

flock on the Way of the Cross, each Friday night, never takes his eyes from the scenes above him. At the Twelfth Station, if you are watching him instead of keeping your eyes where they belong, you will see his chin tremble, his hands clutch the staff of the cross a little more rigidly, and his lips move in silent prayer, or perhaps it is a threat, as on that first round of the Stations.

Father Cassidy sometimes sighs, and says now that he has a son, he wonders just what Buddy will turn out to be. But Anne, Father Cassidy's faithful housekeeper, with a wise shake of her old head, answers softly.

"Faith, your Reverence, 'tis myself thinks he has the build and the eye of a General—or a Bishop."—Bernardine McCarthy.

**GENERAL INTENTION FOR SEPTEMBER**

**RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PIUS XI.**

**THE CONVERSION OF CHINA**

When the last General Intention for the conversion of China was proposed to the members of the League, in 1912, there were 1,250,180 Catholics in that country. Ten years later the Catholic population had doubled. If this rate of conversion is kept up, China will have, in 1932, four millions of Catholics; and in a century possibly forty millions. "What a dream," exclaimed a missionary writing from China, "if at the end of a century there was one Catholic for every ten Chinamen."

And yet the dream may come true. At the present time the Holy See is taking a special interest in that country. Very recently it appointed a Delegate Apostolic, Mgr. Celso Costantini, who is now the ecclesiastical head of a hierarchy comprising fifty-six vicariates apostolic and sixty-one Bishops. These prelates have jurisdiction over 2,468 foreign and native priests, who in their turn minister to the spiritual needs of 2,143,000 Catholics.

While French missionaries are still the most numerous in China, owing to their long years of labor there, other national sources have been tapped; and missionaries hailing from Italy, Holland, Spain, United States, Ireland, Canada, England, and Switzerland, are at work. Besides, these Foreign Mission clergy, the Religious Orders are well represented. Among these are the Salesians, Augustinians, Dominicans, Franciscans, Society of the Divine Word, Fathers of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Lazarists, Passionists, Jesuits, Trappists, Marists, Little Brothers of Mary, and Brothers of the Christian School.

It is consoling to see so many different nationalities and communities employed in the work of converting China, but what is more consoling and perhaps promising more for the future, is the constant increase in the number of the native clergy which, since 1912, has risen from 681 to 1,030. Besides the native Chinese who enter the religious bodies, there are at the present time 318 theologians and 264 philosophical students in seminaries, with 1,700 studying the classics in other institutions, all preparing themselves for the evangelization of their fellow-countrymen.

All these activities, centralized and efficient, have one object in view, namely, the conversion to the Catholic faith of a vast country of 427,000,000, a population whose national unity is the greatest on the globe. However, many obstacles must be overcome before pagan China can be claimed for the Church. Among these may be mentioned the voluntary isolation of the Chinese, their dislike of strangers and foreigners generally, their interecine struggles, their obstinate attachment to rites and usages thousands of years old, their blind respect for superstitions, traditions and for beliefs and practices that savor of idolatry, their narrow formalism of their educated classes, the incapacity and rapaciousness of those in authority among them. To these obstacles must be added one for which the Chinese cannot be held responsible, namely, the multiplicity of the Christian sects which are at work there, hindering the progress of the true Church. Who will blame the poor pagan but subtle Chinaman, no matter how well disposed he may be to the religion of the foreigner, if he asks the missionaries who seek to convert him to Christianity, to come to some understanding among themselves, as to what they believe, before they begin to teach him?

Once the chief obstacles are out of the way, no people in the world offer such facilities for wholesale conversion. The Chinese are honest, frugal and simple in their tastes. Family life among them is admirably constituted, and it may be affirmed that, outside a tendency to polygamy in certain districts, the relations of parents and children approach our own Christian ideal. In China, as in the ancient Rome of Prudentius, "the heirs of pagan ancestors, from their tenderest age, surround with homage and fear all that the grey hairs of their fathers taught them to respect."

