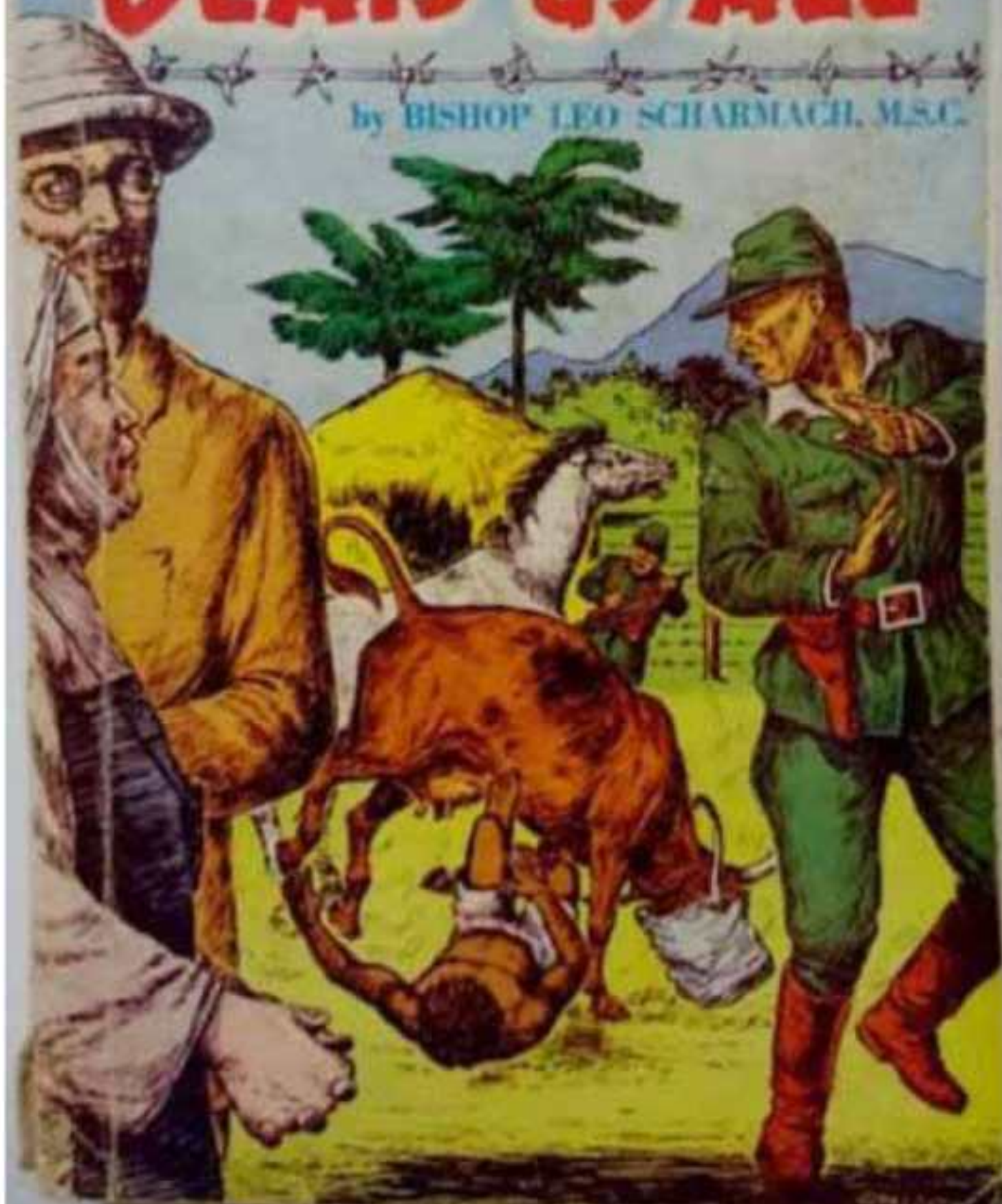


THIS CROWD **BEATS US ALL**

By BISHOP LEO SCHARMACH, M.S.C.





THIS CROWD BEATS US ALL

BY

Most Rev. LEO SCHARMACH, M.S.C., D.D.,
BISHOP OF RABAU

Edited by John Dawes

Illustrated by John L. Curtis

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DEDICATION

To

my valiant Missionaries, who went with me through
the ordeal of the Prison Camp and Pacific War, and
emerged alive and victorious from this supreme test
of our fidelity

and

in loving memory

of

those amongst us to whom war brought the consum-
mation of the total holocaust and sacrifice of their lives.

Written

in the year 1957, the 75th Anniversary of the Founda-
tion of our Rabaul Mission and after its resurrection
from total destruction.

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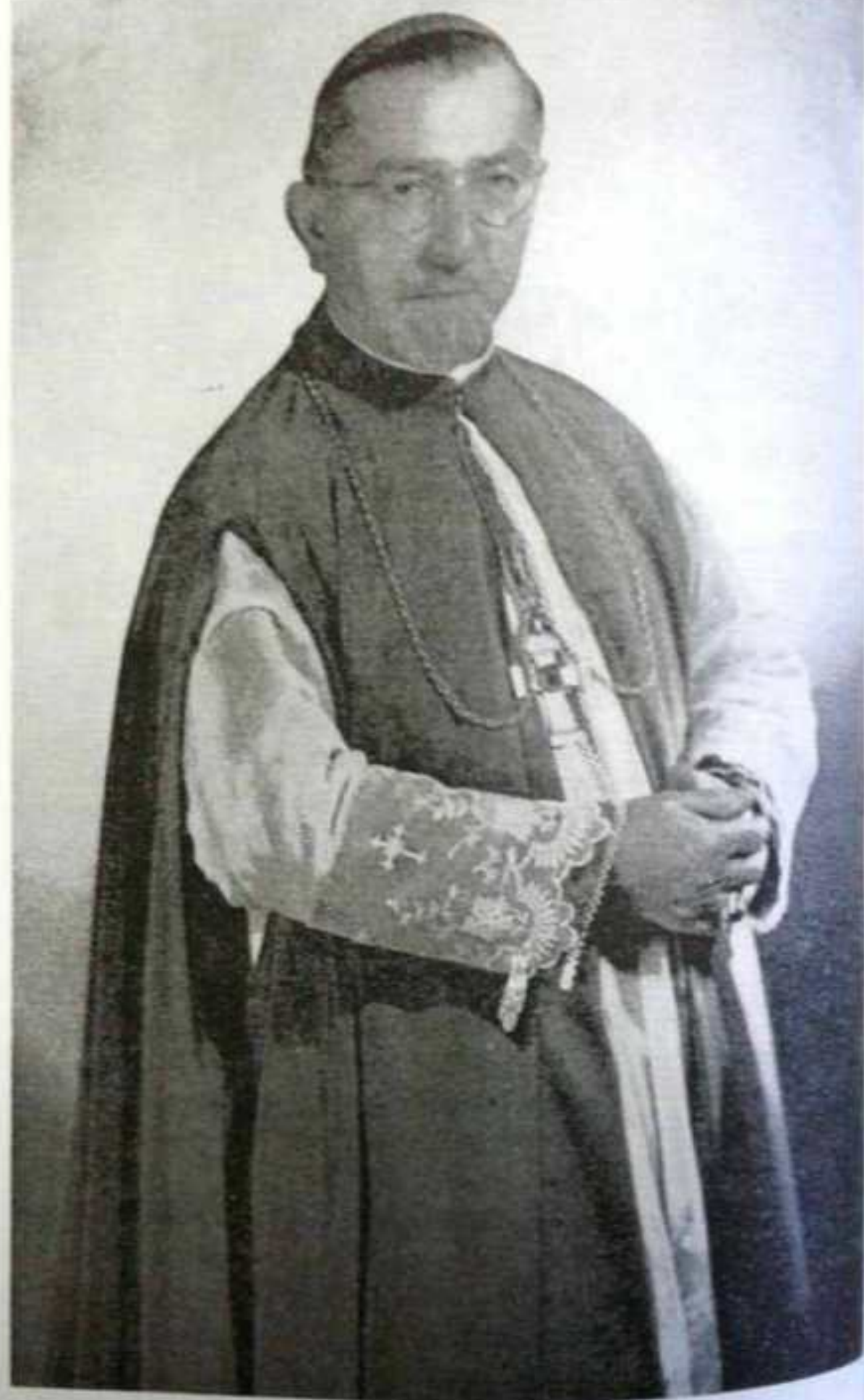
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MOST REVEREND LEO SCHARMACH,
VICAR APOSTOLIC OF RABAUL.

FOREWORD

It is over eighteen years now since the Pacific War swept us into its turmoil. Time has cooled animosities and hysteria and I have not the slightest intention of stirring them up again. My aim is to record facts as we experienced them, bestowing blame or praise as merited.

Our own Missionary Sisters, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, who went through the prison camp with us, published their experiences in "Red Grew the Harvest," which was very well received. They wrote it from their point of view, as nuns enduring enemy occupation.

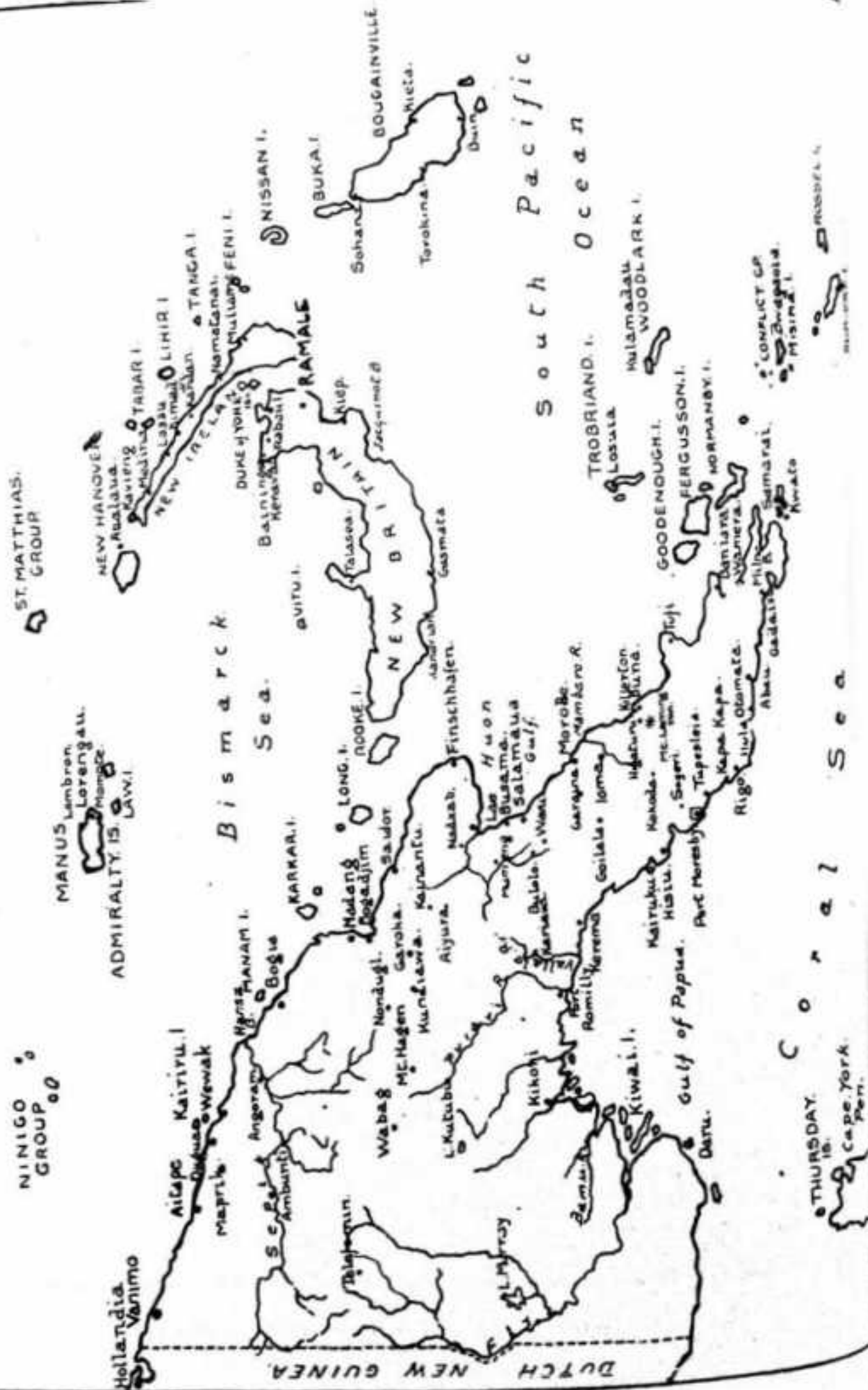
I am writing now as a Bishop under the Japanese. A decree issued by their High Command stated that only the Bishop was to deal with them in trivial as well as in important matters. So I was forced to become protagonist in the battle of wits that started with the Japanese invasion in January, 1942, and ended with their surrender on the 15th August, 1945. Consequently I cannot avoid describing many of my unique personal experiences in that role, which thrusts me embarrassingly in the limelight. For that I apologise.

The Japanese High Command, in full control of material power, considered the 360 civilian prisoners a negligible entity, whose existence depended on the whim of the General Staff. In their eyes we were a small, miserable, powerless crowd. That was a fatal mistake. The small, miserable crowd was in contact with and drew upon supernatural powers infinitely greater than those available to the invaders. These powers helped us frustrate all Japanese plans to exterminate us and were responsible for our survival.

This book's title is a quotation. Towards the end of our battle, General Staff officers admitted their own defeat in these words: "Bishop, we have discussed you and your missionaries many, many times. We cannot make you out. **THIS CROWD BEATS US ALL.**"

I feel obliged to those officers for supplying the title. "Arigato gozaimas"—"Thank you ever so much!"

† LEO SCHARMACH





PART I.

BATTLE OF WITS

INVASION OF NEW BRITAIN

When the Second World War broke out in September, 1939, we in New Britain were not unduly worried.

"Whoever," we said, "would be interested in attacking us or invading this forlorn corner of the world?"

Several German raiders were roaming the Pacific. They sank some Allied ships and landed the passengers on the island of Musau, near Kavieng in New Ireland. However, they could not prevent cargo ships from Australia bringing us necessary supplies. To protect Rabaul, the capital of New Britain, from the raiders, one battalion of Australian soldiers was garrisoned there. The entrance to Simpson Harbour was guarded by one battery of guns.

Rabaul itself was strewn along the harbour shore. A lovely tropical island town of 3,000 people, it prided itself on being the nearest town in the world to an active volcano. Actually it was situated in the large crater of a former volcano, which probably could compete with Krakatao in Java in vehemence and eruptions.

In prehistoric times that volcano disappeared into the inner recesses of the earth to form the present Simpson Harbour which is fringed on both sides by extinct and partly active volcanoes. Thus Rabaul offers one of the most enchanting views in the world.

For all this beauty it has had to pay dearly. There are



Rabaul and Simpson Harbour, with the mountains "Mother," "South Daughter" and the volcano Matupit in the background.

earth tremors galore, of varying intensity, though people no longer account those below strength 5⁰.

In 1937 there was a devastating eruption on little Vulcan Island, three miles off Rabaul. In three days a new volcano, 740 feet high, had piled up. Three hundred and fifty natives lost their lives. The town itself was covered in dust but was spared a major disaster.

In 1942, Matupit Crater, only two miles from Rabaul on the opposite side of the harbour to Vulcan, was erupting when the Japanese landed. Every 15 minutes or so a tremendous blast, shooting pumice and rocks 10,000 feet high, shook Rabaul and engulfed it in darkness caused by the heavy rain of ash.

Observed during the night from a mountain five miles distant, this eruption was a thrilling sight. Suddenly, a cloud, like a mushroom or cauliflower, would burst into the air, illuminated by the volcanic fire below. Fiery stones and boulders would roll and tumble down the slopes and the magnificent spectacle was accompanied by thunderous detonations from beneath, and lightnings from above.

But the Japanese did not come to enjoy this display.

They came to bring new fame, or rather, ill-fame—the horrors of war and in its wake the total destruction of Rabaul. They hurled the town into the blood-bespattered pages of history.

However, this is not the story of Rabaul. It is the record of the Catholic Mission of Vunapope, the headquarters of the Sacred Heart Mission which extends over New Britain, New Ireland and Manus. In 57 main stations 60 priests attended to the spiritual needs of 60,000 Catholics.

Vunapope itself is the nerve-centre and heart of this large mission. Through its numerous institutions and workshops, hospitals, the seminary and teacher training college, its bulk store and ship, the mission work in the out-stations becomes not only possible but efficient. Its printing and book-binding department provides books for church and school in 32 different languages.

It has been, too, the residence of the Bishop, in this case myself, since 1939. A Cathedral dominates the panorama.

Here, also, is a three-storey building housing the five Priests and 35 Brothers.

There are convents for three Sisterhoods: for the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (F.D.N.S.C.), the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart (M.S.C.) and the 45 Native Sisters (N.M.I.). For those mother-houses the Sisters receive their appointments to the different out-stations.

And last, but not least, Vunapope is the home of our mission doctor who is in charge of all our hospitals including that for the missionaries and the maternity hospital.

In all, when the war came, Vunapope comprised 78 permanent buildings.

During the years before the Japanese invasion, those missionaries who were enemy aliens were free to go about their work from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. During the night they were allowed to stay on their mission stations. Monthly, they had to report to the nearest government official. Though these restrictions brought a certain amount of hardship, on the whole we were grateful to the Australian authorities for the liberty granted us to continue our mis-

sionary activities—for not interning us, as other nations did missionaries who happened to be enemy aliens.

All this changed when Japan attacked Pearl Harbour on December 8th, 1941. Even then we did not anticipate that they would sweep with lightning speed through the Pacific, taking the Philippines, Malay Peninsula and Singapore in a few days.

They landed in Rabaul on January 23, 1942 . . . just 46 days after blasting Pearl Harbour.

On Boxing Day, 1941, Japanese reconnaissance planes flew over Rabaul and took photos. Soon the first air-raids started. I offered to the authorities our mission hospitals at Vunapope, complete with doctor and nurses, and they gratefully accepted.

Japanese bombing concentrated on military objectives: aerodromes and guns. Among the first targets to be wiped out was the town's only coastal battery. Soon our hospital was filled with wounded soldiers and civilians.

We now fully realised the war had come to us and that we could expect the worst. The Government decided to evacuate all European women and children. An official visited Vunapope and asked each European Sister separately if she wanted to leave. All volunteered to remain and offered their services as nurses for friend and foe.

At 10 p.m. on the night before the Japanese landing, three Methodist ministers came to me, asking if we would allow their nurses to stay with our Sisters.

"Don't lose any time. Bring them in. We will care for them as for our own," I answered.

They arrived about midnight and our Sisters provided accommodation for them. Army and civilian nursing sisters from Rabaul were brought in later.

During the night of the 22nd and 23rd of January most of us slept quietly. Although the capital was bombarded nothing happened in the vicinity of Vunapope.

At 5 a.m. on January 23rd, the bell called us to morning prayers and holy Mass. It was still quite dark, but to our amazement the whole sea in front of Vunapope was full of warships, exchanging light signals. However, they did

not seem interested in us, nor was there any sign of a landing.

Quietly we went to the church for morning prayers, holy Mass and holy Communion, recommending ourselves to Our Lord and putting ourselves under the protection of the Blessed Virgin.

As usual, I said my Mass in my private chapel. When I had finished, two nursing sisters were waiting for me to baptise a new-born baby. Mrs. Schuy, the wife of our mission doctor, had given birth to a daughter the very night the Japanese fleet moved in. I baptised her Irmgard.

By this time there was great excitement and expectation in all the different communities. At Vunapope, we numbered some 500 people. There were the Fathers, Brothers, the European Sisters, native Sisters, seminarians, the half-caste boarders—boys and girls—the native boarders, the teacher-trainees, patients of the maternity hospital (which then had its full quota) and European refugees from Rabaul and the outlying plantations and the military hospital.

Among the European refugees was the manager of the local Burns Philp's trading store. He gave us his keys and permission to take from the store all we needed, especially food-stuffs for the military hospital and our own use.

Only a few miles away stood the Japanese fleet ready for invasion, yet here on the Kokopo road was a long procession of soldiers, boys and girls carrying all possible food-stuffs to the military hospital! That went on for some hours.

Our presence did not seem to bother the Japanese—except for half a dozen planes which circled very low, roaring over Vunapope. The pilots apparently had a good look at our mixed community and must have noticed that we all were civilians. We stood there looking at them, nobody ran for shelter, nobody cheered or moved. On their part, there was no machine-gunning or bombing.

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

About 10 a.m. a dinghy approached Vunapope but stopped where our mission ships were anchored. Japanese climbed on board. We heard the smashing of glass and

then the Japanese flag was hoisted on our masts: the Rising Sun! For our mission fleet it was the setting sun; in fact it was the end of it, we never saw it again.

An hour later we again saw a dinghy coming to our jetty. As representatives of our whole community, a Crown Law officer, a Government doctor and I went to the jetty to meet the Japanese, a young officer and four sailors. The officer was very nervous and his face was twitching. He looked terribly serious and was armed with a revolver. Without speaking, he handed us a note. It read:

"Bring your ships to Simpson Harbour!"

Then the dinghy returned to one of the warships.

Our fleet captain and native crew—after they had been found—took the "Paulus," "Teresa" and "Kurindal" to the nearest warship. The officer declared they would take charge of our vessels there. There was no need to take them to Simpson Harbour. The officers and sailors were friendly, especially to our native crew. They offered them cigarettes and Japanese coins. Some pointed to their own skin and to that of the natives, declaring that they were brothers. The coins were made of aluminium, they were very light and even floated on salt water. There and then, the natives made up their minds that the Japanese money was worthless. Like driftwood, it did not sink!

After midday lunch all the Priests and Brothers assembled in our spacious parlour. Rumours had it that the Japanese were coming by road. We heard shots, fired not far from where we were. Native labourers from the nearby plantations rushed wildly through Vunapope. They literally ran for their lives. The invaders had shot two of them. What happened was this: a Japanese patrol had come across the natives, but when the soldiers approached them the natives were afraid and ran away. The Japanese took this as an offence. They were coming to liberate the natives from slavery and exploitation. What were they running away for? Better shoot them!

A few minutes later three soldiers arrived on the scene. They were rather small. Their uniforms looked strange to us and their military caps funny. Each had a small towel hanging out of his trousers pocket. Each, too, had a coil

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of strong rope dangling from his belt, presumably for tying up prisoners. Each shouldered a rifle with fixed bayonet. Here we were, standing by, confronting now the first three of Nippon's forces. They did not understand a word of English and we no Japanese. Each of us had his passport in hand. The soldiers looked at the passports in a way that showed a complete lack of understanding. They were soaked in perspiration and we guessed correctly that they must be thirsty. We offered them some lemonade which they gulped down with great relish.

In order to free the other missionaries from their honourable presence, I invited them to follow me to the Bishop's House. As we entered my house, they kept their rifles shouldered and bayonets fixed. The polished floor was too much for them. They walked as though on ice, and had great difficulty retaining their balance. They looked so comical that I could not help laughing. Suddenly, they stopped and broke into ecstatic exclamations:

"Fujiyama! Fujiyama!"

Some years before I had received from a missionary in Japan a woven picture of Nippon's holy volcano and as it was an artistic piece, I put it on the wall—never expecting it to make such a wonderful impression on the Japanese themselves!

