impressions, to the high thought and deathless beauty of the works of master-minds of Catholic literature? Nothing—a gewgaw exciting only vanity.

Down with the dead medal! Up with the living book!—Catholic Columbian.

## ARCHIEPISCOPAL VISITATION.

Last Monday His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface left for Westbourne and Sandy Bay, Lake Manitoba. Yesterday he was at Our Lady of Suffrage, Sandy Bay. Today he leaves for Ebb and Flow, Lake Manitoba. On the 30th inst. he will start for the Dauphin country. Sept. 1 he visits Makinak and Laurier; Sept. 2, Ste. Rose du Lac. Sept. 6 he starts for Winnipegosis; Sept. 8 he will visit Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, Pine Creek, Lake Winnipegosis. Sept. 9, return to St. Boniface. Sept. 15 he will start for St. Laurent, Lake Manitoba, and visit, Sept. 17, Ile des Chenes and Pointe aux Lievres, and, Sept. 18, Our Lady of Folgoet, Dog Creek.