Our hopes for the religious future of China are based on solid grounds. Japan has shown in the

past thirty years with what astounding assimilating power the Yellow Races are endowed, what rapid progress they can make in white civilization, and what influence they can acquire when guided by intelligent and energetic leaders. If Japan had only the saving leaven of Christianity to crown its civilization, what a wonderful nation it would be! Why not look for some such good fortune for religion in the Chinese Republic? Its Catholic population is increasing rapidly, and Chinese Catholics have already given proof of their assimilating power by their adoption of the usages in vogue in the Church in other lands. They have their large churches, their grottoes of Lourdes, their processions, pictures, medals, scapulars, etc., which, after all, refer only to the external side of things. But the interior life of the Chinese Catholics is not less conspicuous for its examples of faith and piety. One of the most popular devotions among them is the Way of the Cross. The pathetic story of Our Lord's Passion and Death makes an intense appeal to those good people, and they never tire of following Him in spirit in His footsteps to Calvary. The Apostleship of Prayer is solidly rooted among them, and the Morning Offering is an integral part of their daily prayers. The Chinese Catholics are praying for the conversion of their fellow-countrymen, and look anxiously for the day when millions shall kneel at the same altar and enjoy the same spiritual privileges as themselves. For Chinese Catholics the Sacrifice of the Mass is a feast of the soul. A religious now in China writes us: "A young missionary who, after six months of heroic application to the study of the Chinese tongue, is as much at home with it as David was in the armour of Saul, and who goes timidly for the first time to celebrate in some little country village, is quickly put at his ease when he hears the traditional Kyrie of Dumont's Royal Mass. True, the Latin words are badly mangled, but the hearts of the singers are in the right place and so are the notes."

What a splendid victory it would be for Christianity if China were brought over! That vast land has lain long enough under the blight of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. It is time that Christian teaching loosened the grip that those base forms of religion have on that country, a grip which has lasted several thousand years, one that does not yield to any ordinary means. The help of God is needed and this can be secured by zeal and prayer. China needs our help; we must hasten its day of freedom from the thraldom of Satan by our efforts. God wishes to save souls by the cooperation of other men; human aid in the work of the Redemption is an essential condition of the Church's apostolate. Why is it that China has not taken its place among Christian nations as quickly as it should? Because aspects of work and prayers—secondary saviors—have not been found. The Church is continually inviting, urging apostles to work and pray, but these are slow in responding to the call. Several thousand are now at work in China, but what a paltry handful they are when compared with the apostolic army that should be there!

Undoubtedly the majority of our readers will not be called upon to go to China to work for the conversion of that country. But they are all surely called upon to do something. Here in Canada there are several training schools for missionaries of both sexes that look to us for practical cooperation. There is the China Mission College in Toronto and a Missionary College just beginning in Montreal. Among women there are the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, of Montreal, and the Sisters of Our Lady of the Angels established in Sherbrooke, Que. Both Sisterhoods are already at work in China. We can help all four institutions by our alms, and thus share, though it be only indirectly, in the noble work in which they are engaged. Unhappily it would appear that our zeal for the welfare of the Chinese pagans is at a low ebb. One example will suffice. A few years ago The Messenger appealed to its thousands of readers throughout Canada to furnish a "Burse of the League of the Sacred Heart" for the training of a missionary in the China Mission College, who would work in China for long years to come. The burse is still far from completion.

If we have not alms to give, we can still help by our prayers; everyone can help in this way. Within recent months a Crusade of Prayer has been started for the conversion of China. Why not contribute our little bit to the volume of supplications which is rising daily to heaven for the souls of the four hundred million pagans who are deprived of the benefits of Christianity, who have never experienced the sweetness of living under the yoke of the Gospel, who have not the hope that is ours of seeing God some day face to face in heaven?

E. J. DEVINE, S. J.

**THE GUARDIAN ANGEL**

God extends His protection to us through many agents, chief among whom are the Guardian Angels, whose office is to assist and save all human wayfarers from the perils that at every turn in the road

threaten the life of both body and soul. This consoling truth is clearly taught in the Scriptures, which say: "For He hath given His Angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways."

Not only the years of childhood, but youth in its prime, and manhood in its decay and old age come within the province of the ministering Angels. A simple faith in the power and protection of our celestial companion, who walks with us every step of our life, is one of the greatest needs of our materialistic and self-sufficient age.

Surrounded as we are by the vast throng of malign and unfriendly spirits that menace the soul, and by physical dangers that jeopardize the very existence of the body, let us turn constantly to our Guardian Angels for that defence and protection which they alone can give, and show those all-aiding spirits the honor and gratitude they deserve.—The Pilot.

**SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY**

R. K. MacGregor, Ph. D., in America

The field of spirit phenomena is wide, and within it spirit photography bulks largely. All such photography is a fraud has been proved times without number. But the ranks of the gullible never grow thinner; some minds can go on believing in the teeth of the most glaring exposure. The history of spirit photography, however, has always been particularly shady. The trickery which seems inseparable from all branches of spirit phenomena has been preeminent in photography. From the Catholic standpoint such humbug and bungling need to be exposed that the unwary may not stumble.