That was a pleasant surprise for them. But I was in for a surprise too, though not a pleasant one. There in front of my house stood my car, a black Buick. How did it come to be there? It should be locked up in the garage! Another shock was in store. All three little heroes climbed into my car. One sat at the wheel and started the engine. That was too much for me. I shouted at them:

"Stop! That is my car and you can't have it."

Unmistakable gestures made clear what I meant. The driver waved his hand as if to indicate that they would not take any notice of me. Thereupon, I opened the door of the car and, with a firm grip, pulled them out: heroes, rifles, bayonets and all. Using the missionary's standby of sign language I persuaded them to follow me. We walked round the corner in my garden. There we saw a dozen or

so abandoned cars. Their owners had fled to the bush, seeking safety. I pointed to them.

"There, you can have your choice, but you cannot have my car."

Quite satisfied, they walked off.

But how did the Japanese get hold of my car? One of our Brothers, who was my driver also, had invited three other Brothers for a ride on the main road at the unfortunate hour when the Japanese advance guard came in. The troops fired a rifle shot through the centre of the car, wounding nobody. The Brothers stopped and were arrested and imprisoned in the native jail at Kokopo. At supper we missed them in the dining-room but nobody knew what had happened to them. Eventually, through an interpreter, we learned their fate, and they were released to join us.

There and then I made sure that my car was properly locked up in the garage and that its key was kept by the mission manager, Father Muller.

Two hours later another group of Japanese soldiers appeared. They headed straight for the garage. They peeped through some holes in the wall. One had a hammer. A few blows and the lock was gone. They entered the garage. I was watching them through my window. As the key was not in the car, I was afraid they might give it their hammer treatment. I phoned Father Muller to bring the key and explain to the soldiers that it was the Bishop's car. Failing to make any impression, he demanded to be taken before the commanding officer at Kokopo. All drove off. The officer understood English and told Father Muller to drive the car back to the Bishop. Triumphantly, the priest brought it back and optimistically we hoped to keep it for good. Soon we were to learn differently.

On the evening of that first day of occupation, six Japanese officers invited themselves into my house. The conversation was mostly among themselves as some of them understood only a few words of English. From time to time, Japanese soldiers came in with reports. The way they saluted their officers amused me. The officers, most of them of captain's rank, behaved in friendly fashion so I offered them soft drinks and sandwiches. They appreciated

that very much. To fill in time I started to learn Japanese. I pointed to different objects in the room and they were quite keen to name them in their own tongue. I took notes as well as I could.

Suddenly, the house shook from terrific explosions; at a safe distance an allied air-raid was on. All the officers jumped up. Hurriedly they put on their belts with their Samurai swords, then their steel helmets and rushed out of the Bishop's House. I advised them to go some 200 yards to the cliff from where they would have a good view. As they did not return, I went to bed.

NUNS IN THE PATH OF THE INVADERS

When the invasion was imminent we brought all the Sisters from Rabaul and Volvolo to Vunapope, but the quick landing of the Japanese forces prevented us from bringing the M.S.C. Sisters from Tavuiliu, some seven miles from the island capital.

At the first bombings the authorities in Rabaul advised all to dig slit trenches for air-raid shelters. The Priest, Brother and four Nuns at Tavuiliu did so. We had no idea of their fate when the Japanese fleet appeared in front of Vunapope as it was then impossible to discover what was going on at Rabaul and other places.

The Japanese landed at numerous strategic points to capture the two airfields at Lakunai (that is at Rabaul), and Vunakanau, 10 miles from the town. Weeks later they admitted having 9,000 casualties, counting killed and wounded. Later correct statistics of casualties, however, revealed that 16 only were killed and 49 injured. There were some doubts at the time even among the Japanese officers as to these figures. Apparently, there was a double purpose for the exaggeration of their losses; first, to induce the whole world to admire their heroism, and, secondly, to make their own soldiers firm and cruel in dealing with Australian soldiers.

On the morning of the invasion, at 7 a.m., some thousands of Japanese soldiers thronged the steep hill from the beach to the Catholic mission station at Tavuiliu on their way to the Vunakanau Airfield. The majority of the storm-troops, urged on by their leaders, passed through the mission

station to the airfield. But as rear-guard there came a detachment of Red Cross soldiers, who made themselves more or less at home at Tavuiliu. Naturally, the four Sisters were very much afraid and went over to the Father's house.

Soon a group of soldiers entered the house. None could speak a word of English. However, the Sisters, having their Red Cross armbands on, had a pacifying effect on them. Anticipating that the troops must be thirsty the Nuns offered them soft drinks. The Sisters were right—their "guests" finished the whole case of forty-eight bottles before departing!

Other soldiers noticing that the Sisters' house was unoccupied went in and enjoyed themselves by breaking open and smashing everything that was locked. The contents they threw pell-mell on the floor. Probably they were disappointed that there was so little that interested them. Only the white veils of the Sisters attracted them. They tore the linen from the starched parts and took it along. Others invaded the kitchen through the windows, the doors being locked. They too had a wonderful time, and discovered a very practical method of opening the tins . . . bayonetting them! They went into the pantry and bayonetted all the canned foods. Butter, milk and coffee held no appeal, so they threw these on the floor. From the fish, bully-beef and jam they prepared themselves a meal.

They took knives, forks and spoons as souvenirs . . . yet they had hardly left the mission when they threw them away.

About 1 p.m. an officer came along. Lieutenant Okamoto apologised for the unholy mess that the soldiers had made. Ordering the troops away, he put permanent guards around the convent and set a notice at the entrance stating that it was out of bounds for all Japanese. He was like a guardian angel sent by Heaven to protect the Sisters, Father and Brother, often visiting them and always bringing some food supplies. The missionaries were allowed to stay at Tavuiliu until the 18th April, 1942, when the military police transferred them by truck to Vunapope.

Three Australian soldiers figured in another incident

at Tavuiliu on the morning of the invasion. They arrived at the mission in a truck and glancing over the cliff saw the invaders coming up. The Australians jumped into their truck and tried to escape, but drove straight into other Japanese already on the road. These fired a few shots which brought the truck to a standstill. One Australian was killed by a bullet. The Japanese threw him into the bush a few yards from the road. The other two were taken prisoners or killed.

In the afternoon natives found the body of the first Australian and reported this to Brother Overkamping at Tavuiliu. He, with the help of the natives, buried the soldier whose identity disc read: Lesley Smith, 28 years, Melbourne. 2/22 Battalion. It was later given to the Australian Graves Commission.

INTERNEED!

At Vunapope the next day was relatively undisturbed. Two days later, however, the population there, missionaries and refugees, except myself, were lined up in front of the Cathedral. They were separated and counted according to their different nationalities: Australians, Germans, Austrians, Czechoslovaks, Poles, Dutch, Irish, French, Italians. The missionaries were assigned to the M.S.C. Sisters' Convent, the refugees were accommodated in the half-caste boarding school. The religious were told they should not bother to take anything with them except a change of clothing because after two days they would be free to re-occupy their own houses. The missionaries believed the Japanese. That was the first lesson in how far we could trust their word. The promised two days grew to four years.

Later three officers and an interpreter came to me.

"We want your house and that one opposite!" I was bluntly told.

"Well," I said, "you can have my house, but you can't have that on the opposite side."

"Why?"

I explained: "That is the mission doctor's house. His wife gave birth to a baby girl the very night the Japanese

forces moved in. There is no other accommodation for her and the baby.

They became very polite, regretted the inconvenience and told me I might move over and stay in the doctor's house. I had the impression they misunderstood me, assuming that my wife had a baby.

"Now," I inquired. "Who will occupy my house?"

They put their noses up and declared:

"Japanese officers will stay in it."

"Very well," I said. "I expect Japanese officers to behave as gentlemen and treat my house accordingly."

They ordered that all my furniture had to remain. I could take one bed, a chair, my clothes and my books. I had quite a library and had no desire to carry all those volumes. So I opened the door of my safe, a large fire-proof cement vault. I told them that there were some old papers in it and that I would like to put all my books in. They graciously agreed. I got busy with my boy and piled all my books in a big heap. Then I locked the door and told Colonel Kwata that I would like to keep that key.

Very politely he said: "Yes, you may keep that key and any time you wish to get some books you are welcome to do it."

That arrangement continued for as long as Colonel Kwata occupied my house.

Let me introduce here my servant, Johannes Drevo. He had been with me for two years before the invasion, always keeping my house spick-and-span and my garden in a delightful condition. On Confirmation trips, he was my valet, sacristan and master of ceremonies for the altar boys. When, at the outbreak of the war, other boys deserted their masters, he remained faithful and continued to help me even in the darkest hours of the occupation.

So when I was ordered out of my house he was at hand to put the books into the safe and to help me to carry my bed, chair and clothes to the doctor's house.

I took the Blessed Sacrament from my private chapel to my new quarters. Here we transformed a table into quite a respectable altar where later I said Mass every morning and the others received Holy Communion.

There were eight of us in the house: the doctor's family of five, two Sisters and myself. Compared with the other missionaries we were quite comfortable. One Sister was a nurse and looked after mother and baby; the other nun was a good cook so we fared very well.

Orders had been issued by the Japanese that nobody was allowed one step out of the house or they would be shot, and no light was allowed during darkness. All torches had been confiscated except those in the doctor's house.

It happened during the first days of our internment that one of the old Brothers, to whom the whole business was too strange to be comprehended, used a flashlight when going to the toilet. Immediately the alarm was given. A detachment of soldiers with fixed bayonets charged up the hill to the house where he was. Priests, Brothers and Sisters were lined up and given a terrific dressing down. Doctor Chikami ended up in broken German, the equivalent of which in English would be:

"We will shoot through you and we will mortify you," meaning: "We will shoot you and kill you."

His threats were accompanied by gruesome demonstrations of stabbing with the sword. His were not empty threats. He was one of the most notorious and cruel of the war criminals. At that time we did not know this.

THE BISHOP'S SAFE

That safe of mine proved to be a minor miracle of the war.

It contained all the mission documents and records from the last 60 years. There were also the duplicates of all the baptismal, matrimonial and death registers of the whole mission. In anticipation of some disaster, the missionaries had been ordered to send these in yearly from the respective church books.

During our three-and-a-half years' imprisonment, we were repeatedly searched. I and my belongings were especially subject to scrutiny. The officers wondered that I had so few official and church papers, as they called them. "Well," I said. "You had better go to the other house where the Fathers are. There is any amount of them."

They did not care for the suggestion as other Japanese were conducting the search there.

It never dawned on them that at their headquarters in the Bishop's House they had all the mission documents!

I offered them a brief case with some specially selected papers. One friendly interpreter confided to me that these were very good reading for those fellows up in the High Command. Every scrap was translated into Japanese. When that brief case was confiscated for the third time, somebody in the High Command woke up to the fact. By then they were quite familiar with the content and put a note in Japanese on each page, indicating that it had been investigated.

Later when Vunapope was completely destroyed by bombs, the Bishop's House was brought down by incendiaries. It burned to the last scrap, but there amidst the rubble was the strong cement vault, standing up like a monument. That same evening while the ashes were still smouldering I went over to try my key. The handle of the steel door was broken off and the key would not turn.

I decided to take the further risk of leaving the papers where they were, especially as we expected an American landing after such a tremendous bombardment. But another year-and-a-half passed before we were liberated by the Australian Army. Then we went over to look at our safe. Although unsuccessful attempts had been made by the Japanese soldiers to remove the thick steel plate of the door, our mission Brothers were equal to the task. They slipped back the bolts and opened the door. The safe had proved to be fireproof. All its contents were unharmed. This was a blessing for our future mission work as most of the official books on the stations were destroyed.

Full of gratitude we thanked Our Lord for the preservation of that safe.

VISITOR FROM TOKYO

During the second week of internment a Japanese Colonel came to see us and introduced himself in fluent German as Colonel Akita from the High Command in Tokyo.

His first request was:

"Please, gentlemen, your passports."

Dr. Schuy showed him his German passport and I my Polish passport. The Colonel had been for three years attached to the Japanese embassy in Berlin, and was very well acquainted with the political and territorial situation there. Very carefully he studied my passport and declared:

"Bishop, you are no longer a Pole. You are German now. Hitler has reconquered your homeland near Danzig, the famous Polish Corridor, and has declared it an integral part of Germany again."

The quirks of time. When I was born at Stargard it was German territory. I studied in Germany and was drafted into the German army in 1915, serving three years in the front line in France. Being a student of theology they gave me the job of saving lives instead of destroying life. I was stretcher-bearer, carrying wounded German, French and British from the front lines into safety.

After the first World War my homeland was taken back by the Poles and they declared me a Pole. With a Polish passport I entered the Territory of New Guinea.*

Colonel Akita explained the purpose of his visit. He had been sent by the High Command to investigate how the Japanese Army and Navy were treating civilians.

To me he was more a messenger sent by heaven than by Tokyo. His visit had a great influence on my future policy towards the Japanese.

So the Colonel wanted to know how we were treated by the Japanese Forces! Here they interned us and packed Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in one house that was much too small to accommodate them. Some old Priests and Brothers were sleeping on bare planks on the verandah. They had been made to believe that in two days they could return to their own quarters, had left their beds behind,

* During the 1939-45 War Germany took over my homeland and I was declared to be a German. After World War II Poland recaptured that disputed part and I was a Pole again.

By the end of that War I was fed up with these changes. As my life work is neither in Germany nor Poland but here in the Territory under the Australian Flag, I applied for naturalization. It was granted in 1946. I swore allegiance and loyalty to the reigning Sovereign, and I meant it then as now.

yet soldiers refused to return these. There were many German nationals among the missionaries but, under penalty of death, they were not allowed one step outside the house. At the same time the civilian refugees, nearly all Australians, were allowed to play football in the open!

They interned us and became complete masters of our property. They took the keys of our supply stores and workshops. Soldiers roamed through our stores taking what they wanted. Our flour supply was not very big, yet they forced the Brother baker to bake bread for all the soldiers occupying Vunapope as well as for us!

Our cattle, our pigs and fowls were shot at random, but we saw very little of the meat. Some soldiers were shooting cows and pigs, cutting out a portion for themselves and leaving the rest to rot in the plantation.

Soldiers wanting a "drink-nut" (as they called the kulau) did not climb the coconut-tree to get it . . . they cut the whole tree down!

Colonel Akita was quite embarrassed at this recital of facts, and indignantly he declared:

"They can't do that! Everything they take or destroy they have to pay for!"

"Thank you, Colonel, I will remember that," I said.

That statement of his was my big gun which for three-and-a-half years I used against the Japanese, demanding payment for everything on which we could check.

The Colonel left, presenting me with a tin of tobacco and promising to remedy all these evils. I mentioned to him, too, that several of our Fathers and Brothers were kept prisoners at Rabaul. He promised to have them transferred to Vunapope. In a few days they were brought to us.

A PARTY

Next day the officers in the Bishop's House had a party. To our surprise they invited Dr. Schuy and myself. We accepted and about 5 p.m. went over. Colonel Kwata and his officers greeted us with deep Japanese bows. As we entered we bowed in European style. All were very friendly. They treated us to beer and chicken. The meat was cut in small pieces and picked up with chopsticks, which they showed us

how to use. We conversed through an interpreter. After one hour, we decided to leave. We thanked them for their hospitality, made our little bow and turned to go. There was a slight commotion. The interpreter told us to wait. What next! we wondered. Colonel Kwata disappeared into the adjoining room and returned with two tins in his hand. As a parting gift he gave me a tin of meat and the doctor a tin of fish. With mixed feelings we thanked him. Both presents looked suspiciously like our own stores.

RESTRICTED FREEDOM

The days dragged on and Dr. Schuy was deeply concerned about the hospital where the native patients had been left without the slightest care. I worried about all the Fathers, Brothers and Sisters—not knowing how they fared.

I made a written application to Colonel Kwata, asking him to grant Dr. Schuy and myself freedom of movement in Vunapope. We received this without difficulty and were given slips of cotton material on which the concession was written in Japanese characters. We had to wear the permits openly on our coats.

Next day I ventured out. It was a glorious morning and doubly glorious for me when I pinned that Japanese pass on to my coat. I dressed all in white for that solemn occasion. I even put a collar on with purple stock and my pectoral cross. A tropical helmet crowned the outfit. I took a deep breath of, well, restricted freedom, and strolled from the garden. About fifty yards out, two Japanese sentries with fixed bayonets approached. When I came abreast of them I tipped my helmet in military style and wished them "Good morning!" They did not return my greeting. Instead there was a definitely unfriendly grunting and some nasty guttural sounds. So I repeated:

"Good morning to both of you."

Some more ferocious grunting! One of them showed me what they expected me to do. I should take off my helmet and "kowtow" deeply in Japanese fashion. But I waved my finger and told them:

"Nothing doing. See? That is my salute," and gave it once more to them. One of them became furious. He grabbed me, arrested me and marched me off to the sentries' head-

quarters, which happened to be the cathedral sacristy. The door was wide open and inside were some 15 soldiers waiting their turn for duty. I entered the sacristy with a bright smile and cheerily said:

"Good morning, everybody!" saluting the same way as before.

They smiled back and surrounded me, chatting merrily in Japanese. The main attraction was my golden pectoral cross. They took it in their hands and turned it on both sides. One, who seemed to know something about it, explained it to the others. There was no hostility and after a while I decided that was enough. I saluted again in my own way saying:

"Goodbye, everybody."

Noticing the fellow who arrested me sitting there with a face like a thundercloud, I said:

"A special salute for you."

I made my way out and nobody stopped me. Back home, I got hold of Sugai, the official interpreter. We both went to the Colonel to whom I gave him the following message:

"What is the fuss about salutation here? Don't you fellows know a Catholic Bishop's rank? Your Generals are Excellencies and so am I. Actually I should demand that you fellows present arms for me!"

"Brrr. . . ."

They nearly blew their tops. Back came the question: "Do you really demand that we present arms for you?"

"No, I don't. What I demand is that I salute in my own way. And if my salute is not smartly returned, I will stop it entirely!"

Back came the answer: "Bishop, you are welcome to salute in your own way."

That was their first lesson from the Bishop. There were many others to follow.

I must say that the officers saluted smartly. The higher their rank the better they behaved. When I met Generals I treated them as equals. They bowed deeply according to Japanese etiquette and I, slightly, in European fashion.

Henceforth I could visit all the Sisters, Nurses, Fathers and Brothers. They were glad to see me and I tried to do what I could for them. For my part there were no more

risks of scraping and bowing before every coolie. Those who had dragged me off for not "kowtowing" to them now gave me the deepest salute whenever we met.

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine."

GREAT NIPPON

One morning an Air Force Captain came to see me. An arrogant fellow, he was sitting there, his nose high in the air, puffed up with the glories of his victories. For a while he said nothing. At last he spoke up:

"You see, Bishop, everything now belongs to Great Nippon."

I commented: "Sorry, Captain, there must be a mistake somewhere. This place, Vunapope, for instance, does not belong to Great Nippon, it belongs to the Vatican, and I am representative of the Vatican. Everything you take or destroy you have to pay for."

That statement had an effect like that of a pin on a blown balloon. Properly deflated, he apologised and admitted he only expressed his private opinion.

That was the first time I made use of Colonel Okita's information. In the future I had plenty of opportunities of doing so again.

At the beginning of our internment the Japanese presented us with a nicely printed proclamation signed by the Emperor Hirohito. Its exact wording was:

Proclamation

It is solemnly proclaimed herewith that the Japanese Army has occupied this Island of New Britain.

The aspiration of the Great Emperor of Japan lies in the emancipation of the Asiatic People from the oppressive influence of the British Empire, United States of America and Holland, such having embraced an inordinate ambition to dominate the Eastern Hemisphere.

It is further contemplated that Japan leads the whole Asiatic people along the way to co-existence and mutual prosperity, thereby securing the permanent peace and justice in Asia, with the ultimate object of establishing the New Order in the world.

In the occupation of the said island benevolence will be bestowed upon the inhabitants who should rely upon and be obedient to the Japanese Army.

The life and prosperity of all the good and peaceful inhabitants shall be guaranteed by the Army, so that they may rest assured and be industrious.

Should anyone attempt to plot or be engaged in espionage against the Japanese Army as well as to disturb the public, such criminal shall be condemned to death.
Dated at Rabaul this 23rd day of January in the year of the Japanese Calendar 2602.

From this we were led to believe that as prisoners of the Japanese, provided we remained obedient and did not meddle in military matters, our lives and property would be guaranteed!

Unfortunately, I failed to see those promises kept. The Emperor's orders evidently did not reach Tol Bay. About 150 Australians surrendered under International Law conditions and were then brutally massacred by Japan's Forces. A few escaped—the Japanese left these for dead and under cover of darkness they made their escape. They were able to give the details of this gruesome story.

Again there was the case of Captain Gray of the 2/22 Battalion who was taken prisoner on the way to freedom. We do not know all the details of what happened. However, some of our seminarians, who were not confined to their house but who were forced to do all kinds of small jobs for the Japanese soldiers and were thus able to move about more freely, reported to us that they witnessed the following incidents.

On the morning of a bright sunny day, Captain Gray was seen tied to a coconut tree some 50 yards from the Bishop's House. He was ordered to disclose military information on the whereabouts of the Australian Army. He refused and was beaten. He was then left alone until the officers returned, repeated their questions, "beat him up" again, and for a second time tied to that tree in the blazing tropical sun. That procedure was repeated periodically till 4 p.m. Captain Gray remained adamant. They had a last request: that he should admit that Japanese officers were gentlemen. He refused, and probably gave them a very frank opinion as to what they actually were.

At 4 p.m. he was marched several hundred yards into the adjoining coconut plantation. Several soldiers with spades, some officers and Dr. Chikami escorted him. At the selected spot the callous doctor got busy. He cut out Captain Gray's heart, **ALIVE . . .** in order to study the reactions!

They buried the Captain there. The seminarians, watching from their hiding place at a safe distance, made a mental note of the grave.

After the Armistice, when the War Crimes Commission came to investigate Japanese atrocities, the seminarians related the story and pointed out the exact spot where Captain Gray was buried.

Dr. Chikami managed to get repatriated to Japan with the first Japanese. He was ordered to return to Rabaul and be tried before the War Criminal Court. Australian newspapers brought the news that Dr. Chikami had committed suicide in Japan. He left a note addressed to his wife and children telling them that he preferred to kill himself than be hanged in Rabaul.

The Japanese treatment of prisoners, their disregard of human life and their ruthless confiscation of our property, houses, plantations, provisions, stores, cattle, pigs and fowls were a direct contradiction of the Emperor's proclamation. I asked Sugai, the interpreter, for an explanation. He gave it obligingly, and advised me to read between the lines.

"Yes," he said. "They guarantee your life, but sometimes they kill you; they protect your property but sometimes they take it without payment." That was an adequate interpretation.

Sugai was a Christian and a Sunday-school teacher. Although generally kind to us, he could not help being a Japanese and on certain occasions to save his own skin became very nasty and dangerous. We will meet him again.

JAPANESE TACTICS

LOOTING THE STORE

About 8 a.m. one morning one of our half-caste boys ran up to our house and breathlessly reported that the Japanese were looting the mission store and making fun of the Mass vestments. They were putting them on and imitating a priest. I dressed, put on my pectoral cross and hurried to the store. In front of it a utility truck was standing. I entered the building.

There were three common soldiers. Each held under his arm a round bundle of clothes in the middle of which was a

bottle of sweet altar wine. The clothes belonged to the priests on the out-stations. They were just ready to leave the store. I shouted:

"Stop, thieves! I will teach you a lesson about looting our stores."

Unceremoniously I tore the bundles from under their arms, saying:

"Come on now, boys! I want your names."

I addressed each separately: "Anato non namai"—"Your name, please!"

One counteracted and asked my name. On a writing pad sheet I wrote in big letters: BISHOP L. SCHARMACH.

Then I sent a half-caste boy who was standing near to call the Military Police—the Kempī tai. He returned, reporting that at Kempī no one was in. So I told him to rush to the sacristy where the guards were. In a few minutes down came a sentry with a rifle. He fixed his bayonet as he approached us.

"Look here, these three fellows are looting our store, I want you to bring them to Colonel Kwata," I said.

Meanwhile the three culprits jabbered to him in Japanese. His answer to my request was: "No! No!" He stepped back and charged me with his bayonet. I did not budge. With one hand I wiped his bayonet aside and stepped forward about a foot, thus making his long bayonet useless.

"Come on, boy," I said, "I want your name now." He refused to give it to me.

At that moment a Japanese officer on a motor bike arrived in front of the store. I lifted my hand and stopped him. I explained that I wanted the looting soldiers and the sentry arrested, all four to be paraded to Colonel Kwata. All the Japanese now talked excitedly to him. He refused to help me. I stepped close to him:

"Sir, your name please!" He refused to give it. I quietly walked around his bike, took the number and said:

"Thank you, Sir, I think I will get you."

After that there was hurried dispersal. The officer mounted his bike, the three culprits abandoning their loot jumped into their utility, while the little hero with the



The first Vunapope Cathedral, which was destroyed by bombs.

bayonet scurried back to his quarters. Left alone I decided to go home.

I walked up the steep hill to the Cathedral; there the officer with the bike awaited me.

"Go Kwata teisa no." (Don't go to Colonel Kwata.)

I asked why.

"No good, you go Captain X."

I asked where I could find this officer and he directed me to our former hospital for the Fathers.

"All right," I said, "I will report the matter to him." I went immediately to the house indicated and asked for the Captain. All there pretended not to know him.

"Well," I said, "putting me off as cheaply as that will not do."

I went home and talked it over with Dr. Schuy, who soon typed to Colonel Kwata a letter which I dictated.

I explained to the Colonel that the protection accorded to our property by the Japanese was inadequate. This very morning I had surprised soldiers looting our store. Therefore, I demanded that the keys be returned to me and that two

mission Brothers be stationed in the store to protect our goods. Further, we considered it a disgrace that all the missionaries were kept prisoners for six weeks under penalty of death. I demanded more freedom for them and better accommodation.

The letter was duly signed and sealed. I went in search of our interpreter, Sugai. As he was not in, I set off to deliver the letter myself. I entered the Bishop's House. Silence reigned there, except for a soft snoring in the bedroom. The Colonel was sleeping soundly. I put the letter on the table and went home. By early afternoon things started to get lively. Sugai came over, fuming with rage. How could I have dared to forward a letter to the Colonel without his censorship! I managed to calm him, explaining that I had actually looked for him, but as the matter was urgent, I had delivered it myself.

"After all, Sugai," I said. "I'm not aware that I ever appointed you my censor."

His idea of censorship was to let every letter he thought unpleasant drop into the waste-paper basket.

"Well," I enquired, "was the Colonel angry about my personal delivery?" As he admitted that he was not, I told him: "So you need not be angry either!"

"How did the Colonel take the contents of the letter?" I then asked.

"Yes, well, yes, he acted surprisingly well; you may have some success with your letter," Sugai replied.

Next day I was invited to the Bishop's House. There the Colonel and four of his senior officers waited, in full uniform complete with Samurai swords and revolvers.

"Hmmm," I thought, "this looks rather tough." However, their eyes did not indicate any special hostility. The Colonel briefly apologised for the behaviour of some soldiers and declared that the requests I had outlined in the letter would be granted. The concessions would be:

(a) I would be given the keys of the mission store and two Brothers appointed by me would be permitted to remain in it day and night.

(b) The missionaries would be allowed more freedom in Vunapope and in a defined area of approximately 15

miles radius. Permission would be given in writing.

(c) They asked if I were prepared to give full guarantee for the behaviour of all enemy aliens. I gave a pledge for every one of them—Fathers, Brothers and Sisters.

Our own supplies from the store were a great comfort for us and for the out-stations where missionaries remained. So we lived happily ever more—well, almost, until the most disturbing news exploded over us. But before relating that, I will give another instance of Japanese tactics.

... UNIQUE CEREMONY

During the first months of occupation of Rabaul before America joined Australia in the Pacific War, the Japanese at Vunapope erected on a small elevation not far from the Bishop's House a wooden cross approximately six feet high. The ground was carefully cleared of grass and rubbish and there the cross stood on a pedestal of reef-stones. Flowers and shrubs were planted in a circle.

We were all surprised when Sugai invited us—all Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and even the Australian nurses—to the ceremony.

We assembled at a fixed hour. The Colonel and all the officers attended, and a detachment of Japanese soldiers in full dress and with their rifles. Sugai had explained to us that by this ceremony the Japanese wished to honour all the Australian soldiers who had fallen in battle at the invasion. We were asked to contribute in our own way to the tribute. A command brought the officers and men to attention. Colonel Kwata made a deep bow before the cross and then read a lengthy address in Japanese. We recited the De Profundis and other prayers and sang a hymn for the departed. It was a worthy ceremony and we were pleased.

And that was exactly the purpose for which it had been arranged—that we should be pleased and more especially the people in Australia.

The Australian military nurses and ourselves obtained permission to write letters to Australia describing what nice pious people the Japanese soldiers were; how they honoured the deceased Australian soldiers and how well they treated

us. The letters were put in a bag and dropped over the aerodrome at Port Moresby. They arrived at their destination, but the permission to write was not repeated.

Though all at Vunapope were very anxious to get rid of the Japanese, there was no sign of such a move. I cautiously enquired from Sugai why they did not move on to some other place. He explained that the present policy of Japan was to get on favourable terms with Australia—which was still without American aid—without the use of force.

There it was! The motive in staging the ceremony at the cross was to execute a political manoeuvre!

When the Japanese cremated their dead soldiers there was always, near the crematorium, a small altar with candles, incense sticks and, as I noticed, a tin of fruit, such as peaches or mandarines. This latter was never opened . . . which meant that thousands of Japanese spirits had to share the one tin. We were inclined to believe that a small can of Australian peaches contained a tremendous amount in spiritual food value.

Prior to the ceremony for the Australians, Sugai was sent by the Colonel to enquire discreetly what kind of food would be most appreciated by the deceased members of the A.I.F. I ventured the opinion that a tin of bully-beef, tinned fish or tinned peaches would hardly appeal to them. Realising our lack of appreciation of their customs the Japanese sent nothing for the soldiers, dead or living. But in the camp we made up for this by offering Holy Masses and our prayers for them.

DISASTROUS ORDER FROM TOKYO

On the afternoon of February 26th, 1942, I was summoned to the Bishop's House. Present were: Colonel Kwata, the interpreter Sugai, Captain Chilota (whom I remembered from the first evening) and a Major from the General Staff in Rabaul.

The Major had been sent to me to communicate the following command: By order of the Japanese Government in Tokyo and the General Staff at Rabaul all foreigners who are subjects of those nations at war with Japan are to be

arrested and imprisoned in Rabaul. After their removal, the German missionaries are to be given full freedom.

"There is nothing we can do about it. Orders from Tokyo and Rabaul are given to be executed," those at the meeting said.

That was one of my darkest hours. I was supposed to surrender my missionaries, especially the numerous Sisters, to the tender mercies of the Japanese troops! Not on my life! I decided to fight. Those concerned were the Australian, Dutch and Irish missionaries.

I suggested: "Let's talk over some details."

I attacked the weakest point. I asked if Ireland had declared war on Japan and if consequently my Irish Fathers and Sisters were their enemies.

"Oh," the Japanese said, "we doubt if there is a formal declaration of war by Ireland—but that does not matter—English and Irish are the same to us."

I asked: "Did you ever hear about De Valera? He is the personification of the contrast between England and Ireland."

A lengthy discussion in Japanese took place among themselves. The Major from the General Staff seemed to know a lot about De Valera. They ended with the declaration: "All right, Bishop, the Irish are not our enemies, consequently they may remain with you."

"Aha!" I thought, "their first defence is gone." I proceeded to attack the next weak point. Amongst the Dutch missionaries there were two old Fathers and an 80-year-old invalid Brother who was confined to bed. Father Nollen was 72 and Father Brenninkmayer about that age.

"Would you really arrest these old men, who have worked all their lives for the benefit of the uncivilised natives? Would you put them in a Rabaul prison?"

Again a discussion among themselves. Sugai knew the three aged missionaries, and probably put in a good word for them. After fifteen minutes or so the major declared: "These three old Dutch missionaries may also remain with you."

Then came the big issue—to save the Australian and Dutch Sisters.

I addressed them: "Officers of the Imperial Army, you probably do not know why all these Australian and Dutch Sisters are still here." I next stressed the point that weeks before the Japanese landing, when there was still a chance of evacuation, each one of the Sisters was separately asked if she wanted to be flown to Australia. "All of them, Australian and Dutch Sisters, volunteered to remain here and do hospital and charitable work for all—Japanese as well as their own countrymen. They trusted you Japanese to behave as *gentlemen*. They expected to be treated by you Japanese with the same generosity as the Australians treated their enemy aliens, the Germans. They did not imprison them nor did they deport them. They allowed them to continue their mission and charitable activities. Only slight restrictions were imposed, such as reporting every month and staying in their residences overnight."

Under the weight of these arguments their last resistance seemed to crumble. They asked me a very important question, one that seemed to confirm my impression. If the missionaries of enemy nationality would be permitted to stay would I guarantee their good behaviour, and secondly, would I guarantee that the Australian and Dutch Sisters would remain within their premises as previously?

The Major pointed out he had no authority to give a final decision on all points discussed. He had to report to the High Command in Rabaul, and in a few days the result would be communicated to me.

Actually, after two days the answer was made known to us. All the Sisters could stay, the Dutch Fathers and Brother Dean as well, but only the old men. Besides guaranteeing their good behaviour, I had the obligation of providing food, clothing, housing and medicine for them. I gladly agreed and felt decidedly better, as did the so-called enemy aliens. However, from now on, I had to keep constantly in mind that my head would be off if any one of them did anything that the Japanese considered to be a breach of that agreement. But I trusted my missionaries. There was no more talk about complete freedom for the

Germans among us. We all had to share the same fate and treatment.

Further distress was ahead. Soon orders came from the Rabaul High Command that all civilian refugees interned in our half-caste boarding school had to be transferred to Rabaul. Amongst them were two members of our mission—Father McCullagh and Brother Brennan, both Australians. I tried my best to keep them in Vunapope but Sugai advised me not to worry: "They are only going to Rabaul for a special job, and after two days they will be back again." I knew by then what "two days" meant in Japanese terminology. But Father McCullagh and Brother Brennan asked me not to insist on keeping them in Vunapope. Father McCullagh said: "I am the only priest and I wish to go with them to take care of their spiritual needs; just give me a Mass-kit and I will be all right." So we did. As we saw them departing on lorries, I had the feeling I would never see them again. For several weeks they did odd jobs for the Japanese, such as unloading cargo. Now, repeatedly, we sent Father McCullagh altar wine and hosts. That was a sure sign he was able to say Holy Mass and distribute Holy Communion.

Then came the time when we heard nothing more of them. Now a strange thing happened. Officers from Rabaul, whom I had not met, came to see me. Nothing official! After some small talk, they volunteered the information that all the civilians were put on board the "Montevideo Maru," but on the way to Japan the ship was torpedoed near the Philippines and all civilians lost.

This was sad news indeed. Two more Japanese officers called on me on different days giving the same report. I grew suspicious. Never before had Japanese officers of their own accord given the slightest indication of the Empire's losses.

After hostilities the question of the "Montevideo Maru" came before the War Criminal Court at Rabaul. The Japanese told the Australian authorities what they had told me. But investigation at U.S. Navy headquarters disclosed that the Americans had never torpedoed a ship like the "Montevideo Maru" near the Philippines.

Further, a mass grave had been discovered at Matupit near Rabaul. Allegedly there were found in the grave wrist watches and other things identified as belonging to people who were supposed to be on the "Montevideo Maru."

Piecing this together it is highly probable that a "Montevideo Maru" never existed. The prisoners were taken by truck to Matupit and other places. Most likely they were equipped with spades and were ordered to dig a trench, after which machine guns mowed them down. It would have been easy for the Japanese to throw the bodies in and cover the trench. That would be in keeping with their forces' procedure elsewhere. Just to put investigators on the wrong track they assiduously spread the story of the "Montevideo Maru."

Nearly five months after the removal of the male civilians to Rabaul, all the nurses, military and civilian, were taken from us. First Naval Officers came repeatedly to inspect them. Then on the 4th July these appeared again, inspected the nurses' quarters, inquired after their health and told them they would return in a month. Instead the very next morning a large Japanese truck stopped in front of the convent where the nurses were interned. A number of officers jumped out and declared they had come for the nurses. The latter were thunderstruck, as were the nuns. The nurses were ordered to pack up and get into the truck, in which a number of naval guards were waiting for them.

The girls began to pack but took their time. When all was ready they assembled in the front room and gave the Sisters a farewell concert. The strains of "Auld Lang Syne" and "Home Sweet Home" floated sweetly through the convent.

The officers had sent for me. The nurses were allowed to say goodbye to the Bishop, Father Barrow and the Sisters, but nobody else in the camp could farewell them.

I enquired from the officers where the women were going. One said, "To paradise, where there is no malaria!" Too bad, I thought, and felt sorry for the nurses. The Japanese had a very effective way of dispatching people to paradise, as we already knew from the Tol Massacre and

the "Montevideo Maru" incident. This time, however, it was to be the paradise of Yokohama. All the nurses survived and later returned to Australia, convinced that our idea of paradise is not identical with the Japanese idea of it.

FURTHER INCIDENTS

THE SISTER'S VEIL

One fine morning a half-caste boy came running up to me. Breathlessly he reported: "Two Japanese soldiers have torn off a veil from a Sister's head." Then excitedly he exclaimed: "Here, here they come."

Two guards with fixed bayonets were approaching. I walked up to them, stopped them, and in true Japanese fashion gave them a "dressing down." Putting my fist under their noses, I said: "What have you done, you blighters? Don't you dare touch a Sister or her sacred veil. You will be sorry for yourselves if I report you to Colonel Kwata!" Though they probably never understood every word I spoke, their guilty consciences made my rebuke clear to them. There they were, conquerors with their fixed bayonets . . . very crest-fallen and with bent heads. They allowed the storm to pass. Quite a number of Japanese soldiers witnessed the affair. I let them go and went to the Sisters to get their version of the incident.

"Oh, yes," they said, "the two soldiers attempted to tear off a Sister's veil but she was too quick for them and escaped unharmed." So I let the matter rest at that and did not report them.

Apparently there was a great controversy amongst the



Japanese troops as to why the Sisters wore veils and what they hid underneath them. Our two heroes had tried to solve the mystery, failed, and made themselves fools.

CEREMONY TO HONOUR JAPANESE DEAD

A few weeks after the landing, the invaders decided to honour their fallen comrades by a special ceremony. As we were still confined to our houses, none of us could interfere and Japanese carpenters used our carpenter's shop to make a lot of small boxes measuring five by five inches. Soon we learned their purpose.

The Cathedral was prepared for the event. All statues and holy pictures were carefully covered with white material.

In the afternoon we saw a long procession moving solemnly to the Cathedral. It comprised several detachments of soldiers in full battle dress. With them were their officers, among them generals in full regalia. Bringing up the rear came a single file of soldiers who carried the small boxes. They were escorted on both sides by guards with fixed bayonets. I did not count the boxes, but estimated the number at approximately 20. We were told by Sugai that these contained the ashes of victims of the invasion and were to be sent home to Japan. None of us witnessed the ceremony in the Cathedral which lasted about 30 minutes.

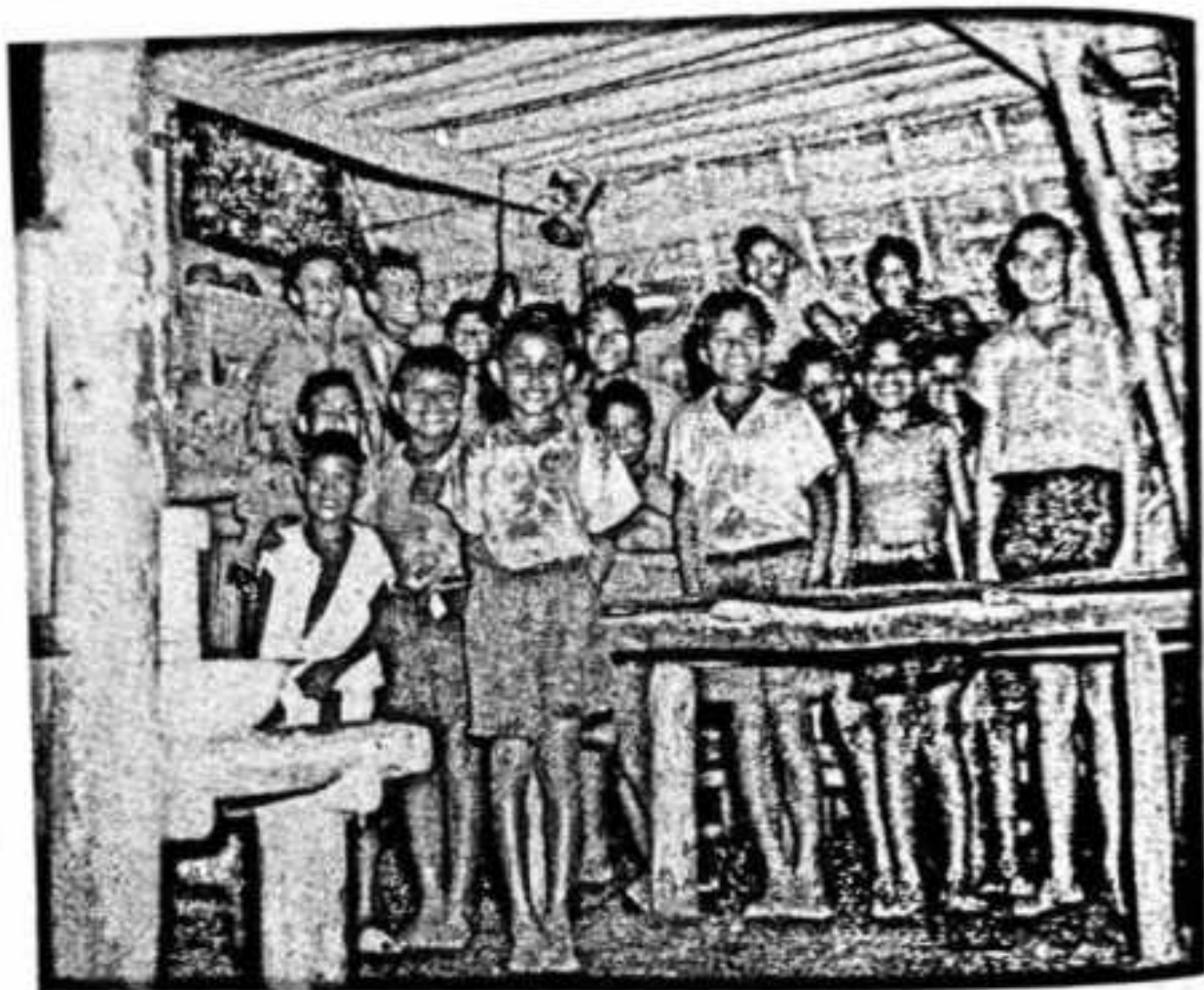
We were glad the Japanese cremated their dead. Otherwise our property near Vunapope would have been transformed into a gigantic cemetery.

A few months later, at Vunapope, was established a full scale military hospital. Most of our mission houses were occupied but even these were not sufficient to accommodate some 1500 sick and wounded soldiers; they had to erect big tents and a number of primitive houses, covered with tarred-paper, which were used as hospital wards.

The crematorium was set up a few yards from our mission cemetery. It was not elaborate and complicated, as would be expected, but quite simple. A trench, about two feet deep, was prepared. Logs, which soldiers had carried from the bush, were placed one on top of the other in the trench. The corpses were laid on the logs. Petrol was

poured over the bodies and set alight.

Thousands were cremated there during the next two years. The ashes were always sent to their relatives, even later when it became very difficult and dangerous. Apparently, at that stage of the war, they were taken by submarine to Japan.



The half-caste boys in the prison camp.

QUICK ACTION

Another incident occurred in the half-caste boys' school where the civilian refugees had been interned. After they had been transferred to Rabaul, I went to the school and met three Japanese doctors, among them Dr. Chikami who had ill-treated Captain Gray.

I said to them: "You have chased these boys out of their house, not even allowing them to take their beds, wash-basins and clothing. I am here now to take back all their belongings."

The three doctors protested, saying they refused me

permission to do so. Most vociferous was Dr. Chikami.

"Look here, Doctor," I said, "I'm not asking your permission; this is mission property and I'm taking it! You try to stop me and I'll report you to Colonel Kwata."

I blew my whistle and in a few seconds the house swarmed with big and little half-caste boys. I called to them: "Boys, get your beds and belongings and be quick!" They took me at my word. In a few minutes the house was stripped of everything movable. Dr. Chikami remarked: "Rooting," meaning "Looting." I replied: "We are only reclaiming our own property but I know some other people who are looting in Vunapope."

The job properly done, I was about to walk out when Dr. Chikami approached me. His arrogance had vanished and he said: "Bishop, please do not report us to Colonel Kwata. I will tell him and everything will be all right." So the whole affair ended happily.

I knew by now that all the officers were afraid of Colonel Kwata. Some nights previously, those of us in the doctor's house had been awakened by a terrific din coming from the Colonel's headquarters. He had all his officers lined up on the verandah and was giving them a mighty "telling off." He was roaring like a lion. We never found out what it was all about, but evidently something was wrong somewhere.

DEPARTURE FOR THE CORAL SEA BATTLE

Time dragged on terribly slowly for us.

From the time of their invasion in January, we had but one desire and one hope—that the Japanese would move out and leave us alone. We imagined how nice it would be to move back into our houses, even after a strenuous clean-up, and to resume a normal mission life. Each of us looked for signs of preparations for an early departure.

It was not until the end of April that we were sure something was afoot.

Military activity greatly increased. Many warships, cruisers, destroyers and transports moved into Rabaul. Large groups of bombers and fighters left Rabaul every morning for destinations unknown to us.

A week or so before the Japanese departure, I watched the Colonel's driver wash and polish my car, now privileged to be used by Colonel Kwata himself.

By unmistakable gestures the driver implied that my car would be returned to me. That was good news as well as a strong indication that the Japanese would soon leave.

A few days later, to my amazement, I saw Colonel Kwata and his batman cleaning the verandah of the Bishop's House. The Colonel, barefooted, his pants rolled up, was washing the verandah with a hose while his batman was scrubbing it with a big brush. A spectacle for angels and men! I was sure that this action would have a deep significance. I was right.

Next morning the Colonel invited me to the Bishop's House. He explained that they were moving out for an unknown destination. He wanted to hand back my car and my home, but I should inspect the house first to see that its condition agreed with my expectations. He surely did not forget what I told them when they took over my residence: "I expect Japanese officers to behave as gentlemen and to treat my house accordingly."