It is just about fifty years since the idea first took shape. In Boston, a psychic studio was established by a gentleman named Mumier. But he proved such a charlatan that he was laughed out of the business. His experience, however, had revealed how rich was the crop of dupes, so he bobbed up corklike again and again, until the New York police prosecuted him for obtaining money by fraudulent means. From that date he vanished permanently. Some years later Mr. and Mrs. Guppy, two well known English mediums, appeared as his successors. But their ability was on a plane lower even than their morality; so they were promptly exposed and passed beyond. In 1875, Buguet, a Frenchman, visited England. He was an imperial grand wizard of charlatanism and an expert photographer. He produced spirit photographs so impressive that he won the confidence of many well known English spiritists. The French gendarmier were less confiding. When Buguet returned to France he was charged with fraud in the manufacture of spirit photographs. At the trial he owned up; he admitted that his assistants and double exposures were the real source of his spoils. This confession put a quietus on spirit photography for a long time. But after twenty years it has acquired a fresh lease of life and is at present probably the most popular feature of the many trickeries of so called psychic phenomena.

Human credulity is an inscrutable quality. It seems able to coexist with high intelligence in many other directions on the part of the same individual. For instance the Rev. Stainton Moses, a well-known English spiritist, who had been Buguet's most zealous champion, continued to believe in him despite his confession of fraud. He insisted that the judge must have been prejudiced and that Buguet must have sworn falsely for a monetary consideration. The latter hypothesis is the more probable. And so the argument is twofold. If Buguet could fake police bribes, he could also take false photographs.

Today the spirit photographer is doing a brisk trade. Probably he is more skilled in photography but his credentials are not a bit more trustworthy than those of his predecessors. The three leading spirit photographers are William Hope, whom Sir Conan Doyle considers "the leading psychic photographer of Great Britain," Mr. Vearncombe and Mrs. Deane. The British College of Psychic Science acts as booking agent for these three, a proof that they bask in the sun of official approval. For years the other British institution of like nature but of more honorable repute, the Psychic Research Society, tried to get a test sitting with Mr. Hope. But no incident was ever more coy than that medium. Then Mr. Marriott, a London photographic expert, solicited Hope without result; later he challenged Hope with the same result. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle assured the world that Hope was all right; he had watched him at his work, and fraud was impossible in the way the pictures were produced! Mr. Marriott was not to be shaken off. He offered to produce spook pictures in circumstances similar to those in which Hope worked. The offer was accepted; the test took place at the College of Psychic Science. Doyle and four others acted as observers. Mr. Marriott's apparatus was carefully examined, his actions were carefully watched. All agreed that no fraud was being practised. Yet the plates when developed showed two spirit photographs. If inability to detect trickery is proof of real spirit pictures these were genuine.

But they were not such, Mr. Marriott said they were produced by fraud unnoticed by the observer. Sir Conan Doyle's testimonial to Hope, therefore, falls in value, if it has any; obviously he cannot detect a fraud when there avowedly is one.

Mr. Edward Bush, another member of the Research Society, sent Hope a photograph of a map whom Hope presumed to be dead. At the first sitting a spirit message came through; at the second sitting a spirit picture of the subject of the photograph appeared. Yet, the subject was Mr. Bush's son-in-law who was alive and well. The spirit message was in the same handwriting as that of other messages received through the same agency, and had the same errors in spelling. The spiritists admit that the message is a forgery but along with Hope they still claim that the picture is quite genuine. A recent issue of the Scientific American, however, recalls an incident that happened recently. Mr. Price of the Research Society had been seeking a seance with Hope for five years. One was at last arranged through the agency of the college; terms two guineas and the provision of a packet of six quarter plates. As a precaution against trickery Mr. Price arranged with the Imperial Dry Plates Co., London, to provide him with a special half-dozen plates upon which designs had been stencilled by x-rays. At the college, Price met Hope and his assistant Mrs. Buxton. The lady asked if the plates had been tampered with. "They are in exactly the same condition as when received from the maker," was the perfectly truthful answer.