Together we inspected the house. The front verandah, reception room and adjoining room seemed quite clean but the back verandah was dreadful. The Colonel apologised, saying: "You know, the batmen used to live here and this is what you can expect from them." Full of joy at the anticipation of getting my house back, I assured him that we would clean it up in no time. We said good-bye to each other, but I did not wish him a happy return.

The same morning, an unknown soldier presented me with a pack of papers, the first of which was to be signed by me. They were all in Japanese and the soldier did not understand a word of English. I turned to the second page and got a shock. It was signed by Captain Gray, whose heart had been cut out alive.

Was I being requested to sign my death warrant, perhaps telling the Japanese that it would be a great honour and a pleasure for me to have my throat cut by them? I expected that some day they would kill me; but, at that period, just when they were leaving, it seemed most inconvenient!

I told the soldier to find Sugai. I wanted to know what I was signing.

Sugai appeared and I asked him: "Are they going to kill me?" He protested, denying the suggestion emphatically.

"All right, what am I going to sign for?"

He explained that the troops had restored 10 bags of flour to our store in recompense for those taken out previously. I signed the receipt. There was still a big account to be settled with them. Acting on the advice of Colonel Akita from Tokyo, I demanded payment for everything they had taken. We presented them with a long list of items. They paid a few hundred pounds in Australian currency, but nothing like the whole sum asked.

Sugai again turned up and advised me to send a letter of thanks to Colonel Kwata.

"Well, Sugai," I said, "I'm not sufficiently acquainted with your Japanese style of writing such a letter. Would you kindly draft one for me?" He did. He suggested I should thank Colonel Kwata and say that I was overwhelmed with gratitude for the money I received and that I would never even dream of asking for more. This Japanese method did not appeal to me; I preferred the western way of telling Kwata in my own words that while I appreciated the payment of the money received, I sincerely hoped that the Japanese forces would in time pay the remainder due to us.

The long desired hour of the Japanese departure arrived and at that very hour we were struck as if by a thunderbolt. Twelve sailors appeared at Vunapope and posted a proclamation stating that nobody was allowed to occupy their former houses; everybody had to stay where they were. That was particularly hard on the Fathers and Brothers. The Sisters were still in their convents.

THE JAPANESE NAVY TAKES CHARGE

It was at the beginning of May. Since January 23rd, 1942, we had learned a great deal about handling the Japanese and now we could try our skill on these naval fellows. Compared with the army, they seemed rather kind-hearted and an occasional cup of tea and a few cakes made by the Sisters made them even friendlier. True, they refused us permission to re-occupy our houses, but had no objection

to the Fathers and Brothers taking their beds and mattresses and all their other belongings from these buildings.

A Navy sergeant, a rather stout chap, took up residence in the Bishop's House. He had strict orders to prevent anybody—soldiers, sailors or civilians—removing any furniture from the premises. I did not feel bound by Japanese orders and decided to recover my beautiful wall-clock.

I instructed my faithful Johannes to follow me to my house. We were going to get my wall-clock back. He was all for the attempt. At a given sign, he was to step on a chair, remove the clock from the wall and walk out with it.

We entered the Bishop's House. I greeted the fat sailor with "Seyonara"—"Good morning," and he returned my greeting. As he could not understand a word of English, we both used natural sign language. I pointed to the clock, then to the tip of my nose, and indicated that I was going to take the timepiece away. His reaction showed he understood only too well. Gesticulating with both hands he let me know that it could not be done. I was sure that it could. I said to Johannes: "Get it!" My servant jumped on a chair, took the clock and went out. The sailor, in desperation, made the gesture of committing "harikiri." "Don't commit harikiri," I responded, "the clock is my property," and walked out.

As I write this, I am looking lovingly on my dear old clock. It survived Japanese occupation, bombardment and earthquakes and even now very faithfully keeps correct time for me.

The chair I am sitting on is also the one the Japanese let me take with me when they first occupied my house. It, too, gave me faithful service during house arrest, bombardment and prison camp. It is just 15 years since then.

The joy of having my car back again was short-lived. Before I could use it, Navy headquarters in Rabaul ordered: "No civilian is allowed to possess a car!" They took mine away. An Admiral was riding in it later.

One of our Dutch priests, aged 45, managed to hide and remained undetected by the Army. As the Japanese had agreed only to the aged Dutch missionaries staying with us at Vunapope, by concealing himself, he escaped the fate of those who were brought to Rabaul and later perished.

I thought the Navy interregnum a favourable opportunity to bring him into Vunapope. I asked our sailors for a truck, explaining that there was a priest at Paparatava who wanted to see our mission doctor. They agreed immediately. We fixed Sunday morning after breakfast as the time for the journey. I was to go with them.

The truck was already waiting when I noticed unusual activity on the sea. Warships and transports moved slowly into Rabaul Harbour. What disturbed me was the sight of a great number of landing barges heading straight for the beach at Vunapope, I asked the sailors the meaning of this manoeuvre.

"Oh, yes," they said, "that is Colonel Kwata and his crowd coming back from the Coral Sea Battle."

"What! Kwata and his men coming back to Vunapope?" I exclaimed. What a surprise! And we thought them gone for good.

I cancelled my trip to Paparatava, but I gave them a note for the Father and asked them to bring him in. They obliged. Later, when Sugai was in charge again, he wondered how the Father managed to get to Vunapope. I explained that he came with permission of the Navy which brought him to see the doctor. He did not object and the priest was safe.

HOME AGAIN AFTER THE CORAL SEA BATTLE

The barges spilled our returning heroes on to the beaches. They were home from a clash with the Americans. Jubilantly, they jumped out and ran for the well-known water-taps at Vunapope, all beaming and smiling, glad to be still alive and glad to see us again. We were not so sure that we could reciprocate their joy. Back they went into their old quarters and settled down in comfort.

They gave two different accounts of what had happened since their departure from Vunapope. The soldiers told the Sisters that they had sunk all the American ships and aircraft carriers and shot down all their planes. They could not complete their victory and had to return because they ran out of water. I am sure the good Sisters, full of sympathy, agreed with them.

I got different news from the naval officers, who were in

charge of us for one week only, and from Kwata and his officers. They admitted heavy losses on both sides. They even gave me the names of American and Japanese cruisers and aircraft carriers sunk. I checked later and the information was fairly correct. But they gave me no detailed information about their adventures. I know now from Australian publications that the Japanese transport group that left Rabaul was then heading for the Coral Sea. It was just north of the Woodlark Islands when the fleet was discovered by B-17s. Soon the United States land-based planes from Port Moresby and Townsville attacked and played hell with them. No wonder they got thirsty and decided to return to Rabaul on May 7th. The following Sunday morning we had them back at Vunapope.

During the Coral Sea Battle I had changed my quarters, moving into the consultation room of our dispensary. That gave more privacy to both the doctor's family and myself and put me comfortably near to all the communities of the Fathers, Brothers and Sisters. The Japanese, however, did not like it. Formerly, I was only a hundred yards away from them and they constantly kept a vigilant eye on me. Now I was out of observation range. What was I up to? Surely some illegal activities, they suspected.

Before the Japanese moved out for the Coral Sea Battle the common opinion at Vunapope was that once they were gone the war would be finished for us. On their return my view was: "Let us prepare for at least three more years of war." I advised everybody to keep busy with some occupation lest they become mentally upset.

The Sisters, besides caring for our food and clothes, filled their days with commercial classes, nursing lectures, music and language lessons. The Brothers worked hard at improving our housing conditions and that of the other communities. The priests revised their philosophy and theology, studied native languages and Japanese. We had a booklet for the use of travellers in Japan. We mimeographed it and everyone got a copy.

SEARCH No. 1

After losing face in the Coral Sea, the Japanese who returned became more bad-tempered and suspicious. The

writing of letters was strictly forbidden. I discussed this ban with Sugai, pointing out that the Fathers who were still at the out-stations surely must have a way of communicating with me should they need food, medicines or special faculties. He agreed that these were routine letters and would be allowed.

June 21st brought some excitement to all the communities. At 4.30 a.m. I was awakened by the tramp of soldiers and the clatter of swords and rifles. I paid no attention to it, presuming it to be some special exercise. But, suddenly, they banged on my door and shouted: "Open the door! We want to search your house."

"Oho," I said, "at such an early hour!" and asked: "Is there time to wash?"

They answered: "Yes."

So I washed and dressed all in white for that solemn occasion.

Then I called again: "Is there time for a shave?" Back came the answer: "Shave, no!"

I unlocked the door and let them in. I sat at my desk, from where I could see the whole room. The scene resembled that of a Bishop presiding at a special meeting. There were a Major, two Captains and the chief of military police.

I asked: "Smoking allowed?"

They answered, "Yes."

After lighting my home-made cigar I said: "Well, now you may search my belongings to your heart's content."

One of the Captains had a special job. There he was, standing opposite me, in full dress, with Samurai sword and revolver. He even had gloves on. He did not participate in the search, but just stood and stared at me. I thought he must be a professor of psychology observing and studying the reactions of a potential criminal.

I was sitting there, contentedly smoking my cigar and watching their activities when there was a reaction. The chief of police, who was searching my wardrobe containing my clothes and some small items, held a tin of cigarettes in his hand. In a peremptory tone I said: "Give it to me!" Amazed, he looked at me. I insisted: "Come on, I want that

tin." He handed it over. "Thank you." . . . I wonder what findings the professor reported!

The greatest attraction for them was my brief case with its specially selected reading matter for the High Command. They seized it, confiscated it. Then they arrested me and told me that they had to escort me to the headquarters of the Kemp-i-tai. The confiscated papers were put into a small suitcase, which I had to carry. As the missionaries saw me being marched off between two guards with fixed bayonets, they said: "We will never see our Bishop again. That is the end of him." But our good Sisters did not despair. They spent the whole day on their knees before the Blessed Sacrament, imploring Our Lord for my safety. Some offered themselves as substitutes for me: "Take my life, O Lord, and spare the Bishop." This was their fervent prayer.

We reached our destination just on breakfast time. The Japs offered me a bowl of rice with an egg, fried hard, on top of it. I told myself that this might be the last meal for a while and finished it off.

Shortly after breakfast they declared the Imperial Court open. They charged me with having written letters, an action strictly forbidden.

I admitted having written an order for food supplies to the Brothers in Rakunda. But they insisted that that was forbidden. I contended that it was allowed and that Sugai himself had given permission with the authority of Colonel Kwata. I said he had told me that routine letters, such as food orders, did not contravene the order. Sugai, who was present, denied this emphatically.

There was another point yet. They had watched me going by a ramshackle car to Paparatava. While that was within the permitted range, what business had I to go there?

I explained that at Paparatava there was one old Father and some Sisters. They were all my missionaries and I had gone to inquire if everyone was all right. They admitted there was nothing criminal in that. The Chief of Police asked me now if I were prepared to make all my statements on oath. I consented saying: "Yes, I am." Then I jumped up, banged the table and said: "And an extra oath; that

Sugai is telling you lies and that he gave me the permission." Rather startled, they looked at me and then at each other. They exchanged a few words and then the Chief of Police declared: "That will do for the time being. Later on, we will see you again. The Imperial Court is closed."

All through the day I sat comfortably in a long chair, wondering why they were keeping me there. At noon there was another bowl of rice. In the afternoon I got drowsy and slept the sleep of the just. The professor of psychology was not present to register the reactions of the criminal. I said a number of rosaries and smoked my cigars in between.

At 5 p.m. a landing barge headed for the shore, bringing the Father and Brother from Rakunda to give evidence. The police checked up on the statements I had made in the morning. I had to go out of hearing range, to the shore. After a few minutes, I noticed the Father and Brother leaving the police station with their suitcases and going up to the mission. Their statements were in keeping with mine. The police called me and told me I could go back to my house, that the court case was finished. When the Sisters and other missionaries saw me returning they all thanked God that their prayers were answered.

Next morning Sugai arrived again, inviting Father Manager and myself to the Bishop's House. We intended wearing the clothes we had on, but Sugai said: "You can't go like that. You have to dress up—coat and collar." It looked like a solemn affair. I hoped they were not going to court-martial us. "Sugai, look here," I said, "you had better tell the truth. I am going to fight for it." Sugai very lamely admitted that he had already told them. I felt better now. At the Bishop's House, Colonel Kwata with his senior officers dressed in full uniform, awaited us. First, Kwata apologised for the inconvenience he had caused by the search and by my arrest. He was sorry but he had had to act on superior orders. Now he was pleased that the results did not incriminate us in any respect. A glass of wine concluded the business.

"Well," I said, "that is definitely more pleasant than a court-martial."



SISTERS BEING SEARCHED

While I was under arrest at the Kempri Station all the other communities were subjected to the great search.

The F.D.N.S.C. Sisters M. Flavia and M. Editha report their experiences as follows:

"June 21st brought us some excitement. At 4.30 a.m. we were awakened by tramp, tramp around our verandahs. Two Sisters crept cautiously out and peered over the balcony. In a couple of seconds there was a bellow: 'Get out and come down!' Only half awake we tumbled downstairs to the clicking of bayonets and roars to 'Hurry up!' The early morning gloom added to the air of mystery and suspense. The reason for the early disturbance was this.

"After their defeat and subsequent inglorious return from the Coral Sea encounter, our Japanese lords were in a very nasty humour, and we became the victims thereof. They had not expected to be checked in the south and so came to the conclusion that someone in our midst had sent radio messages which brought about their disappointment. We, of course, were not supposed to know how unsatisfactory had been this venture, but their obvious annoyance only confirmed the deductions we had already made on counting the battered hulks crawling into the harbour. And now we were under suspicion and there was going to be a great search.

"We were commanded to form a squad, and whilst an armed guard surrounded us, a number of officers took up their positions in front. Beside the spokesman were some promising-looking gentlemen holding spades and ropes. We knew the Japanese methods—the spades were for us to dig our own graves and the ropes were to bind us in preparation for the final scene. For once we were thoroughly frightened. Then the leading officer addressed us. We were to remain in

our present position (the nurses were lined up some distance away), neither moving nor speaking, while they would search our houses. Afterwards we would be called one by one and interrogated. Anyone who dared to disobey would be severely punished.

"Then began a five hours' search during which certain parties in our midst examined their consciences. Upstairs we had a few quite good little drawings of Japs and at least two of us had diaries, the last entry being about the departure for and return from Port Moresby.

"An hour passed, two hours, and still our position was the same—the diaries above, the lads with ropes and spades before, our consciences none too easy within. Then the sun began to scorch down upon us. The guards departed in batches to partake of some morning refreshment but left us there dispirited and hungry.

"All at once the tide took a propitious turn. An officer called upon Mother Superior to go above and help them. Now she was a resourceful woman and those diaries and sketches were on her mind as well as on ours. After ably directing the search into safe channels she proposed that it would facilitate matters if each Sister were to take her own books and belongings and line them up before her on the ground below. Therefore, accompanied by guards, upstairs we went, gathered our books (one incriminating diary was hastily stowed away on the owner's person) and took up our position again. The owner of the second knelt on the grass arranging her books, slipped diary No. 2 under her knees, and remained kneeling until the search was over. When the inspectors came along, the two diary owners wore a most innocent air, the one on her knees making a particularly good impression. Her humble attitude was the correct one for an Australian to adopt in the august presence of Japanese officers.

"Then matters began gradually to improve, whether because no wireless sets were found or because the Sisters all appeared so innocent, I know not. However, in the end we were all upstairs again helping to conduct the search, and a very thorough one it was too — under mattresses and in every possible hole and corner.

"It was almost 10 o'clock and the ordeal was nearing its end, so we were once again lined up. Mother Superior was commissioned to examine our persons. With her usual dexterity she kept well away from pockets (No. 2 diary was by this time reposing in that of its owner). Every little paper was examined and any suspicious article was pocketed by the officers. An invitation card to a previous camp concert caused a stir among the honorable gentlemen. They read, 'A first class entertainment will be held on the lower 'drome (meaning our ground floor) out of range of air attacks — June, 1942.' We were questioned. They discussed. They, still puzzled, took it away. They also took away a few letters and drawings, one of the latter featuring small Sugai, our Jap interpreter, standing before the tall nurses and telling them that they might write home on 'family problems.' Then we were let go. Naturally, we were a little limp by this time. A strict guard was maintained till sunset but none of us had to dig our own graves.

"That evening, by order of Mother Superior, two precious diaries disappeared into the kitchen fire and thus, so thought the owners, much valuable data was lost to posterity."

On the same day, all other Stations where the missionaries were still doing their work were searched also. Everything went all right.

One friendly interpreter from Rabaul confided to me that the reason for the general search was that two German missionaries in New Ireland, Father Nauhaus and Father Hamig at Namatanai, were charged with having helped Australian officials, who were hiding in the bush. It was alleged that the priests had given them food and clothes, and had sent them messages about the Japanese. Both Fathers were arrested and later executed at Rabaul.

For the same "crime" two more German missionaries, Father Martin and Father Kohlstatte, and one Irish Father, Father Murphy, were executed on the island near Kavieng.

On the New Britain south coast, Father Culhane, an Irish priest, was shot and left unburied on the beach. He, too, had been charged with helping Australian soldiers who came through his station on the way to safety.

His confrere, Father "Ted" Harris, an Australian, met the same fate, for heroically assisting the retreating Australian soldiers. He gave away his last supply of food, medicine and clothing. The fleeing troops insisted that he should go with them, but he refused. He said that, being a missionary, his place was with his flock. The Japanese took him on board their ship and killed him.

These were the first nine victims of the Japanese. There were 12 more to follow.

PLANS TO DEPORT THE BISHOP

At this stage rumours reached us that the Japanese contemplated separating the Bishop from his missionaries. Furphies in those days grew like mushrooms, but I did not pay much attention to them as many proved to be without foundation. Soon I was to realize that there were real grounds for this one.

At St. Paul's in the Bainings lived Father Stapleman and four M.S.C. Sisters. One day, about this time, Naval officers came to see the priest. Apparently, they did not know that he was under my charge. They told him: "That Bishop there at Vunapope seems to be a very powerful man, but we don't like him. He does not co-operate with us, demands payment for everything we take, and rather obstinately gets away with what he wants. What do you think, Father, will happen if we separate him from the crowd at Vunapope and deport him to some lonely island?"

Father Stapleman said: "I can tell you exactly what will happen if you do that. If you take him away to-day, the Apostolic Delegate in Tokyo will know it to-morrow and the day after to-morrow the Vatican will know it. Japan has diplomatic relations with the Vatican, hasn't it? Well the Bishop is its representative and soon you will know what will happen to you."

Amazed, they asked: "But how is it possible?" Father Stapleman replied: "That I cannot tell you. You do it, and you will see what will happen."

Of course, the priest was bluffing.

Off the officers went and reported to the High Command. There they put their heads together and decided:

"This time we will get him. The Bishop has a powerful transmitter. It should not be difficult to find that." They appointed their sharpest "noses" to ferret it out.

WAMI

Days before the "grand coup," I noticed our local Kempri unobtrusively poking about more than usual. However, I paid no heed to it, not then knowing what Father Stapleman had told the Navy officers.

Soon, on a Sunday afternoon, a major, rather tall for a Japanese and quite handsome, arrived. We called him Wami. The name had been given us by a Kempri but we discovered later it was a fake.

I was not aware of the great honour of having the most powerful man in the Japanese army as my guest. Wami was chief of the Secret Police and his powers amounted to a combination of those of the Gestapo and Cheka. In his hand rested only too loosely the decision of life, death or torture. Besides his native tongue he spoke English, German, Chinese and Malay.

I offered him a cigar which he accepted. That gesture was my method of ascertaining if my visitor's intentions were friendly or hostile. If they took the cigar their errand was harmless; if they refused I had to be on the alert. Normally, it worked, but this time I was mistaken.

After some small talk about native languages, he asked me if we had any Australian money. I said we had a few hundred pounds, with which Colonel Kwata had paid for goods taken from us; but I had already arranged to exchange it the following week for Japanese money. Horrified, he exclaimed: "What! you dare to exchange the bad Australian money for the good Japanese currency!"

My repartee was: "Hullo, Major. What authority have you to say that? The pay-master told me quite differently and I presume that by exchanging the money he only follows Japanese Government policy."

"Yes," he said, "we hear you are talking to natives and depreciating the Japanese money."

That nettled me and I demanded proofs. He had none. To cover his lack of information he said nonchalantly:

"Rumours are sufficient. You know, rumours may become dangerous." I hotly retorted: "I have no contact at all with natives. Yes, next door is the maternity hospital, but do you presume that I have nothing better to do than to discuss Japanese currency with pregnant native women?"

I broke off the interview, telling him that it was time for Benediction which I was going to give to the Sisters. He asked if he might come. I replied that if he behaved he could attend. As we may have anticipated, during Benediction he was not on his knees, absorbed in devotion. Oh, no! He was nosing about in all the adjoining rooms. After Benediction, I went down the stairs and met him there. He said in a friendly way: "Bishop, you got good boys." I looked blank. "Boys?" What boys?" He repeated: "Boys, boys," and pointed to my mouth. "Thank you for the compliment!" I answered, realising that he meant "voice."

I introduced him to Dr. Schuy as he had mentioned that he wished to see the native maternity hospital. I went to my room to change. After a few minutes I heard a terrific row going on outside the hospital. There was Dr. Schuy fuming with rage, protesting wildly and stamping the ground.

I went out and inquired: "What is going on here?" Dr. Schuy pointed to Major Wami and said: "This fellow here is telling me that our hospital is dirty!" "Yes," chimed in Wami, "I just saw the Sisters' convent. How nice and clean everything is there compared with this dirty place here." I challenged him: "Come on, Major, show me the dirt!" He retorted: "The flies!" "Exactly, Major," I agreed, "they are Japanese flies. You had better catch them for us!"

The dirt, filth and open latrines round the Japanese quarters and the discarded dressings, full of blood and pus, were shocking breeding places for millions of flies.

Being "fed up" with this cheeky fellow, I demanded: "Major, please, your name." He snapped back: "I have no name," and went away.

SEARCH No. 1

Soon we were to meet under more uncomfortable

circumstances. Three months after the first search, during the early days of October, a shiny limousine drew up at my door at 9 a.m. Wami and some higher officers got out. They swarmed into my room. Wami was in charge of the whole operation. At the same time, truckloads of soldiers with fixed bayonets drove up and in a few seconds surrounded all the different communities.

Wami was spokesman. "We have to search you, your personal effects and all the communities too," he declared. He spread out a detailed map of Vunapope. "Here is a resettling plan. In three days you have to move inside the clearly defined boundary. I leave it to you to accommodate the different communities." I glanced at it and protested: "Lavatories and our air-raid shelter—a tunnel—are cut off!" He silenced me: "No time for details now."

They started to search my room. It was eighteen feet by fifteen and in it were a bed, a desk, a wardrobe and bookstand. No chance to conceal a radio transmitter there. They soon realised that. Still there was the dispensary with its adjoining rooms and especially the attic with a variety of things. Everything was thoroughly inspected. In my room they concentrated on my papers. Every scrap was confiscated . . . especially my brief case with the carefully selected reading matter for the High Command. Two captains were assigned to take the titles of my books—quite a good collection, but not according to their heart's desire. There were theological, philosophical, meditation and prayer books, some scientific volumes, too, but nothing that indicated the slightest connection with radio transmitters or receivers. Too bad! Not admitting they were beaten, they hoped I might have concealed some of the suspected messages to or from the Apostolic Delegate at Tokyo or the Vatican or the enemy, between the pages of my books. They went in for the search with great zeal and turned every leaf. It took them several hours to complete the task. It ended in utter disappointment.

Others tried their wits on the Sisters. Said one bright fellow: "Sister, will you kindly show us the underground sending-room?" The Sister had never heard of such a thing. She imagined that they wanted to see our air-raid tunnel.

"Oh, yes," she said, "please follow me." They followed, bursting with expectation. She led them into the tunnel and said: "Here it is." "Oh, no, Sister, we don't want to see that! Show us the underground room where the secret messages are dispatched." Poor Sister could show them nothing of the place that wasn't there!



Some of the European nuns after their release.

BISHOP'S LEICA

While the two captains scrutinised my books, Wami was busy examining my wardrobe. On one of the shelves, for all to see, was my Leica. He opened it. "Ah!" he said, "that is the stuff. Bishop, I want that Leica!"

"Oh, no, Major, you can't have it. It's mine and the only camera left on the mission. I will need it after the war."

"But I want it now."

"No, you can't have it."

"I can't, eh?"

He started to inspect my photo album. He exclaimed excitedly: "What is this picture?" I said: "It is several years old. That is a copra steamer, loading copra in front

of Vunapope. The firemen have just put in a few shovels of coal. That accounts for the smoke." Wami retorted: "You can tell that to somebody else. This is a Japanese ship bombed by the Americans and you are taking war pictures with your Leica. I herewith confiscate your Leica and the incriminating photo." My Leica went into the big police basket, where my papers were already.

It was now 12 o'clock and they told me that I could go over to the M.S.C. Sisters and have a cup of tea if I wished. I went. The Japanese had invited themselves into the Sisters' refectory and occupied one row of tables. They had brought their lunch with them. On the other row were the Sisters, with the Bishop presiding. I had my cup of tea and a sandwich and returned to my room. The two captains were still nosing through my books. Wami had gone. During the search he developed a rash. He was scared to death and began screaming for a Japanese doctor as he thought he had been poisoned. The doctor gave him an injection.

I walked into my room, took the confiscated Leica out of the basket and addressed the captains: "I can't let that Leica go. Here is my proposal: I give you my word of honour that I will not use it. You put your police seal on it and I will keep it." At the end of that sentence, a colonel entered, demanding my passport. I quietly put the Leica on the table, covered it with a pack of papers and went into the passport business.

The different communities also had their own experiences. Here is one related by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart: "During the search a number of Sisters endured a few moments suspense in the Chapel. A surly officer strode up to the altar and proceeded to open the tabernacle. The Sister sacristan ran for the chaplain. Another Sister begged the officer to wait till the Father came: 'We are not allowed to open that. Only a priest may do so.' Said the surly one, 'You are not opening it, I am opening it,' and he proceeded to have his way. Pagan fingers grasped the ciborium and placed it on the altar. It was a tense moment. A line of Sisters was now kneeling, praying desperately at the altar steps. Did he dare to touch the Blessed Sacrament we were ready to defend it with our

lives. He tried to remove the lid. Normally it was the easiest thing in the world to remove that lid, but now it refused to move. He twisted the cross on top of it around but nothing happened. Then, probably under the impression that it was not meant to be opened, he replaced it in the Tabernacle." ("Red Grew the Harvest," p. 25.)

The search proceeded without major mishaps. In the afternoon Wami turned up again. I had to translate a proclamation into German, and read it to the assembled Fathers, Brothers and Sisters. Wami was standing nearby checking the translation. He paid me the compliment: "Very correct." By order of the High Command we were to be brought behind barbed wire. We had to evacuate all our big houses: the two big convents, their boarding schools, maternity hospital and other hospitals, and the teacher training college. Little was left in which to accommodate the Sisters, but we squeezed them into the native seminary and into the printing shop, although both houses were not very large.

At 3 p.m. a whistle shrilled: the search was finished. They put a lid on the big police basket with its suspect papers and departed. My Leica was quietly reposing on my table, covered with papers, waiting for further developments.

We had three days to shift into the new quarters. Every able-bodied missionary lent a hand and all the native Sisters, the boarders, both boys and girls, helped, too. It was amazing how many things, big and small, had to be moved.

October 3rd was the last day. It was the feast of Little Therese and the anniversary of my consecration. I said the last Mass in the M.S.C. Sisters' chapel. We made it as solemn as possible. A few minutes after the Mass the chapel was stripped of its furniture: the altar, the statues, stations of the cross, the pews, everything was removed.

In the meantime the whole Kempfi staff was busily ramming in posts for the barbed wire. Soon there was a gate and a locked door and a nice ship's bell dangling near. I had to ring it, if I wanted to go to the police.

And another new edict was proclaimed! Nobody

except the Bishop was permitted any dealings with the Kempri or higher authorities. That meant a full time job for me; whether the matter was large or small I was the liaison with the Japs.

The order was not motivated by respect for the Bishop. The big search a few days previous had ended in utter disappointment: not a trace of illegal transmitters or dealings by the Bishop or any other member of the mission. A friendly interpreter from Rabaul, who helped to translate the suspect material, told me confidentially that I need not worry as there was nothing wrong with any of the seized matter. On the contrary, my papers proved to be rather good reading for those fellows up in the High Command. In due time we got them all back again.

The Secret Police must have reasoned that although the search revealed nothing, if they let the Bishop deal exclusively with them, he would make false steps. Thus he will play into our hands, they thought. Kempri hinted gently at that, telling me: "Bishop, from now on you have to be very diplomatic."

"Yes," I said, "I will see what I can do for you."

The day after we were securely put behind the barbed wire I rang the bell at the gate for the first time. Somebody duly opened the door for me. To the police I said: "I have some complaints."

"Complaints? How? What is wrong?"

"There is very much wrong with the barbed wire you fellows took from our horse and cattle fence. It is badly rusted, unhygienic and full of tetanus bacteria. Just think of it! If we wanted to escape, how easily we could scratch ourselves and get tetanus. The German missionaries who are in the majority behind this barbed wire reckon that, being your dear allies, they would be entitled to nice, clean, galvanised wire."

Open-mouthed and amazed they listened to my complaint. That was a new one on them. Never before had prisoners complained about the bad quality of the barbed wire. This was my way of driving it home to them how meanly they treated their allies.

They mumbled: "It is all done for your protection."

They went so far in their protection, protecting us against ourselves by shooting us.

AIR-RAID SHELTER BARRED

In Wami's plan the entrance to our air-raid shelter was barred by barbed wire to prevent us using it. A lot of work and sweat had gone into driving that tunnel into the mountain behind Vunapope. Now 350 people were left unprotected from the air; that would mean our annihilation in the event of heavy bombing. The thought made me wild and reckless; the grim prospect had a similar effect on others.

One was Mrs. Schuy, the wife of our mission doctor, with three small children—including a baby. She approached a Japanese officer who was walking near our houses. She gave him a piece of her mind in her own language. Being a doctor of colonel's rank, he understood German. A few minutes later he ran into me—and a second blasting, more severe this time. I shook my fist under his nose and shouted: "What are you Japanese heroes up to? Have you now declared war on babies, children and women of your own allies? Do you see that barbed wire there, barring the entrance to our air-raid shelter and exposing all of us to annihilation? That is cruelty! That is a crime against humanity. I shall appeal to the Emperor himself." Though he understood perfectly, he never uttered a word. Next morning Kempf got orders from the High Command to remove that wire.

Acting on knowledge gained from experiences during the First World War, I had ordered a tunnel to be begun in a rather steep hill. Our present houses were near this. Two different teams were constantly enlarging the shafts. One was digging and excavating while the other was lining it with coconut posts for support. So far we had standing room only for all. We realised that we would need a second set of tunnels for sleeping accommodation and that it should be nearer the other part of our camp.

We kept burrowing until the hour of disaster struck, when Vunapope was blasted from the surface of the earth.

The tunnels withstood the heavy bombardment and saved the lives of all who took refuge there.

Just as we started and were some 30 yards in, Japanese officers inspected the tunnel and asked what was its purpose. I explained that we liked some protection against machine-gun bullets and bombs.

"You don't need that. We shall protect you."

"Oh yes," I said, "I know. . . ."

In Rabaul at that time the Japanese used slit trenches, and aircraft bullets and bomb shrapnel played havoc with them. An admiral, the second in command, and his staff were wiped out in one of these slit trenches. They soon woke-up and all started to dig tunnels—miles and miles of them. The steep mountain sides were ideal for that purpose.

The general staff had extra comfortable tunnels with electric light, cinemas, dormitories, dining and club rooms. Around Rabaul and Kokopo there was sufficient underground accommodation for 150,000 Japanese. The officers estimated it took 200 bombs to cause one death, compared with the First World War figures of 10,000 shells to one death. Quite a favourable balance. In their tunnels they had big navy repair workshops, auto repair garages. Those near the seashore on the road to Rabaul hid landing barges. These tunnels still exist and are in good condition.

THE LEICA AGAIN

I had new quarters, a small corner room in the house in which all the Fathers and Brothers were. The dispensary, and with it my former room, was beyond the boundary and occupied now by the Kempis.

In came Sugulo, the interpreter at the Kempis-tai in Rabaul. He was a friendly fellow with good manners.

"Bishop, do you know what happened to your Leica?"

"Oh yes," I said, "it is here in my cupboard and quite all right."

"Oh, I am so glad to hear it," he said. "You know, we turned the whole Kempis office at Rabaul upside down looking for the camera. Major Wami was especially keen about it."

He reported his discovery to his headquarters. Next

morning Kempfi visitors from Rabaul called on me.

"Bishop, you promised your Leica to Major Wami. We are here to collect it and here is the payment."

"Oho," I said. "Go easy, please! I did not promise my Leica to Major Wami, I refused to give it to him. But as you mention payment, how much?"

"Twenty pounds, occupation money."

"What!" I exclaimed. "You dare to offer me so little, even in occupation money? You can have my Leica but you will have to pay in gold yen, yes, 500 gold yen. Not so long ago you fellows boasted that German submarines were bringing optical equipment and Leicas to Tokyo. Would you offer them 20 Rabaul occupation pounds for a Leica?" They protested vigorously that they had no gold yen.

"All right, if you haven't, leave my Leica alone." I did not expect to save it, but in order not to give them a cheap victory I continued: "If you poor fellows have no gold to pay with, could you pay in quinine?" New hope sparkled in their eyes.

"Oh yes, how much do you want?"

"Just a moment," I said, roughly computing how much quinine I could buy for 500 gold yen.

"Well," I announced, "seventy-two bottles of quinine, each 1000 tablets!" They were stunned by the request. They insisted that the whole Japanese army did not possess such a huge quantity.

"What, you can't even pay in quinine? Then leave my Leica alone and go home." They went and the Leica is still with me. Even now I am making fine Kodachromes.

PRISON AND PROTECTION CAMP

We no longer expected an early withdrawal of the Japanese. Completely resigned to the will of God, we were prepared to accept every trial He wished us to endure. We had three chapels in our camp on account of the different



communities. We made our meditation every morning, assisted at Holy Mass and received Holy Communion. That gave us strength and courage to bear all the hardships.

Personally, I was sure at the time that they were after my hide and that, given any pretext, they would kill me some day.

Three captains came to see me; all rather arrogant fellows. "You had better make no complaints," they said. "You and the whole mission crowd should be only too grateful to us that you are still alive." I retorted: "Tell your High Command that they are welcome to cut my throat, but as long as I am alive I will protect my mission and fight for it."

I am sure that they reported every word of this. Nothing happened then, but they had their plans for the future.

As these three captains looked rather young, I asked them where they had been during the First World War. "Oh," I said, "probably you were not born then or were still clinging to your mother's skirts. See, I was a soldier myself. I, too, had a revolver and sword. It is a pity I could not have met you fellows then, I am sure you would not have dared to behave as arrogantly as you do now, seeing that I am armed with a cross only." It was remarkable how meekly they swallowed that.

A few days after we had settled behind the barbed wire, Major Wami paid me another visit. It was after sunset. Beaming and smiling, he greeted me: "Hullo, Bishop, how are you? To-night I am coming as your friend." I remained aloof: "Say, when I last met you during the great search, you did not behave exactly like my friend!" Off-handedly he replied: "Oh yes, it was different then. I was on duty. Now I am coming privately as your friend." I invited him to my room. When he mentioned "on duty" I could not help thinking of a rough sergeant-major who had declared: "When on duty I don't know my mother. When on duty I am a swine. And I am always on duty." When on duty Wami behaved like a swine. I was not sure that he too was not always on duty. I kept on the alert. On my table was an electric lamp heavily shaded because of air-raids. He immediately started to nose about. Seeing the wires leading

to the lamp, he unabashedly asked: "You got radio?" During the search they hunted for radios and could not find them. "Oh yes," I said, quite casually, "I have, and a good one too. Cost me £42. Rather good reception. The only trouble is that Colonel Kwata took it and is listening in!" He grinned and apparently appreciated my answer. Next he went to my bookstand and picked up a small black notebook, which had also been confiscated and returned. He said: "Im Westen nichts Neues." That is the German title of Remarque's book, "All Quiet on the Western Front." A literal translation would be "No News From the Western Front." In my notebook was the address of a missionary friend in Japan. That was what he was after. I explained that two of our missionaries had, at one time, travelled via Japan. The missionary there had accorded them hospitality. He had sent me greetings and the silk picture of Fujiyama in the Bishop's House. His curiosity was satisfied.

Now I counter-attacked: "Did you read that book, 'All Quiet on the Western Front' by Remarque?"

"Oh yes," he admitted proudly.

Here was my chance: "How can you dare to read that book? Don't you know that it is on the Nazi index by Hitler?" With that I exacted some compensation for what had happened to me the previous day.

HITLER AND CATHOLIC CHURCH

I was summoned to the Kempfi office. There some envoys of Major Wami awaited me. During the search they had confiscated a book, "Hitler and the Catholic Church," from the Fathers' community library. Now they brought it along and attacked me about it.

"Did you read this book?"

"Sorry, not yet," I replied.

"Does it belong to you?"

"Where did you find it?" I questioned.

"Over there where the Fathers are."

"Oh well," I said, "then it belongs to our library."

"Ha!" they exclaimed, "then you are responsible for it."

"Yes," I said. "What's wrong with it?"

"It is anti-Nazi and forbidden by Hitler. How can you dare to have such a book in your library?"

"When I left Germany in 1925 there was no Nazi Party and Hitler was still hanging wall-paper and white-washing houses. How can I know what he has or has not forbidden? Have you an index of all books forbidden by the Nazis? Please give it to me and I will eliminate all the forbidden books." Of course they did not have one. Then I took the offensive: "Why shouldn't we read this book? What do you take us for? For coolies, street sweepers or the like? All the Fathers and I are highly educated people. There are famous scientists among us. We study and read everything. For instance, we know all about Japan, its culture, its religion; and the reason is because we have sufficient brains to form our own opinions about all these things.

"What do your scientists do in Japan? Do they study one book only, learn it by heart and repeat it ad nauseam?"

By now, they realised they were on a sticky wicket. They declared: "We have to confiscate this book."

"By all means, take it and read it. I am sure you will find many instructive ideas in it."

They had one point yet: "Are you not all members of the Nazi Party?"

"God forbid! We are honest German citizens and missionaries."

"But does not Hitler want you all to be members of his party?"

"No, the Fuhrer does not want priests and missionaries to occupy themselves with politics. We are only fulfilling his wish." That settled it. They left to report to Wami. I enjoyed my revenge.

During the three days we were packing and moving behind the barbed wire, a Kempri delegation from Rabaul arrived to demand that the mission Brothers in charge of the power house should remain there. I agreed, for we, too, were very much interested in having electric power, especially since it ensured the benefits of light and water supply. However, I insisted that a priest should be stationed with them. They laughed and jeered at me. A priest! Imagine that! Quite annoyed I jumped up and shouted: "After all you have already inflicted on us, don't you dare to start a religious persecution against us." They discussed

the matter and after a short while accepted my terms. "It is all right, Bishop, you may name a priest to stay with the Brothers; but all intercourse is forbidden with the inmates of the camp." I appointed Rev. Father Dahmen for that post.

BISHOP'S REPUTATION

An interpreter from the High Command once called on me. With a beaming smile he said: "I am so glad to meet you, Bishop, at headquarters we hear so much about you. You have quite a reputation by now. I feel greatly privileged to make your acquaintance."

Apparently I had a reputation, but it was based on conflicting reports that puzzled the High Command. A captain from the General Staff was sent to me.

"Bishop, we want to understand how you, as Bishop, treat the Japanese officers with such cynicism and sarcasm."

"The explanation is quite simple. You see, when officers call on me and behave as gentlemen, I treat them as gentlemen. If they behave as arrogant rascals, they are treated accordingly."

I have no doubt that he too reported every word. My explanation solved the problem of the conflicting reports. Some officers had testified: "The Bishop is a nice man with charming manners." Others had contradicted that: "He is terribly rough and sarcastic, playing hell with us."

Both were correct. But to get to the root of the matter the General Staff sent a special envoy to find the facts. He was a staff-colonel; a bit on the short and round side, with lively eyes and good manners. I had no idea that his mission was to test me.

He seemed very interested in our mission labours and I explained to him our religious, charitable and educational activities. I told him that there were 60 priests, all them with university training; a good number of linguists and scientists among them: anthropologists, botanists, ornithologists and conchologists.

There were our mission Brothers, all of them trained tradesmen: carpenters, bootmakers, tailors, shipbuilders, engineers, planters and others.

Some of our mission Sisters were trained nurses,

teachers; others famous for needlework and handicrafts, domestic science and other things.

I stressed this point: "None of them—Fathers, Brothers or Sisters—are getting a penny as wages, myself included. And they are the most hard-working people in the whole territory."

"Well, Bishop," he said, "you don't expect us to believe that! Common sense tells us that there must be profit in it." I agreed. "There is. But we all have our bank account up in heaven—not a penny here on earth."

"But how do you make your living?"

"That is to the point. Our Brothers are running our coconut plantations and a big saw mill. By perfect organisation, economy and hard work we are nearly self-supporting. We earn our own upkeep. Of course, missionaries do not live in luxury. In addition we spend a lot of money on hospitals and medicines, on schools and native teachers."

Unexpectedly and out of context, the Colonel blurted out: "But Bishop, you are a nice man and your manners are charming!"

I was not prepared for such a compliment. "Well, yes, Colonel, thank you for the compliment." Quickly I returned it: "You know, Colonel, it is like this: you called on me, behaving like a gentleman and I am treating you accordingly." His little eyes sparkled. I am sure he turned in a good report to the High Command.

During the first days of our imprisonment some higher ranking members of the Kempri called at our camp. At the gate they saw our ship's bell which I sometimes had to ring several times a day to contact their officials. On the spot they decided to take it for themselves.

They declared: "We want that bell."

"But you can't have it," I said.

"Why?"

"I need it myself to get the door opened."

"Yes, but we want it for Rabaul!"

That did not impress me. I persisted in my refusal to hand it over. Finally I consented: "Yes, you can take it. I will put a basket of stones here at the gate. In order to get in touch with the Kempri, I will smash a couple of windows

and I am pretty sure somebody will come and open the door for me."

They left the bell. I wonder what they credited me with.



MISSION COWS CHARGED WITH DRINKING PETROL

A major from the Japanese air force was another visitor. He brought six tins of fish and deposited them at the door. I presumed that it was part of Japanese visiting etiquette.

He was a bit cross-eyed and terribly serious. He charged our mission cows with drinking his high-octane aviation petrol. I scratched behind my ear and confessed that never before had they done such a thing. What were they up to now? Then, on second thoughts, I said: "I am inclined to believe the charge. Only recently we equipped our ox carts with motor car wheels and tyres. That must have put new ideas into their heads. After the tyres they could want petrol, too."

The joke was lost on him. He remained deadly serious. I admitted that the consequences would be disastrous. Imagine



The author, as a missionary 30 years ago, with his horse, "Billy."

Japanese 'planes wanting to take off to intercept enemy aircraft and the mission cows having consumed all their petrol! The thought would be hideous. As their action amounted to wholesome sabotage, I presumed the officer would ask for the death penalty. I was mistaken. What he requested was that we, with our men in the gardens, make a fence to prevent our cows from committing another similar crime. I felt that the honour of our cows was attacked and defended them. I pointed out that they had had a very good barbed wire fence, but the Kempis had dismantled it, depriving us of our freedom and had put us behind it, granting the cows full liberty of action and movement. Anyhow, I finally agreed to deprive our cows of their ill-used freedom by erecting another enclosure.

Other examples of the misbehaviour of the cows were reported to me. Misusing their liberty they visited the Japanese kitchens. The soldiers used to cook their rice out in the open in drums cut in half. Some of the cows decided to have a good meal of rice. They put their heads into the drums and were having a good time. But, disturbed suddenly

by the Japanese, their horns got stuck, and with drums, rice and all on their heads, they careered wildly through the plantation. That report seemed more probable than the first one about the petrol.

Then there was Billy, my faithful Makassar horse, which I rode for nine years before being appointed Bishop. He was always a great lover of freedom. An ordinary horse fence was no problem to him. I had to build a Billy-proof barrier. Once on a visit to Tapo where the Sisters were, my steed entered the convent, showing his love for the nuns by chewing up their veils which were hanging on the line. Now with all the horse fence wire surrounding our prison camp, Billy could come and go at will. He went scrounging around the Japanese quarters. Not appreciating his visits, they shot at him and wounded him. Limping badly he went home. The Brother, realising that he could not recover, killed him and sent his carcass to our camp. The Sisters in our kitchen cut it into delicious steaks which were greatly relished by everybody. Tastes differ greatly in time of peace and in time of prison camps.

HANDCUFF INCIDENT

One morning I went to the Kempri office and saw a heap of handcuffs on the table. I asked if I could see a set. The Chief of Police took a pair. I extended my hand to get it. He snapped one handcuff on my wrist and let the other end go. I said: "It is wonderful how it works. You know, I will keep that one as a souvenir," and pretended to walk out. The Kempri chief was alarmed at the thought of losing the handcuffs and vigorously protested. As he reached to recover them, with lightning speed I bolted the free cuff on his wrist, locking us together. In true police fashion, I tipped his shoulder and said: "Come on, boy, I have waited for you for a long time. Now you had better follow me quietly." Roaring with laughter, the other Kempis enjoyed it immensely. The Chief took no offence. Still laughing, they unlocked the cuffs to free us.

KININIGUNAN BOYS

On the outskirts of Vunapope we had a boarding school for native boys. It was a teacher training college for the



first grades, combined with agricultural and technical courses.

When the Japanese occupied Vunapope they soon rounded up the boys, mainly for light work. Brother Landinger, the school's principal, saw to it that the soldiers did not exploit the lads. The troops treated them fairly well. What the Japs liked best was the boys' brass band. Its reputation quickly spread and some Japanese musicians supplied them with notes of Japanese music, especially marches. In no time the boys mastered them and their fame rocketed even up to the High Command. Soon shiny limousines drove up full of staff officers wanting to hear that band. On one occasion I happened to be present. The audience was all high brass. I was sitting next to the interpreter and noticed the officers were listening spell-bound, especially to the Japanese music.

The interpreter asked me: "Bishop, do you know what they are saying?"

"What is it?" I said.