The seance commenced; the company sat round a table; Mrs. Buxton led in singing a hymn; Hope put up a long prayer invoking the aid of the Almighty. In view of what was to follow immediately, it was a particularly audacious display of irreverence. Hope brought the dark slide to Price for examination. The latter marked it, so that he would be sure it was the one used in the camera. Both men went into the dark room. Price opened the packet of plates and loaded the marked slide. Hope then asked Price to pick up the unused plates at the same time taking the loaded slide from him. Price never lost sight of the slide in Hope's hands, and he noticed him take a half turn from the light, then, quickly putting the slide in his breast pocket remove another one. When Price finished repacking Hope handed him back a loaded slide, and the two left the dark room. Before handing the slide again to Hope, Mr. Price looked for the marks he had placed on the slide that he had loaded. Of course they were not there. Price took his place before the camera; the plates were exposed and developed. One showed a spirit "extra" of a lady; the other simply a photograph of Price. But neither had any trace of the design stencilled on by the x-rays. The college does not allow spirit negatives to be taken away but the other negative Price retained. Immediately after the sitting the four remaining plates were taken to be developed; the x-ray design appeared on each. When the negative retained by Mr. Price was compared with those remaining of the original half dozen, the glass was found to be of a different thickness and color. Yet this Mr. William Hope is according to Sir Conan Doyle "the leading psychic photographer of Great Britain."

Mr. Vearncombe is another dealer in spirit photography. He claims to get spirit extras on plates without ever opening the packet or exposing the plates. Now there is a society of professional conjurers called the Magic Circle. This circle tested Vearncombe. The members first sent him a packet of plates enclosed in a lead wrapper. Unfortunately for Vearncombe lead is opaque to x-rays, so the plates were returned blank. Another packet was sent and fourteen traps were set to disclose any tampering that might take place while the packet was under "control." When the plates were returned, one disclosed on development a spirit photograph. But Vearncombe had fallen into two of the fourteen traps set to catch his trickery. The experiences of the "Magic Circle" with Mrs. Deane are simply a repetition of the others. Permission to test her was granted by the college. After the sitting the investigators informed the college authorities that Mrs. Deane's spirits were produced on previously prepared plates. The principal of this college was indignant at the suggestion, and intimated his final decision in these terms: "I am not prepared to grant any member of the 'Magic Circle' any further sittings with our mediums."

Mr. Thomas Bedding, formerly editor of the British Journal of Photography and scientific editor of Photographic Progress, says: "Of all the impostures palmed off upon a credulous world, spirit photography is the most shameful and the most shameless." The factors necessary to success are credulity in the dupes, laxity in the photographer, and humbug in the medium. The method is quite simple. You may have a choice of several. The photographic plates are impressed with the psychic images before they are exposed upon the living sitter, or a transparency is interposed between plate and sitter, or at the moment

of exposure a figure previously made up glides mechanically into the field of view and passes out of sight before the lights are turned up. Whatever method is adopted some form of trickery attaches to it. All spirit photography is fraudulent. There is no spirit picture that has been produced by any medium anywhere the like of which cannot be produced by skillful photographers without any psychic aid. The exposures of the leaders might well awaken suspicions as to the genuineness of all spirit photographs. With the facts of these exposures all interested persons may make themselves familiar. For these things are not done in a corner. All the records are open to scrutiny. But apparently it is of no avail. Some people apparently like to be duped. As long as they wish to be they will be.

**PRACTICAL ADVICE TO YOUNG AND OLD**

Don't neglect to say your morning and night prayers, be they ever so short.

Don't forget to make your morning offering, and to renew your good intentions during the day, saying frequently: "All for Thee, O Jesus, all for Thee."

Don't give up the pious practices which you have been taught to adopt, such as saying three "Hail Marys" in honour of the Immaculate Conception, reciting the Rosary, and making an Act of Contrition at your bedside.

Don't sit down to, nor rise from your meals without saying grace. "I very strictly require thanks for all that I give." (Christ to Disciple, Im. of Christ iii. 9.)

Don't neglect to invoke the sweet names of Jesus and Mary in time of temptation.

Don't associate with any person of doubtful character, remembering that "a man's worst enemies are those who lead him into sin, his best friends those who keep him from it."

Don't frequent any places of amusement dangerous to your soul; seek your recreation, by preference, in healthy outdoor exercise.

Don't fail to join some Society established in the parish in which you reside: Children of Mary; Society of St. Vincent de Paul; Catholic Federation.

Don't forget to co-operate as far as possible in Catholic social works. Help the poor.

Don't be so foolishly proud as to think that you may read, without danger to your soul, all and everything of the papers, pamphlets and novels published now-a-days. Be prudent. You are playing with fire.

Don't ever imitate the example of those who disgrace their Holy Religion by staying away from Mass on Sundays and Holy days of Obligation without valid excuse, and by eating flesh meat on Abstinence days.—Southern Cross.