"Well, they are saying that they would not have believed

it if they had not heard it with their own ears. How did the mission succeed in training these natives to play with such perfection?" That simply was beyond their comprehension. The tribute was certainly a great compliment to Brother Landinger.

A few days later the second great search occurred and Brother Landinger was ordered, with all the missionaries, into the prison camp. The officers told the boys that they now were free to go back to their villages. Being liberated from "slavery and exploitation" the Japanese expected the lads to be glad and jubilant. Instead, they witnessed tears and mourning. "We don't want to be separated from our Brother and the missionaries," the boys told them.

"Well," said the Japanese, "if you prefer to go into the prison camp to join your Brother and the other missionaries you may do so." Great joy and exultation on the part of the boys. That, too, was beyond Japanese comprehension.

Although there was no accommodation for a hundred more inmates in the prison camp, that did not worry the boys. The Brother organised teams. They worked like beavers. One group brought long kunai grass for the roof. Others cut posts, rafters and bamboo. Soon they had their housing complete with bamboo beds. Then the youngsters dug their own tunnel which connected with our main tunnel, thus giving us more ventilation.

Later, when we were completely bombed out and all the Japanese, Kempri included, had fled, we missionaries with our boys and girls were the only ones to stay in our tunnels. A few days afterwards Kempri returned to see if we were still there. Their first question was: "Are the Kininigunan boys still with you?"

"Sure they are. Do you want to see them?" I blew my whistle and out they ran. That also confounded the Japanese, who said that all the natives employed by them had deserted.

"What do you do to make them so faithful to you? What do you say to them?"

"There is no magic formula to make the natives faithful," I replied. "It is the result of our education and their

appreciation of the benefits derived from it that makes them so loyal to us."

In spite of the 100 additional healthy appetites we had to satisfy from now on, the Kininigunan boys proved to be one of our greatest blessings.

PLANS TO EXTERMINATE US BY STARVATION

When put behind the barbed wire there were over 300 of us. That number increased steadily as missionaries came in from the out-stations and the Marist missionaries arrived from Rabaul. Finally, we totalled 350.

I asked Kempfi for food supplies for 350 people but they laconically declared: "Our orders are not to feed you, but to guard you and see you don't escape!" "Oh, I see!" I commented. They then permitted two, later three, Brothers and a handful of boys to work gardens for us outside the prison.

Each morning the Brothers sent an ox-cart full of tapioca, sweet potatoes, bananas, coconuts and sometimes corn and green vegetables. They had to unload the supply near the prison gate, where a member of the Kempfi would come and check, very conscientiously, the quantity and quality. After this our boys would distribute the vegetables among the different kitchens. Sometimes the Brothers would send us a pig or cow, but both preferred a strictly "private entrance" to our camp through the barbed wire.

After two months of this scrutiny I was summoned to the Kempfi office. The chief had a pile of papers in his hand. "Look here, Bishop, we have checked very carefully on all the food supply that has gone into the camp. According to our papers, you and the whole crowd should be dead by now!" He let the cat out of the bag; they had intended to exterminate us by starvation.

I humbly apologised for myself and the whole camp for still being alive. "But," I added, "you overlooked one important item." Eagerly they asked: "What is it?" "Well," I said, "missionaries, in fact bishops, too, are rather tough and hard to kill," driving home that we were aware of their noble intentions. They did not accept my explanation, knowing only too well how to kill missionaries and bishops.

Instead they got excited. The chief of the Kempri police declared: "Boys, mark my words. We are at the dawn of a great discovery. Look at our records and look at their faces. Our scientists assure us that no human being can subsist on the poor calories contained in the food that is going in. They don't look starved at all and they are very much alive. I tell you, there is a phenomenal secret involved. Who is running their kitchens? German Sisters! There you are. Everybody knows how inventive and clever the Germans are. The Sisters have a secret formula for converting very poor foodstuffs into meals of high nutritional value. And we will get it out of them."

They duly passed the bright idea to the High Command. Back came the order for all German Sisters to write down all their recipes and procedure in preparing our food.

In due time I took a copy of the recipes to the Kempri.

"Is that all right now?"

"Oh no," they answered. "We will forward your copy to the High Command. They will send a team of nutritional experts to Vunapope. In their presence the Sisters have to prepare the food according to the recipes and they will watch the procedure and sample the food on the spot."

"Well," I said, "our Sisters will feel greatly honoured, I am sure."

The nutritional experts flocked into the Sisters' kitchen. They carefully watched every move, checked every ingredient. They tried the food and seemed pleased with it.

I never got an official report from the High Command on the results of this investigation, neither did I hear anything about the decisions made to feed the whole Japanese army with those recipes. I still have a copy of them. Perhaps they will come in handy during the Third World War. Who knows?

The actual solution of the food mystery in our camp was much simpler. During the three days given us to transfer our belongings into the area we had also moved all the canned foodstuffs from our bulk store into the camp and stored them away carefully. The Kempri were so busy ramming in posts for the barbed wire fence that they did not notice it.

Alerted by their refusal to supply any food to the 350 inmates, we realised their sinister intentions of exterminating us by starvation.

Natives, who had pity on us, tried to bring food. They were turned away and in some cases the goods were confiscated. There was no hope from that source.

However, we did not despair. There was divine Providence and our Father in Heaven Who knew that His children needed food. Despite the High Command and its designs, He could move the hearts of friendly Japanese officers to help us—and that is what happened.

In the neighbourhood there were sympathetic supply officers. They liked to come into our camp and talk to the nuns, who again outlined to them our dire needs. Of course, they could not provide the whole camp with army rations against the orders of the High Command, as this would only bring trouble on themselves. But here it was that divine Providence watched over us.

An order from their Health Department stated that all officers and men had to mix their rice with barley for its vitamin B2 content. All hated the stuff. It spoiled the taste of the rice, they said. The supply officers had difficulty in getting rid of the barley. They asked me if we would have any use for it. I was sure that we would have. "Bring it in," I said. "The more the better!"

They sent several truckloads of it. Our Heavenly Father was going to give His children their daily bread. Yes, real bread. It was dark brown, full of vitamins A, B1, B2 and many more. It was fragrant and tasty. We liked it. In our camp we had an electric crushing mill that pulverised everything. The wheaten flour we had at the beginning of our captivity had been used up long ago. Now we were milling barley, corn and tapioca. The latter was first sliced and dried in the sun.

The High Command had also decreed that the soldiers must plant rice. They complied, harvested the grain and delivered it to the supply depot. Our friendly officers were again at a loss to know what to do. Nobody wanted it, as it was not hulled; at that time, they had no rice hullers. But we had one nice Buffalo rice huller and polisher. The

solution was simple indeed. They were glad to get rid of it and we were even more glad to have it. We admired the wonderful ways of divine Providence. We got about 30 tons of rice, which we stored in the attic of our former dispensary, hulling it only according to our needs.

The Sisters, without using a secret formula, cooked and served us three solid, tasty meals and we had no reason to look starved.

Some officers in charge of agriculture approached me and asked if I could supply them with two million tapioca stalks. They needed them for planting huge gardens. Tapioca is botanically named "*Manihot utilissima*," although it goes under the names of Cassava and Mandioca also. Tapioca is a shrubby perennial, six to seven feet high, with erect, clean stems. For propagation, these are cut into pieces 10 to 12 inches long. Stuck into well-prepared soil they strike easily and develop tubers ready for harvesting from nine to 12 months after planting. Tapioca was the staple food in our prison camp. I presume the nutritional experts acquired a taste for it while inspecting the Sisters' kitchen and that the High Command decided to feed all the Japanese forces on it.

Two million tapioca stalks are not a trifle. I impressed on the agricultural officers the tremendous potential food value this amount represented. The average yield of tapioca is from six to eight tons of tubers per acre. One truckload of sticks would be 10,000 pieces (as we found out later) and that would be sufficient for several acres.

I stressed the point that the High Command imprisoned us, giving us not one mouthful of food. I asked them if they expected the stalks for nothing; or if they were prepared to pay in goods, preferably foodstuffs. It took a whole week to reach an agreement. They had to consult the High Command and I discussed the matter with the Brothers in charge of the gardens to make sure that we could deliver that amount without harming ourselves. It was a risky affair to come to barter arrangements with the Japanese. If we did not fulfil our obligation, they would simply cut our throats. On the other hand we had no guarantee that they would honour their side of the agreement and pay in food. After a week of haggling we agreed to deliver the first truckload, 10,000

sticks of tapioca. They agreed to pay five bags of food—such as sugar, salt, rice, barley or wheaten flour—per truck-load. All these items could be interchanged. Our delivery had to start immediately.

Some weeks later the gates of our prison opened. Trucks rolled in, stacked with the promised food. I was convinced of my mental stability and others lost their doubts about it. It pays sometimes to be optimistic—and realistic as well.

There was more to come. Our Lord has told us: "Do not fret, asking, what are we to eat or what are we to drink? Or how shall we find clothing? It is for the heathen to busy themselves over such things; you have a Father in heaven who knows that you need them all" (Matt. 6:31). He had frustrated the High Command's starvation plan. We were not hungry, neither did we starve. I estimated our food supply sufficient for at least one year, above our present requirements.

I had big rolls of occupation bank notes, all new; nearly a thousand pounds that had never been used. I repeatedly asked Kempf to give us a chance to buy things with it. Their answer was always: "Sorry, we can't do anything for you." However, the chief of our Kempf was really sorry for us and made out a report for the High Command. More complaining than pleading he told them: "The Chinese are our enemies, yet they can buy clothes and whatever else they wish. The German missionaries are our allies. They don't get a handful of food from us nor can they buy anything even with our Japanese occupation money."

He was rapped sharply over the knuckles. "Whoever appointed you advocate for the prisoners?" he was reprimanded. "Whoever commissioned you to provide food and clothes for them? Mind your own business. Your orders are to guard the prisoners and prevent them from escaping and nothing else."

Fortunately for us, our Father in Heaven was not bound by orders from the High Command. He was going to provide clothes for us in spite of them.

A special organisation—Minsebu—had charge of all civilians. It had a quantity of merchandise which its

members were allowed to sell to civilians. The officers came occasionally into our camp. They were very friendly fellows. I asked them to help us and to sell us some clothing material. Though quite willing to do so, they explained that they could do nothing without the Kempfi's permission. Normally Kempfi and Minsebu were not on good terms, but for once they put their enmity aside and both agreed to help us.

Two big trucks rolled into our camp.

"Hullo, Bishop," said an officer, "here is something for you and all the others." He handed me a nicely written invoice. I still have it amongst my papers. It reads:

Calico 397 yards @ 1/- per yard	s. 397.00
Calico 70 pcs. @ 1.80 per pcs.	s. 126.00
White Rice 20 bags @ 30.00 per bag	s. 600.00

shillings 1123.60

= £112 7 0

Our Father in Heaven was also providing us with clothes, which we urgently needed.

REINFORCEMENTS

Nearly every day the Japanese Police brought missionaries from other parts to our camp. Each had his own particular story to tell. Some, like the two Irish Fathers from Kilenge, had enjoyed royal treatment. As guests of the captain of a Japanese ship, they were given every comfort: special cabins, good food and every politeness. They arrived in Vunapope in great form.

Quite different was the fate of another Irish Father from the south coast of New Britain. They put him in handcuffs and brought him to the Rabaul prison where he remained handcuffed, day and night, for two months. Later they transferred him to Vunapope camp in very bad shape.

Others, some German priests, also came. Some had been flogged to unconsciousness, while others had been put through the "third degree." The Japs had applied water torture to them. This consists of lying the victim supine on the ground while the face is covered with a piece of

calico and water is constantly poured on it. This creates a sensation of suffocation. The Japanese tried to force the priests to reveal military information, especially the whereabouts and activities of our gallant coast-watchers. They endeavoured to force others into co-operation. One Father from Nakanai was noted for his great authority amongst the natives. The Japanese wanted to use this influence for their own purposes. Father refused. More dead than alive they brought him to us.

In the Rabaul compound were 13 Marist missionaries, six Sisters, four Fathers and three Brothers, from the North Solomons, under the jurisdiction of His Lordship Bishop Wade, S.M. When the Kempri asked me if I had any objection to their being brought into our prison camp I replied: "None at all, bring them in as soon as possible." It took several months for the Kempri to get around to it. They told the Marists that they had desired to send them to Vunapope but the Bishop refused to accept them. Imagine what bitter feelings such news could have provoked had these missionaries believed it. However, by that time they had got to know the Kempri and their habitual untruthfulness.

By now it was February, 1943. The Marist missionaries had spent eight months in the Rabaul prison and had suffered severe hardships there. They had endured the added horror of frequent air raids in flimsy shelters, which afforded them no protection against the hazards of these attacks.

The Kempri in Rabaul first sent us one Canadian Father and an American Brother. Both were so debilitated that they could not stand without help. I was called to our Kempri office.

"Here, Bishop, are two more missionaries for you."

I welcomed them, hooked my arms under both and very slowly walked them to the priests' house. There everybody, struck with pity, had compassion on them. "You will soon feel better after being with us," we told them. Two of us helped them to a good shower, complete with soap and fresh towels. In the meantime we collected clothes to fit them: pants, shirts and pyjamas. We also provided handkerchiefs and towels. Then we put them under the

care of our mission doctor. A hearty meal? That perhaps was their greatest desire, but the doctor forbade it until their weak stomachs were strong enough to digest it. Gradually they were allowed decent food until in the end they could compete with us for the rations available.

Soon the other Marist missionaries were brought in. All had to undergo a similar reception. But what had happened to the once beautiful religious habits of the poor Sisters? Their former beauty was gone. They were a sad sight. But our Father in Heaven had foreseen this and He had sent a truckful of clothing material ahead of their arrival. Many of our own Sisters were skilled seamstresses and in no time the Marist nuns were resplendent in new outfits. Although they could not yet vie with the lilies of the fields, they had a fair chance of competing with Solomon in all his glory. Their saintly foundress in Heaven was surely amazed and must have wondered what had happened to her daughters; she had not intended them to dress like that. We had to apologise to her for not supplying her followers with the correct material in the right colour. But we gave them the best we had. There they were now, in brand new calico habits, correctly cut and pleated according to their rule—but artistically arrayed and imprinted with gaily coloured floral designs!

One evening, just before dark, the Kempfi brought another missionary to me. Wearing shorts and a very torn singlet, he had a small, dirty bundle under his arm. This was his most treasured possession—a piece of mosquito net. To qualify as a missionary, he had grown a full beard. I looked at him intently but could find no similarity with any of my subjects. The Kempfi introduced him to me: "This is Padre Benson, an Anglican missionary." Then I remembered that the Kempfi had asked me some months ago if I would agree to take him into our camp. I had given my consent and now here he was. I welcomed him, expressing the hope that he would feel at home amongst us.

The Kempfi told me that the Padre was not permitted to tell us about anything he had seen or experienced at Rabaul or elsewhere. To stress the foolishness of such a demand, I said: "Should he attempt to do such a thing, I

will cut his throat!" Any fears I had that he would be shocked at finding me so unsympathetic were soon dispelled... he understood my intentions perfectly.

He, too, had to face the initiation and what a blessing it proved to him: a cake of soap, a refreshing shower and a clean towel! We dumped his old rags, providing in their stead pants and shirt, socks and shoes. A pair of pyjamas was my contribution. When the doctor permitted it, he was given a decent meal. Our Padre enjoyed being in paradise... as did all the Marist Fathers, Brothers and Sisters. What a contrast between Rabaul and Vunapope! "And look how cheery they are," they said. "They even crack jokes and laugh and we Marists can now smile with them and enjoy their quips!" Padre Benson, too, very soon felt at home. A pious missionary, he had a good sense of humour and was charitable and co-operative in everything. No wonder we liked each other.

With 40 more persons to be housed, the accommodation problem was becoming acute. Actually the remedy was simple—only the basement of the boarding school was available to the Fathers and Brothers. The upper storey was forbidden to us, lest we "damage the sea with our eyes." From there we could have a fine view of the ocean and the Japs did not fear "the evil eye" but espionage.

When Major Wami turned up again I detailed our situation. I said: "You have sent us 40 more missionaries and we have no room for them. Give us the upper storey and we will be all right." "Can't be done," he retorted. "Orders from the High Command." "Yes," I said, "I know you are afraid we may 'damage the sea with our eyes,' but can't you cover it up with coconut mats or something? Or failing that, couldn't we cut off the view with blinds?" Though that proposal pleased him, he confessed to not having sufficient power to grant it. Only the High Command could grant such a request. Still he obtained the necessary permission. In no time we had all the windows fixed with blinds made from native materials and the dangerous view was cut off. Wami came to inspect it and pronounced it satisfactory. The grounds for the Japanese fears were that, being inveterate spies, we would assume the activity at sea was a preparation

for the battle at Buna in New Guinea. They reasoned that we would spoil their plans by reporting their movements in our mysterious, but so far undetected, way.

Actually, we were less interested in their military manoeuvres than the solution of our food problem and methods of living our spiritual life. These were our real concern. We had our morning and evening prayers, our meditation, Holy Mass and daily Holy Communion, recitation of the Breviary and the Rosary. We made our adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for we had our Eucharistic Lord in our chapels. On fixed days we had Sacramental Benediction, the Stations of the Cross and on Thursdays the Holy Hour. We even made our retreat. Consequently, we could afford to be cheery.

Major Wami dropped in occasionally. I had to be continually on the alert for he was always up to something. As head of their spies, he was on duty day and night. One day he confided in me that during the search the Japanese had found several diaries. But, he said, it was a strange fact that all of these finished with the day of the Japanese arrival! How could I explain that? "Well, Major," I said, "you know, we have good memories." He appreciated my reply, for he knew, better than I, how dangerous it is to keep a diary in wartime and particularly while confined to a prison camp. Ten Australian civilians at Rabaul were killed for writing up diaries which were discovered by the Japanese, perhaps by Wami himself.

Yet he had a special surprise for me. Being in charge of all German papers, he had to censor a diary written by one of the German M.S.C. Sisters. He found it unique and most interesting. A pious soul, blessed with a poetical vein, the Sister kept her diary in verse. Free from every vestige of politics, the notebook contained only the efflorescence of her beautiful soul. Wami had a grand time reading it. With a red pencil he noted his remarks in the margin: "Very good," "good," "excellent," "very good," "good." His comments were scribbled through the whole diary, which gave him a glimpse into the souls of our good Sisters.

Another day Major Wami came incognito. His finely tailored uniform and rank gone, he camouflaged himself as

a sloppy common soldier. He had a dirty cap, his shirt pulled out of his pants with a small and not too clean towel hanging out of his pocket. I don't think he expected me to recognise him. So I greeted him: "Hullo, Major, what has happened to you? Did they degrade you or something?" He just grinned and announced that he wanted to see the new set-up in the second storey. I accompanied him. He made straight for the room where the Marist Fathers and Brothers were. Entering their room without any greeting he said: "Any news?" They looked a bit startled and told him: "We have no news." That was all. His raid was a flop.

I went with him through the other rooms. There were several cases standing round. He pointed to one and asked: "Any secret papers?"

"Yes," I said, "over there in the other box. It's full of them."

"Any secret wires?" he went on.

"Oh yes," I said, "plenty, downstairs in my room."

We went there and inside I said: "Major, I know you are keen on secret wires. I've got any amount of them. My spring mattress there is full of them."

He grinned, and that was that. His expedition was definitely not a success. He had pulled the wrong switch and fused the circuit.

STICK TOBACCO INCIDENT

There was hardly a day on which I had no visitors. The barbed wire gave us one advantage—nobody could enter our camp except with the Kempi's special permission. Once I witnessed an Admiral and his officers being refused admission because curiosity alone was not sufficient to warrant a pass. Those granted entrance received a warning: "Be on your guard. The Bishop is very clever." Some officers told me of this.

Two officers called on me and declared: "We understand you have a formula for the manufacture of stick tobacco."

"Yes," I said, "we have developed a secret formula of our own."

"All right," they said, "we have come to get it from you!"

"Really! Just for the asking! Look here, there is an important business proposition involved in it. If I were to offer my secret formula to a manufacturing concern I would get many thousands of pounds for it. You don't mean to say that you expect it for nothing.

"I have to feed the 350 inmates of this prison camp and your High Command does not give us one handful of food. I am prepared to give you my formula—or rather the finished product—in exchange for a fixed quantity of food, such as rice, flour, sugar or meat." I wrote down my conditions and handed them the paper. They thanked me but remarked that they had to see their superiors first. The next day a major would come to inform me of their decision.

And the next day he came, accompanied by two officers. I was summoned to the Kempfi office. They started rather bluntly: "Here, Bishop, yesterday you promised to give us your formula for the stick tobacco and here is the major to collect it."

"Hullo," I said. "Please, not so fast! Yesterday I wrote down for you the conditions under which I would be prepared to give you the formula or rather the finished product. Did you bring my paper along?"

Arrogantly they replied: "We have no time for such things now. What matters is that you gave your word of honour yesterday. Why do you break it to-day and tell us lies?"

That was too much for me. Crash! I jumped up and banged the table, sending inkpots and pencils dancing. "Charging a Bishop with breaking his word of honour and telling you lies, ha! I am going to teach you a lesson." I sat down and ordered: "Give me a paper, please, and a pencil. Another paper for the major and a pencil for him too. Now, Major, you write down exactly what you want from me and I will give you my answer in writing. Then there will be no more talk of a Bishop breaking his word of honour or telling you lies."

The effect was astounding. The major now sprang to his feet gasping for breath, his eyes bulging, his face flushed. He gesticulated wildly with both arms and shouted: "Finish,

finish! I will have nothing to do with it any more. I will report you to the High Command!"

"All right, Major. I myself may decide to report you and your accomplices to the High Command for insulting the Bishop and for attempting to extort his secret formula." I stalked out.

However, that was not the end of it. The chief of our Kempis had not been present during that stormy session. When his subordinates reported to him on what had happened, he lost his temper. I was escorted to the office next morning: There six of the police stared at me with hatred oozing out of their faces. "Looks pretty tough!" I thought. So it proved to be.

The chief bellowed at me. "Why did you refuse to give your formula to the major?"

I answered: "I was prepared to give it to him if he accepted my conditions; but he refused. You had better blame him." According to his ideology there was no better answer than to beat me up. In sheer fury he came round the table to me bellowing hoarsely: "Take off your glasses!"

I leapt to my feet; his face was less than a foot from mine. He roared again: "Take off your glasses!"

"I refuse," I said.

A third time he thundered: "Take off your glasses!"

Again I repeated: "I REFUSE."

Seizing the initiative, I counter attacked vigorously: "Don't touch me! Don't touch me!" and a third time: "Don't touch me!" All this time our eyes were as if glued together. I tried to pierce his brain with mine. For a few minutes we remained staring at each other in silence. Then he slowly turned and went back to his seat. I said to the interpreter: "Tell him I am glad for his own sake that he did not touch me. He has saved himself a lot of trouble."

OUR SECRET LAUNDRY TRANSMITTER

Four Kempis officers from Rabaul, complete with their interpreter, came to our prison camp for another inspection. I showed them around the premises of the different communities. By now nobody in the camp took any notice of

the frequent visitors—we went our way with no bowing or scraping to visiting Japanese.

Eventually we came around to our laundry. The clothes lines were full of assorted clothes: trousers, shirts, bed-linen and other articles, nearly all of them white.