**TRUE PROGRESS**

Modern novelists and essayists cannot resist the temptation to break into print with pessimistic interviews on the deplorable state of civilization. The low standard of the debauching of politics and the lack of appreciation of spiritual values affright them. They cannot refrain from communicating their fears for the future of civilization to a waiting world. One well known writer recently delivered himself of the oracular dictum that "people who think we are reaching a higher level of civilization are plain fools." The implication of course, is that the vaunted theory of progress has slipped a cog in its machinery and the world is headed straight toward ruin.

The truth, of course, is that the world today is neither so good nor so bad as it is painted. Its friends relying on the so-called theory of progress contend that in spite of evidences to the contrary the world is growing steadily better and better, and that the law of evolution, which they assume, demands constant progress through the ages, until the millennium is reached. Its enemies in their turn point to the alarming disintegration of family life, the spread of juvenile depravity, the crime wave, and the growing indifference to right standards of living; to prove the contrary, that the world is growing worse instead of better.

Truth like virtue takes the middle course. The poor old world is probably just the same today as it has been for centuries, with the same infirmities, the same diseases, and the same evil tendencies, that the Apostle deplored when he declared that the whole world is seated in wickedness. Now as then those who have the grace of God know how to overcome the world and its evil. This is the true notion of progress, the constant struggle to get the better of the concupiscent of the flesh and the pride of life, by the supernatural help which we call grace.

When we hear modern essayists either deflating or deriding the progress of civilization, we are reminded of a passage in that essayist of the older school, who has compressed so much wholesome philosophy of life in the too short pages of his golden book, My Unknown Chum. Writing on the can of Progress in a memorable passage this gentle philosopher and wise

mentor gives one of the finest definitions of true progress ever penned. Complaining of the vaunted progress of his age, he says: "I cannot see what need nor what excuse there is for all this bragging. A great many strong men lived before Agamemnon,—and after him. We indeed do some things that would astonish our forefathers; but how are we superior to them on that account. We enslave the lightnings of heaven to be our messengers, and compel the sun to take our portraits; but if our electric wires are prostituted to the chicanery of trade or politics, and the faces which the sun portrays are expressive of nothing nobler than mercantile shrewdness and the price of cotton, the less we boast of our achievements the better. Thucydides never had his works puffed in a newspaper, Virgil or Horace never lectured for a lyceum; Charlemagne never saw a locomotive, nor did St. Thomas Aquinas ever use a friction match. Yet this unexampled age possesses, I apprehend, few historians who would not shrink from being compared with the famous Greek annalist, few poets worthy to wear the crowns of the friends of the great Augustus, few rulers more sagacious, and firm than the first Emperor of the West, and few scholars who would not consider it a privilege to be taught by the Angelic Doctor."

"True Progress" is something superior to your puffing engines and clicking telegraphs, and independent of them. It is the advancement of humanity in the knowledge of its frailty and dependence; the elevation of the mind above its own limited acquisitions, to the infinite source of knowledge; the cleansing of the heart of its selfishness and uncleanness; in fact it is anything whatever that tends to assimilate man more closely to the divine Exemplar of perfect manhood."—The Pilot.

**NEVER DESPAIR OF THE SALVATION OF THE DEAD**

The most abandoned souls in purgatory are generally those who were the least prepared to enter eternity. Because they left the world without giving any sign of repentance, we can hardly believe that they were saved, and having lost all hope we do not try to release them from purgatory. Let us remember that the mercy of God is infinite, and that the divine grace can touch the soul of the sinner at the moment when it is about to be separated from the body; but let us remember also that if this soul is saved, she has to do penance and that she has a terrible account to give to God.

St. Francis de Sales never wished any one to despair of the repentance of a sinner, even at the last moment, saying that this life is the way of our pilgrimage. In which those who are standing can fall, and those who fall can rise again, and like the giants of the fable, rise stronger sometimes from their overthrow; or can superabound where sin had abounded.

He went further; for even after death, he did not wish that any one should pass a bad judgment on those who led an evil life, except of those of whose damnation we are told on the authority of the sacred Scripture. Apart from that, he did not wish any one to enter into the secrets of God, which He has reserved for His wisdom and power. His principal reason was, that as the first grace of justification is given without the merit of any work which preceded it; the last grace also, which is that of final perseverance, will not be given to merit. Besides, who is he who has known the mind of the Lord and who has been His counselor? This is the reason why even after the last breath he wished that we should hope for the deceased person, however sad his death might have been, because we could form only very uncertain conjectures about it founded on the exterior, by which the cleverest persons might be deceived. Therefore, do not despair of the salvation of your departed friends and relatives.—The Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament.

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