Suddenly the interpreter snapped at me saying: "We know you are passing signals to the enemy by means of these clothes." As naively as possible I pleaded guilty: "Oh, yes we do." They opened their mouths in surprise. This was admitting a crime, for which they could arrest me on the spot or even cut off my head. A few moments' silence. Then I inquired if they could read the message hanging on the lines. They confessed they could not. Again a few seconds' silence, charged by then with excitement. So I asked them if they would like me to enlighten them. "Oh, yes, please, please do it." "All right," I said, "it reads from left to right: 'Drop bombs on Kempti-tai.'"

The interpreter burst out laughing while the other two repeated insistently: "What is he saying? What is he saying?" He translated for them and all roared with laughter. A bright retort, a great joke! Still we *were* conveying signals to the American 'planes. A pair of pants hanging upside-down could be interpreted as "V for Victory." But that was not the message we transmitted. It was the colour that mattered. We purposely put white clothes on the lines in an endeavour to inform the U.S. airmen that missionaries and civilians were still at Vunapope. The army, normally, has no white clothes.

In the same strain was my advice to our Kempri. Vunapope had been transformed into a huge hospital compound. The Japanese painted big red crosses on all the roofs. Our local Kempri had intended putting a red cross on their roof also, but I warned them against the plan.

"I know of a much more appropriate sign for the Kempri."

"Yes? What do you suggest?"

"Well," I said, "paint a big arrow pointing to the words: 'Drop bombs here!' We would even put it up for you!"

Great joke again. "Did you hear what the Bishop suggested?" The suggestion translated, all roared with mirth.

One day our Kempfi guard introduced a major to me.

"You know, he is interested in your printing press," he said.

"Oh, is he?"

After our imprisonment, the printing shop had been turned into quarters for our M.S.C. Sisters. It was their dormitory and everything else as well. The press itself, a modern, fully automatic model made in Germany, was covered with a large canvas. Before the invasion we used to print books in 32 different native languages. Now it was standing there unused among the Sisters' beds.

The major ordered the canvas to be removed. He seemed to be a printing expert and when he saw a good thing he knew it. He fell in love with that press at first sight. I half-heartedly answered a number of questions. To the final query about the weight of the press, I replied: "Major, don't worry about the weight. Here it is and here it will stay. You will never remove it from here." He gave me a poisonous glance, saying: "We will show you."

Next day I was called to the Kempfi office. There the whole contingent was dressed up in full uniform, complete with Samurai swords and revolvers. Their ruse was calculated to impress or intimidate me by their might. "Hmmm," I thought, "they are up to something again." And they were.

Dropping all pretence at Japanese courtesy, they bluntly demanded: "We want your printing press and we have summoned you here to say yes or no."

"Hullo," I said, "drive slowly please. I can't give you yes or no."

"Why?" they questioned.

"Because I want to think it over."

"What! Think it over?"

"Yes," I said.

"How long does it take to think it over?"

"Well," I said, "that depends on the speed at which I am thinking and the importance of the matter."

"How long will it take you then?" they insisted.

"Taking into consideration that this concerns an up-to-date German printing press, I dare say it will take me

some three hours. At 2 p.m. I will give you my answer in writing."

"Very well," they consented.

I went home, assembled my Council and talked it over. We soon agreed on the policy to be pursued. I typed a letter addressed, however, to the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Forces and not to the chief of the Kempri at Vunapope. That was the key to the whole problem. At 2 p.m. sharp I handed them the letter, which I left unsealed. The second-in-command, an officer named Soga, received it and opened it immediately. He got a terrific shock. Although he could not understand English, he could read his name. And there it was in the first sentence. It is definitely an unpleasant experience for any subordinate Kempri to see his name mentioned in a report to the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Forces, especially if his conscience is not too easy.

Soga shouted at the top of his voice for the interpreter. Both got busy translating the message. I sat there smoking my cigar, enjoying the world in general and this situation in particular.

In my letter I had stated that the Kempri Officer Soga, on orders from the High Command, had asked for our printing press. I would be prepared to lend it under the following conditions:

- (a) A receipt signed by the High Command for the loan.
- (b) Guarantee for good treatment during the period of use.
- (c) An assurance that it would be returned to the mission after the cessation of hostilities.
- (d) As payment, we requested food supplies for our 350 people in Vunapope Prison Camp, the amount of these provisions to be agreed upon before the press was handed over.

It was signed by me and the Bishop's seal was attached.

After they had finished the translation I asked them if my answer was satisfactory. They replied that it was very good indeed and that they would despatch it immediately to the Commander-in-Chief.



I am certain my letter never reached the High Command, for I never again heard a word about it. Anyhow, it served its purpose perfectly.

PERMISSION TO BUILD A HOUSE

An officer called on me, very politely seeking authority to construct a house. It seemed strange that an officer of the Imperial Army request permission from an imprisoned Bishop to build a house. And it seemed even more strange in view of the fact that the army had already erected any amount of houses without my consent and even without my knowledge. Or did the Japanese suddenly remember what I had told them a year and a half ago that Vunapope did not belong to Great Nippon but to the Vatican and that I was its representative? At any rate, I inquired:

"What house?"

"Well, just a house."

"And where?"

"Beyond the Matanatava Creek in your mission plantation."

Being confined behind barbed wire, I could not check up on them and I could not stop them anyway, so I gave the officer the permission.

Next day two captains visited me and, saluting smartly, inquired if, on the previous day, the officer had sought permission to build that house. I confirmed the report. They thanked me profusely, bowed deeply and left.

I never dreamt what my assent would bring and none

of us guessed at its implications until we saw the feat accomplished. The result was simply unbelievable.

The Japanese cut down 350 acres of bearing coconut trees. They bulldozed and graded the place, levelling it into a huge aerodrome. In addition, they built a host of workshops for the assembling and maintenance of more than 100 aircraft. Some "house" that! I unknowingly gave my permission but decidedly not my blessing. From the beginning it was a doomed "house" and a special curse seemed to be attached to it. The Japs shipped their planes in parts and assembled them near the airfield. They made their test flights around and over Vunapope, flying so low that they seemed to tear off the roofs of our houses. They practised dive-bombing with small sand bags. Everything seemed to go according to plan. The pilots' ardent desire was to have "a go" at the enemy.

The Americans kept a vigilant eye on them. Every day at noon a United States reconnaissance 'plane circled undisturbed over the new aerodrome and Vunapope; apparently it was too high to be attacked by fighters. The Japanese seemed to ignore it completely. The Americans did not in the least disturb them in their work there. The Japanese boasted that the Allies would never dare to attack them.

Then on a fine sunny morning, at about 9 o'clock, Vunapope shook with terrific explosions. We rushed from our houses to see what was happening. Soon everybody was pointing to a massive black cloud of smoke two miles east of our prison. There had been no air-raid alarm; nobody noticed the American 'planes coming; now they were swiftly disappearing low down over the sea.

The "house" the Japanese had built, doomed from the outset, had been bombed and was gone. The curse had struck in a matter of seconds.

Those Japanese 'planes had been planned to bring destruction to Australians and Americans. But divine Providence had assigned them to be of benefit to our destroyed mission. After they had lain unassembled for some ten years on our property, we built a melting furnace nearby. A mission Brother and a team of natives hacked the

'planes into pieces, small enough to fit in the furnace from which they came as shining ingots of aluminium that fetched a good price in London. Over one hundred planes were converted in this way.

After the destruction of the aerodrome on our lands, all the others met a similar fate. The Americans developed very effective tactics. It was a matter of a few minutes. About 500 dive bombers, escorted by a swarm of fighters, swooped on the 'dromes and installations and blasted everything. Around Rabaul and Kokopo the Japanese had powerful anti-aircraft protection, but our 'planes always seemed to take them by surprise. Soon the skies were free of Japanese.

THE BISHOP'S FEAST

In normal years, 3rd July, the feast of St. Leo, the patron saint of the Bishop, meant a great family feast for all missionaries under my jurisdiction. In 1943, the second year of our internment, the Fathers decided—since many of the missionaries were imprisoned with me—to celebrate the Bishop's feast day in grand style to show the Japanese what the Bishop meant to his subjects.

Our musician "par excellence" was Rev. Father J. Reischl, M.S.C. Blessed with an extraordinary musical talent, he composed for the occasion music for Psalm 46: "Clap your hands, all you nations, in applause; acclaim your God with cries of rejoicing.

"... God reigns over the heathen, God sits enthroned in holiness . . . a God so high, He has all earth's princes for His vassals."

This Psalm reflected our sentiments exactly and we definitely thought of our heathens and their deified little Emperor.

The performance was grandiose. Father Reischl himself conducted. Seldom would a conductor have a chance to direct a choir drawn from so many nationalities, races and colours: white, black, brown, yellow and mixed were represented. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, girls and boys formed the choir. Crystal clear sopranos, altos, tenors and heavy basses harmonised perfectly. A performance in Sydney

Town Hall would have brought them a tremendous applause. At Vunapope it conveyed to the Kempis some idea of the high culture and musical standard of their prisoners.

This concert was given the evening before my feast. Several other excellent items were on the programme. As is customary on such occasions, a senior priest delivered an address to the Bishop, who answered appropriately.

Next morning we offered Pontifical High Mass, accompanied by singing of high standard.

A week or so before my feast, I went to the Kempis office and explained to our gaolers the significance of the forthcoming celebration. I pointed out the Bishop is not only "boss" of all the missionaries but he is also their spiritual father. "They will honour me with a beautiful concert, but I consider it my duty to make my feast most enjoyable for everybody in the camp. Your Emperor gives his soldiers a special issue of good food and drink. I would like to do the same for my spiritual children but I have nothing at all. Could you help me?"

They liked the idea and from the start were sympathetic. "All right, Bishop, how can we help you?"

"As you realise," I said, "the camp consists of a very mixed community, having a variety of tastes. Let's take the Fathers and Brothers first. They, for instance, would appreciate some cigarettes."

"All right, How much per person?"

"Well, perhaps a pack of twenty."

"Good! We'll fix that for you. What else?"

"The Fathers and Brothers would also like to drink my health. If they do it with water it may be dangerous."

"What! Dangerous! Why?" they questioned.

"By now," I said, "you probably know that I have an iron constitution. Doctors warn me that it is dangerous to pour water into it. You know it may get rusty and even on occasions like this, if others drink my health with water, it may be affected."

They roared with laughter.

"Did you hear that one?" they asked one another. "We have to save the Bishop from such a calamity." Turning to me they said: "What is your suggestion?"

"Well," I said, "a sufficient quantity of beer and Saki (rice wine) would be highly appreciated."

"Yes," they said, "we understand perfectly and we will help you with the Saki. About the beer we are not so sure. We will contact the Minsebu; they are in charge of civilians. We hope they will co-operate."

They did.

"Now for the Sisters. They, of course, have more tender tastes; beer and Saki may not be appreciated by them. I dare say they would like a few cases of soft drinks and perhaps some sweets."

"All right. We will see to that."

"And then there are the girls and boys; I am sure they would like some lollies and cakes."

"Sorry, Bishop, we can't supply lollies, but couldn't we supply a few bags of sugar and flour?"

"Good," I said, "the Sisters will be delighted to make all the sweets and cakes for them."

We got everything they promised: even more than I had dared to ask or to hope for. I still cherish happy memories of the fine co-operation and goodwill the Kempri showed on that occasion. I had to pay for all the items, but that was a pleasant duty—and no bother, as I had still a lot of occupation notes left.

There was just one small fly in the ointment. I had told the Kempri to invite some Jap officers and doctors from the hospital for the concert. A number promised to come. A few minutes before the concert, however, the police announced that none of the officers would come, only Kempri themselves. Later I learned the reason for this sudden change of mind. One bright fellow came up with the idea that the whole celebration was a fake, camouflage for quite a different thing. For 4th July is American Independence Day and he decided we were celebrating this under guise of the Bishop's feast. Actually, we were not disappointed at their absence. After all, it was our family feast.

"THIS IS CHURCH PROPERTY, ISN'T IT?"

A fine car drove up near my door one day and three captains alighted. I offered them cigars, which they

accepted. The Japanese had nothing important to discuss; they had come just for a chat with the Bishop.

Now, we have an old Brother John, our baker, who in spite of his age feels an "avid urge for scientific exploration." Some call it curiosity. Brother John saw the car there unattended with a trunk in it. He longed to know what was in that trunk. He opened it and got such a shock that he nearly fell on his back. Still shaking, he came near the house and signalled me to come out. I went out, the three captains apparently taking no notice of my exit.

Brother John reported what he had discovered. I said: "All right, Brother, say nothing and keep near by." I resumed my talk about tapioca, sweet potatoes and what not. I gave the officers the benefit of the doubt, presuming that they had come to hand these church goods—for that was what the trunk contained—over to me. I even ordered a cup of tea and some cakes from the Sisters for them. We enjoyed both and they thanked me very politely. But when they wanted to say good-bye, I said: "Would you gentlemen like some oranges to take with you?"

"Sure, only too delighted to accept your kind offer."

I called Brother John and said to him: "Please, Brother John, make a basket of oranges ready for the captains."

By this time my behaviour was a greater mystery to the good Brother than the contents of the car. "Imagine," he thought, "the Bishop knows these fellows have looted our church and stolen our most precious and sacred church vessels . . . yet he rewards them with tea and cake, and to top it all, with a basket of fruit! There must be something wrong with our Bishop."

We talked a while longer until the Brother returned with the oranges. Solemnly I escorted them to the car, where I took a position near the trunk. Brother John wanted to put the basket in the front of the car. But I said: "Brother, you had better put it here into the trunk." He opened it. Now I pretended to get a shock, but recovered with remarkable speed. I took the monstrance out of the trunk, held it up and said: "Look, this is Church property, isn't it? Brother John, take it." Next I took the beautiful altar cross: "This is Church property, isn't it? Brother, take it."

Then came four large brass candlesticks: "These are Church property aren't they? Brother, take them!"

"All right, Brother, now put the basket of oranges in here, please." During this performance the three captains stood as if rooted to the ground, their mouths open, their eyes popping out. In fact, they did not trust their own eyes. We alleviated this terrific suspense by making a quick job of it. When Brother closed the trunk the three officers jumped into the car, started it, and drove off in a flash. I am pretty sure that from then on they credited me with some more mysterious powers, such as seeing through closed doors and compartments. I shall never forget their surprise which defies description. I am even inclined to believe their amazement surpassed that of Isaac when his elder son turned up for the paternal blessing, after the elderly Patriarch had already bestowed it on the younger one.

THE FURNITURE VAN OR "GIVE ME A SWORD!"

One of our aged missionaries, Father Zwinge, was parish priest of Takabur, some 15 miles from Vunapope. He was also the spiritual director of the native Sisters and their novices. Even after most of his fellow missionaries had been brought to our prison camp he still held his position. He wisely anticipated that this would not be for long. Disliking the prospect of leaving his and the Sisters' furniture to the soldiers, he had the natives build, to his instructions, a bush house in a secluded spot in the jungle. All the furniture was moved there: tables, desks, presses, wardrobes, chairs, sewing machines and other things. Father Zwinge locked the door and kept the key, optimistically hoping that the Japanese would not find the house.

However, the soldiers, nosing about and scrounging everywhere, only too soon discovered that hidden treasure. They must have belonged to the Kempis. Anyway, the Kempis loaded all the furniture on to a big truck and brought it in to Vunapope.

I happened to be standing near our prison gate and saw it coming in. At first glance I recognised the furniture

THIS CROWD BEATS US ALL



as mission property. "Hullo!" I greeted the police, "it's very kind of you to rescue our furniture. We will open the gate for you; please bring it in here." But my invitation did not meet with a friendly reception. Very harshly they told me that furniture had nothing to do with me. It was stolen property, confiscated by the Kempri and was theirs now. My protests were of no avail. It was nearly dark by then and they left the loaded truck in their courtyard overnight.

Next morning I was called to the Kempri office. The member in command kept right out of proceedings and commissioned his second in charge, aided by the interpreter, to do the work. Both repeated their claim: stolen property confiscated by Kempri becomes their property.

I contended that if it were stolen property it was stolen from the mission. "We can prove that we are the lawful owners," I said. "Restore it to us. Get the thieves and punish them according to your laws."

Simple, wasn't it? Yet for a whole hour we didn't make the slightest progress. I stuck to my guns and they would not give in.

I noticed they were getting nervous. The strain boiled to exploding point. It was time for me to create an anti-climax.

Out of context, I demanded: "If things are like that, give me a sword, please!" There were several hanging on the wall. A hand-grenade flung under their noses couldn't have had a better effect. Completely off balance, they asked:

"What do you want a sword for? Do you want to commit harikiri?"

"Oh, no, far from it," I said. "I want to cut your throats, honourable gentlemen!" I laughed and they laughed with me. My diversion worked.

"Now," I said, "we had better talk sense. What articles exactly do you want out of all the furniture?"

"Ah, yes, Bishop, that's it," said one. "We badly need a sewing machine. Would you give it to us?"

"All right," I said, "you can have it; that is, I will lend it to you. You give me an official receipt, duly stamped and

signed and after the cessation of hostilities you will return the sewing machine to me."

"Very good, Bishop, and the rest of the furniture is yours!" Happiness on both sides. The big gates opened. The furniture van moved in in triumph. Old Father Zwinge and the Sisters rejoiced that the Japanese had brought their hidden treasure back to them in such grand style.

PREPARATION FOR THE INVASION OF AUSTRALIA

When the Japanese ordered us to put blinds on our windows to shut out the view of the sea, it did not take much guessing to conclude that there was some activity on the water they did not want us to witness.

There were preparations afoot for something big. Aircraft carriers, destroyers, transports, landing barges were being lined up. The guards even told us that they were going to cross New Guinea, take Port Moresby and land in Darwin.

The funny part of it was that officers came to get my advice on these strategical movements. Everybody knows that good advice is dear, but for once I made it cheap for them.

They asked me for detailed information about Darwin. I strongly advised them: "Don't go there."

"Why?"

"Well," I said, "I have never been there myself, but based on secret and strictly confidential information, Darwin consists mainly of big heaps of empty beer bottles and you have to consider the psychological effect it may have on your troops. No, don't go there. It is too bad." I like to think that they took my advice, for they never landed there!

"But 'Sidony' " (that is what they called Sydney), I said, "is quite a different proposition. I am sure it will appeal to you. There are plenty of motor cars—even more than in Rabaul; I dare say enough to allow four soldiers to one car. And there is plenty of bully-beef and canned fish and sugar, and I know positively there is plenty of beer, just as good as your Japanese Kerrin beer. Round 'Sidony' there are plenty of cattle and pigs and fowls and ducks; even more than here at Vunapope. You may go hunting and shooting to your heart's desire. Of course there are dark

spots in this otherwise bright picture. They grow barley in Australia and that may spoil the taste of your rice."

They were quite enthusiastic about the grand prospects. I can't understand why they did not go there: I presume something must have interfered with their plans.

Oh, yes, they had first to traverse the New Guinea mainland before getting to Port Moresby and Australia.

Prisoners in the Lord, we witnessed all the preparations for the invasion of Australia.

Enormous supplies of rice, canned meat, fish, pickled vegetables in wooden casks, huge ammunition dumps, tanks, guns, anti-aircraft guns, many thousands of horses and sulkeys were all hidden in the plantations around Rabaul and Vunapope and on the strategical points of New Britain and New Guinea. Rabaul, with the Commander-in-Chief in residence there, was the hub of all these activities.

Later some officers came and asked my advice on how to cross New Guinea to get to Port Moresby. The disaster of the Coral Sea Battle had spoiled the Japanese appetite for attempting to take Port Moresby by sea. Now they wanted to try it by land. I warned them against it, saying it would be too difficult. The physical exertion and strain would be beyond human endurance.

"Isn't there anybody who has written a book on 'How to Win a Battle in Comfort'? That would be just to the point.

"The nearest approach to it," I continued, "would be to drop a sufficient number of paratroops on the different aerodromes of Port Moresby, capture these and make them usable for your planes. In that way you will secure access by sea for your ships and then you will be established in comfort."

However, they preferred it the hard way.

Next they insisted that I should give them information about all the paths and trails leading across New Guinea to Port Moresby. I told them: "I have not the slightest idea, as I have never been there." Then they inquired if any members of our mission would know about any. "As far as I know, there is only one Father who has been to New Guinea. That was on the occasion of the consecration of

the new cathedral at Alexishaven," I told them, "and it is hardly likely that he then acquired any knowledge of the trails to Port Moresby." They promptly interviewed the priest, naturally without result.

By now the Japanese were getting suspicious. It was impossible, they calculated, that so many missionaries should be ignorant of the paths leading to Port Moresby. They had asked Fathers, Brothers and Sisters without success. Their conclusion was: "They know, but they are hiding it from us. We will get it out of them."

In came a major with a ream of writing paper. I presumed that he was one of a sort of Japanese brains trust. Every member of the mission, even the Sisters, was handed a sheet of paper with the request to write something like an autobiography, with special reference to all the places they had ever visited, preferably in New Guinea. The result was very disappointing for him. That brainwave was a "flop." On top of it I told him that we missionaries resented being treated like idiots.

In New Britain their Intelligence officers had mapped even the smallest native paths and they used them when invading Rabaul. But in New Guinea they seemed to have neglected that important work.

Nevertheless, they decided to cross New Guinea. We saw part of the immediate preparations. Our carpentry shop was a busy place. Japanese carpenters turned out thousands of carrier frames. Something like a wooden rucksack, the device was held on the back by two canvas straps over the shoulders. Apparently they were intended for native carriers.

Recruitment of these was no problem for the Japanese. They unexpectedly surrounded villages and plantation houses. All able-bodied men were forced on trucks and driven at full speed to Rabaul. Some managed to jump off, but the majority were put on transport ships and taken to New Guinea.

When we heard of their efficient method of obtaining carriers, we wished them good luck. Knowing our natives, we were sure it would not work. We were right.

The Japanese used to tell the natives, from the time of

their landing, that they had come to liberate them from European slavery and exploitation. This forced recruiting of carriers was for the natives a very clear demonstration of what the invaders really meant.

When they were landed in New Guinea near Buna and put on the Kokoda Trail, the natives cheerfully shouldered their heavy burdens, consisting of ammunition and provisions. The Japanese were rather pleased with their conduct and performance. The pleasure didn't last long.

All natives, from school age on, are experts in vanishing before your very eyes. They may be hiding ten feet away, but, for you, they are invisible. The native carriers were confident that their art would solve their problem. For them it was a question of life or death and of liberty or slavery.

They marched in single file, always on the lookout for the right spot and the right moment. If both coincided, they simply vanished. When the escorting soldiers raised the alarm and tried to find or catch them, ten or more others deserted also. In due time nearly all of them had disappeared.

Natives in jungles need no magnetic compass. Nature has given them a sense of direction. All the escapees safely arrived on the other side and immediately offered their services to the Australian army. They supplied the Australian Intelligence Officers with valuable information concerning troop concentrations on the New Guinea Coast and at Rabaul; even giving news of the missionaries at Vunapope.

The Japanese army tackled the crossing of New Guinea with enormous effort and temerity and nearly succeeded—only a few miles from Port Moresby they were forced to halt. The Australian troops counter-attacked and gallantly drove them back over the Kokoda Trail to Buna. There the Americans waited for them and finished off nearly all of them. A few of our old acquaintances escaped by Japanese submarines. They came to Vunapope to tell us the story—and a gruesome story it was. They dropped all pretence and told us what had really happened. Among the survivors

was Lieutenant Okamoto, who at the time of the invasion was so kind to our Sisters in Tavuilu.

This failure to capture Port Moresby, the subsequent retreat over the Kokoda Trail and the Battle of Buna extinguished all Japanese dreams and hopes of enjoying all the marvels of "Sidony." For Australia it meant salvation from Japanese occupation.

NEWS AGENCY

According to the news specially fabricated to lift the morale of the Japanese soldiers, they took Port Moresby several times. Now it was aerodrome No. 7, then aerodrome No. 2. A few days later it was No. 5.

Port Darwin, too, was conquered intermittently, only the people there did not notice it.

It was strictly forbidden to give us any reports. In the very first stages of the Pacific War, when the invaders were victorious, they even got Japanese newspapers printed in English for us. Suddenly this practice stopped. Small events, like the Japanese midget submarines entering Sydney Harbour, were related to us with great élan. They told us, too, that American 'planes bombed Tokyo. That was a crime. They would retaliate in the future by executing all American or Allied airmen who fell into their hands. Quite a number were executed at Rabaul.

About that time, two Japanese air force officers called on me, inquiring what I thought of the Japanese air force. I answered their question, giving it a slight twist: "I don't know what your fighting morals are nor how you treat your enemies who crash or fall into your hands, but I know the treatment enemy airmen got from the English and German alike during the First World War. When a famous German air ace was shot down and killed by an English opponent, British 'planes returned to the spot next day to pay tribute to their fallen enemy by dropping wreaths on the spot, if it happened to be on the enemy side. If it happened on their own front, they gave him burial with full military honours.

"If a crashed airman fell into their hands alive, they escorted him to the air force mess, gave him a decent meal,

had a few drinks with him. Finally, they shook hands with him and dismissed him to his internment camp."

The two Japanese airmen listened to me like enchanted school boys hearing a fairy tale. I spared them by not asking how they honoured their enemy comrades. Others had already told me that they executed them. I added only: "That is the way civilised enemies treat each other." There were no more questions.

By their blackout of news they succeeded in keeping us in complete ignorance of the big events of the war, especially in the Pacific. We knew nothing about MacArthur's ingenious plan, nothing about the Midway Operation or those of Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Okinawa and Tokyo Bay. Even operations in places not so far from us, such as the Milne Bay Battle, the Bismarck Sea Battle, the recapture of Manus and all the actions in New Guinea and Solomon Islands were hidden from us.

They startled us one day by telling us that a great battle had been fought at Torokina in the North Solomons. "All the American warships were almost destroyed." It was a great victory for the Japanese—well, yes, almost. But the bad Americans spoiled the game by successfully landing at Torokina establishing a powerful base and laying out a number of aerodromes, later bombing Rabaul from there.

We starved for news more than food. We accepted the suppression of news only under protest. It was imposed on us by the order of the High Command. Yet we all tried to get scraps of information from the Japanese soldiers or even from the Indian prisoners of war. Soon we discovered why the High Command remained silent. Reports handed to the Japanese soldiers were so ridiculous that they did not dare pass them on to us.

Anyhow, I developed a private news agency. Most of my visitors were officers, who knew what was going on in the world. I made it a practice to tap all of them, especially the navy officers who spoke English. If I got identical details from three independent sources, the information was most probably correct. In that way we at least got the headlines of events in Europe, but never in the Pacific or near New Britain.

The Kempri warned my visitors to tell me nothing. They knew that I was pumping them. So I openly demanded news from the Kempri. They retaliated by telling me whales of lies. I had a hard job swallowing all without betraying that I knew better.

Sometimes I had a chance to talk to the interpreter used by the Commander-in-Chief himself. He was American born. Consequently his English was faultless and he did not seem as biased as the others. He answered my questions frankly. I wanted to know what the opinion was "high up," concerning the possibility of an American landing in Rabaul. This was a very vital matter to us all. He said: "Nobody knows but God and the American High Command. In the Japanese High Command opinions are divided. Some senior officers believe it may happen in the near future, others think it not very likely. Anyhow, they are preparing for such an eventuality. They realise that they are bottled up here in New Britain; there is no escape by land, sea or air. If the Americans attack by an overwhelming force there is only one thing to do: to fight to the last man. Surrender is out of the question. Some officers say they will run into the machine-gun fire and get killed in battle. Others prefer harikiri." That was the gloomy picture he painted.

I presume prison camps are all fertile ground for rumours. Ours was no exception. Every bit of information acquired through the barbed wire was eagerly discussed. Our gifts of imagination and combination did the rest. So it happened that MacArthur could not keep up with us. In fact, we were two years ahead of him. It is a pity he did not consult us, we certainly could have helped him. For instance, we had Japan conquered before he even thought of it. To make the victory complete and effective he had landed two million Chinese there. Of course we had the whole of New Guinea recaptured and the Solomon Islands, too. We landed the Americans at Toriu, 75 miles away, and at Duke of York Islands, 25 miles from Rabaul.

In 1944 and 1945 the Allied 'planes dropped leaflets printed in Pidgin English for the information and encouragement of the natives. What a disappointment! The leaflets

told us that the Japanese still occupied part of New Guinea and the greater part of the Solomons. Some of us declared that these leaflets must have been one or two years old! Though they were new, our trouble was that MacArthur could not keep up with our strategy.

PLAN TO DESTROY US BY MALARIA

The plan to destroy us by starvation had been a complete failure. During the years 1942-43 and half of '44 we distributed three square meals to 350 people daily. We did not live in luxury but we continued to look well and were by no means starved.

Providence gave me a hint that an alternative or supplementary plan was contemplated to exterminate us by malaria—or rather by the lack of anti-malarial drugs.

A young interpreter called on me for a yarn. He had nothing to do with us officially. Not far from us, perhaps a mile from Vunapope, was another prison camp with which we had no contact. In it there were 96 British officers brought from Singapore as prisoners of war.

The interpreter told me indignantly that these men were constantly pestering him with demands for quinine or atabrin.

"But they will never get any," he declared.

I objected: "You have to give them these most necessary medicines. It is according to international law."

"Pah," he laughed, "there is no international law for us. I told them about my own experiences in a British prison camp. I had been very badly treated; consequently they have no right to demand anything, surely not such luxuries as quinine."

"Have you ever been prisoner of war in a British prison camp?" I wondered, for he looked like a cheeky "greenhorn" in his twenties.

"Oh, no," he admitted, "I just told them that story to keep them quiet and stop their requests."

"Oh, I see."

And I really saw the diabolical plan in action.

This conversation was a warning from Heaven. Had they made similar plans to exterminate us? I could easily

find out by making an application to the High Command for quinine. I requested a quantity large enough to supply the whole camp. Soon I received the reply: "We have no quinine for you." That made the situation clear for us. From now on we knew quinine and atebrin would be our life-line, a matter of survival or death for the 350 of us.

The unfortunate British officers died like flies. Miserable and underfed they were escorted to work, at a place near our gardens where the Brothers were imprisoned. Any intercourse between the two groups was strictly forbidden. However, the two Brothers officially requested permission to supply some meat to the English prisoners, as at that time we still had some cows left. The Japanese bluntly refused. Nevertheless, the Brothers insisted and asked if they could provide the officers with some bones to cook themselves a good soup. "Bones! All right, give them some bones." The Brothers made sure there was sufficient meat left on the bones.

Then tobacco. The poor fellows were craving for a smoke, but the Japanese denied them tobacco. Although we did not get it either, we grew our own and rolled our own cigars. The Brothers put bundles of these on the path they knew the officers followed on their way to their camp. Gratefully, they picked them up.

The English prisoners appreciated the kindness of the mission Brothers the more as they knew they were not Britishers, but Germans, their official enemies.

Of the 96 prisoners, 80 died in their camp near us. The 16 survivors were transferred to Watom Island, near Rabaul. After the armistice they had disappeared. The Japanese had killed them to eliminate all evidence of their harsh treatment.

When still near our camp, the prisoners requested that Dr. Schuy be called in to see them. The Japanese graciously agreed. Our mission doctor gladly assented to give them any help he possibly could. Japanese soldiers escorted him to the British camp. He wanted to enter. "Oh, no," they said, "you stay near the barbed wire, you can look from here into the camp and 'see' the prisoners. You can't talk to them nor can you examine them." That would make an impressive

report in the papers: "On special request of the British prisoners, a German doctor was called in to see them."

Although this behaviour of the Japanese authorities seems cruel and strange to us, it was consistent with their point of view. If these prisoners were to be exterminated by malaria, of what use would it be to send Japanese or German doctors to treat them? This would only spoil the scheme.

With a surety based on these experiences, we concluded that that very plan embraced us too. We started immediately to counteract it.

THE BATTLE FOR QUININE

Up till then we had not worried much about quinine. Our supply enabled all European members of the camp to take 15 grains prophylactically every week. Natives in New Britain have a certain degree of immunity to malaria and that safeguard is unnecessary for the islanders. In case of a heavy attack, a small dose of quinine cures them.

We had not been concerned about our anti-malarial drugs because we were unaware of the diabolical extermination plan. Besides, we always hoped the Americans would come and liberate us soon.

But now we arranged a rigorous stocktaking of our quinine and atebrin supplies, consequently deciding on the greatest economy. On the advice of our doctor we ceased to take quinine prophylactically, but waited for an attack of malaria. Then the doctor prescribed an appropriate dose to cure it. Most of us, myself included, suffered periodical attacks. However, even thrifty use of our stock would not solve the fever problem. It was imperative to get new supplies.

While the priests, Brothers, Sisters and myself did our best to procure that life-saving drug, the real champions were the Blue Sisters.

They occupied the former seminary. About ten yards away was a large, but temporary hospital building for the Japanese patients. A barbed wire fence separated both houses. Communication was strictly prohibited.

The Japanese soldiers sat there in the shade of their house the whole day, observing the activities of the nuns.

They saw them rise at 5.30. Morning prayers, meditation, Mass and Holy Communion followed. After thanksgiving, a scant breakfast. The Japs soon learnt the daily routine. The Sisters next started their household chores; some prepared the food, others cooked it. A good number were occupied with washing and mending our socks, pants and shirts—a task that appealed to them most of all. Some bright sparks among the guards got the idea that the good Sisters could do it for them too. They showed them their torn shirts and pants and showed by sign language that they wanted them mended. The Sisters understood perfectly. They in turn indicated to the Japs that they needed quinine. "Yes, yes," answered the soldiers, "just wait a while." Soon a great traffic developed through the barbed wire. Small bottles, tins and paper bags, full of the precious quinine, were handed to the Sisters. Socks, pants and shirts came in and returned nicely mended. So it went on for over a year until we were bombed out. The High Command had not the slightest inkling as to how we thwarted their plan and supplied the whole camp with quinine. It is only fair, too, to give credit to the Japanese soldiers for their blameless behaviour towards our Sisters.

Of course, we could not expect the soldiers to appreciate their true religious status. But they expressed their respect by addressing the good Sisters as "holy widows," or as some officers did, "holy ladies." Not bad, really.

Once I was approached by the supply officers and asked if we could provide bananas for the hospital. I agreed on condition that they paid for them in quinine. It worked, and we got our eagerly hoarded drug.

As previously mentioned, the Kempis had informed me that their duty was not to feed us but to prevent us from escaping. Another obligation was included: to prevent us from getting any medicines into the camp. But even the Kempis were human. Their chief asked me once if I could procure two large pieces of cardboard for him.

"Yes," I said, "I can do it, but you know I badly want some quinine or atabrin."

"All right," he said, "this week a hospital ship is due.

A friend of mine is on board, from him I will get some atebtrin for you."

I got two bottles of atebtrin, which is most valuable in cases where quinine has no effect, especially in the case of black-water fever.

I thanked him but asked: "Shall I enter it into my records?" Excitedly he replied: "No, no, secret, secret!" That was enough for me.

Dr. Schuy also had some luck in obtaining malarial drugs from one of his Japanese colleagues by means, too, that were strictly private and confidential.

So it went on and on through the years 1942-43-44-45. We simply refused to die from malaria.

CHRISTIAN JAPANESE

People often ask if we ever met Catholics or other Christians among the Japanese. While it is certain there were Christians among them, it seemed to be dangerous or risky to profess their Christianity. Discrimination and mistrust would have resulted. One fact we noticed was that the behaviour of Japanese officers—even if they were not Christians themselves but had somebody in their families or among their relatives who was a Christian, though not necessarily a Catholic—was much friendlier and more human towards us.

One evening at 8 p.m. when it was already dark, a young Japanese soldier introduced himself to me in quite good English. He told me that he was a seminarian and student of theology. He wanted to go to Confession. Afterwards he inquired if there would be a chance to go to Mass and Holy Communion. I informed him that a number of priests said Mass every morning in the different communities.

He came to me secretly through the barbed wire and continued to do so every morning to attend Mass. Soon he brought a friend of his, a Catholic also, and both received Holy Communion every day until they were posted elsewhere.

Two of the Japanese nurses from the hospital also attended Mass for quite a time. They did not dare to come into our camp. The chapel of our quinine-procuring Sisters

mentioned before, was quite near the barricades. Standing there, they could easily see the priest and hear Mass. A friendly smile and a wave of the hand was all the conversation they had with the Sisters.

One Minsebu officer presented himself as a Catholic. He was very friendly and said he was going to Tokyo and would return after a few months. He offered to take letters to Japan. That was dangerous. It could even be a trap for me, as we were forbidden to write any letters. Even if I could trust him, it could have had unpleasant consequences for both of us in the event of the letters being discovered.

As the risk was too great, I declined, but instead, asked him to take a verbal message to the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Marella, in Tokyo. He promised to do that.

In due time he returned from Tokyo. He brought me a dictionary—Japanese-German—donated by a Japanese lady. For the Sisters he had some small presents, wrapped, in true Japanese style, in silk bundles. I was anxious to know if he had forwarded my message to the Apostolic Delegate. But the Kempis never left him alone with me for a single moment and he could not disclose anything to me in their presence. I did not meet him again.

Once two Buddhist priests were sent to me by the High Command to find out how to convert the natives to Buddhism. "Well," I explained, "you may have a chance, but of course you will have to overcome some difficulties. There are 95 different languages on New Britain, New Ireland and Manus. First you learn these languages, then you will be able to explain properly your Buddhist religion to the islanders. They in turn will then decide for themselves if they want to accept your religion or remain Christians. The greatest majority are Christians." Neither did I hear from them again nor did I hear of any attempt to convert our natives.

JAPANESE FOOD PROBLEM

Time went on and on. The Japanese had lost their chances of capturing Port Moresby and of invading Australia. Their air force had been swept from the skies and their navy was rotting in pieces on the bottom of Rabaul

Harbour. In addition the Americans had landed on the most western point of New Britain and had established a powerful base at Cape Gloucester. The Japanese were properly bottled up and they realised it. The American 'planes saw to it that no more supplies could be brought in.

Possibly the Japanese High Command remembered the mission prisoners. We still fed 350 persons per day and did not look the worse for it.

An order was then issued by the High Command that every member of the Japanese forces, from the Commander-in-Chief down to the Kempis and nurses, had to cultivate a specified area of land and plant it according to plan.

In actual fact, I did not see the Commander-in-Chief and his staff busily growing beans and tomatoes. They had selected for themselves a wonderful place in the mountains overlooking Rabaul, where never a bomb fell. In these peaceful surroundings they cultivated a garden, having practically nothing to do and just waiting for the Americans to move.

All the other soldiers in our neighbourhood worked like beavers. They certainly were not lazy. Their up-bringing in Japan made them good gardeners, for there every tiny spot is cultivated and planted.

Our Kempis explained to me that they had also been ordered to make a garden sufficient for their needs and they asked permission to lay it out near their house, but on our prison ground. Our camp area was strictly defined and guaranteed to us by the High Command, therefore they humbly asked my consent. I made no fuss and cheerfully granted their request.

It was a delight to see the Chief of Police and his men discarding their Samurai swords and revolvers and exchanging them for spades and hoes. They planted radishes, tomatoes, lettuce, beans and other vegetables. As often happens in this world, not always the sower reaps his harvest. Thus it happened here. The bombardment of Vunapope intervened and we were pleased to gather their vegetables for them.

The Japanese nurses, too, were commanded to cultivate a garden. These women we respected greatly. They had

chic uniform and in the hospital dressed in white. From what we saw they were a hard-working lot.

The Japanese nurses should not be confused with some other "ladies" of a different profession and destination. We called them Geishas, but that title was a bit above their rank. Concerning these poor creatures, the officers told me: "We despise them but we use them." There were several thousand of them near Rabaul and Kokopo. When the Americans started bombing in earnest, the Japanese army decided to repatriate them. It was too late. Their ship was bombed, it sunk and all of them perished.

The Kempri petitioned me for a piece of land for the nurses. We went out to find a suitable spot. Next to the nurses' quarters, inside the barbed wire, we ourselves had a garden with some tomatoes, beans, lettuce and other vegetables in it. I offered it to them. They found it most acceptable and handy. They suggested that we remove our vegetables. "No," I said, "let's give them to the girls. They are a hard-working lot. They deserve it. Anyhow it gives them a good start." These hard-boiled guards were so moved by this bit of kindness, that I saw tears in their eyes. They, themselves, proposed that we select a spot on the other side of our camp to compensate for the loss of the nurses' garden. Not to be surpassed in generosity, we in turn offered to remove the barbed wire and put it up on the new border. There was happiness on both sides as the garrison and the guarded rejoiced.

DESECRATED CEMETERY

About 300 yards from our prison compound lay our mission cemetery. We had been by now one and a half years behind the barbed wire and we had not been allowed one step beyond its limits.

Somehow, it was reported to me that the cemetery was in a disgraceful condition. The graves were overgrown with weeds, and small shrubs grew rampant on them. But what upset us all was the fact that Japanese soldiers had chopped the wooden crosses up for firewood. All had disappeared.

At the Kempri office I made a major issue of it. Knowing how much the Japs honoured the ashes of their deceased, I

protested vigorously and branded their actions as sacrilege. The Kempis got uneasy. They knew my unpleasant habit of writing, if necessary, to the High Command. I had a really strong case.

My proposal was to allow all in the camp to walk out to the cemetery every day from 4 to 5 p.m. to keep the graves in order, and give our beloved ones the honour and care due to them.

As expected, we could not reach an agreement in 10 minutes or in one day. It took a whole week. They could not finalise the matter on their own authority. Their superiors had to sanction arrangements and they met all kinds of difficulties. A new gate had to be erected. "All right," I said, "leave it to us. Our Brothers will construct it."

"Yes, but then the gate must be locked and we have no locks."

"Leave it to me. I will supply a new lock and key for you." This I did, keeping one key for myself.

The problem of escort and guards at the cemetery next cropped up; this had to be worked out lest we escape. However, I don't think they worried about that. By now they knew how tame and pious we prisoners were.

The great day finally arrived. The Brothers had made a gate. There was a new lock on it. In the morning I took the key to the Kempis. We looked forward to our first exit at 4 p.m. A Kempis opened the gate for us and in single file we marched out. He did not bother to count us, as this would have necessitated another count on our return. That again would be a tedious task and a procedure which usually did not work. We set to with a will, the different communities taking charge of their loved ones: Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, half-castes and natives. We weeded, planted, replanted and in due time the cemetery looked as it should.

This scheme presented no difficulties for a couple of days. Then it happened that the Kempis could not find the key and kept us waiting. I came to the rescue with my second key. Later we did not even bother them. I simply opened the gate at four and locked it at 5 p.m. They in

turn forgot to send a guard. Something like mutual trust developed to the satisfaction of both parties.

OUR GROTTTO

Halfway between the camp and cemetery, during the time when we had more freedom at Vunapope, we had built a Lourdes grotto. A steep hill there was ideal for such a construction. The Kininigunan boys with their Brother cut out a section of the hill. The excavated earth was used to form a platform in front of the grotto, big enough to accommodate some 500 people on special devotional occasions. The soil on that spot is half solid pumice and it lends itself to be carved into boulders and rocks. We modelled our grotto on the original at Lourdes. There was even a cave. The niche for Our Lady was formed by stones and cement. It looked rather impressive but cold and bare. To bring warmth to it, I lent a hand myself, with my faithful Johannes as aide. Both of us knew our way to our once beautiful gardens. We selected the best flowers we could find. Soon the whole grotto was resplendent with bougainvillia, hibiscus, lilies, siningias, alamandas, russelias, vincas, palms and agaves. We put our whole heart into it, to honour our heavenly Mother and to secure her maternal protection.

On the platform, in front of the grotto, we planted iresine, a dark red border plant, in the form of huge letters, reading: SALVE MATER. It looked beautiful on the fresh green carpet of creeping clover with which the whole mound was overgrown. Before long, Japanese officers asked the meaning of the whole project, especially of the writing. They, of course, again suspected some secret messages. I explained that it was a shrine, erected in tribute to Our Lady. The words meant: "We salute thee, Mother dear." They half-heartedly accepted my explanation and did not interfere.

Yet there was a double message in our grotto and its inscription. One was to Our Lady herself: that in spite of prison distress, her children did not forget her and asked trustingly for her protection. The second was for the American reconnaissance 'planes, for we were certain their

aerial photography would pick up the grotto and its inscription. We reasoned that surely they would not credit the Japanese with using Latin inscriptions. If so, the only conclusion the U.S. pilots could draw would be that there were still missionaries at Vunapope.

Even if the Americans picked up our message, we doubted if they interpreted it correctly. Later events confirmed our doubts.

On our way to the cemetery we always called on Our Lady and kept her grotto in excellent shape. There were always some of us offering homage to her and reminding her of our heart's desire: peace and a new chance to continue our mission work.

This continued for nearly a year, until the 11th February, 1944, anniversary of the apparition of Our Lady at Lourdes. Lovingly we decorated the grotto and expected special favours from her. These we received, only in a very, very different way from which we anticipated. For that day was the first of large scale bombing; the beginning of the destruction of our mission. Later, you will hear more of that. Here my report is only concerned with the fate of our grotto.

When the attack ceased and the 'planes had departed, we went over to the grotto. What a sight of desolation and destruction: Our Lady's statue had disappeared from the niche; we could not find a trace of it. Huge bomb craters disfigured the whole place. The cave was gone, as had all the beautiful flowers and shrubs.

Was that the answer to our prayers and expectations? It was. We soon noticed that our grotto had attracted an abnormal number of bombs. Our nearest tunnel in which we sheltered was some 100 yards away. If all those bombs had fallen on our tunnel or at the entrance, they would have wrought havoc amongst us. But the bombers, mistaking the artificial cut out in the hill for a gun emplacement or fortification, had concentrated on it.

Our Lady, after all, had answered our prayers and protected us. Though the result was contrary to expectation, that was one of the many lessons divine Providence had wished to teach us. As pupils we were rather dull and self-

willed, until by constant repetition, we learned to say wholeheartedly with our Saviour in the Garden of Gethsemani: Not my will, but Thine be done. Our Gethsemani was yet to come.

ENTERTAINMENT

We were, by now, in the last quarter of 1943. Daily life had become a matter of routine. It was not so monotonous for me as I was the only one with whom the Japanese would deal and nearly every day had its excitements for me, though they were not always pleasant.

Other inmates of our camp, although in no way molested by the Japanese, found life a bit boring. They decided to bring more brightness into it.

An instance of this was when two Sisters celebrated their silver jubilee. This event was kept with all the pomp existing conditions allowed. In the morning we had Pontifical High Mass. The liturgical music, Gloria, Credo and other parts were sung by the Sisters' choir, all in beautiful harmony.

Later in the day the Sisters invited the whole camp to a grand concert. Musicals and comedies provided a lively entertainment that kept us laughing. A feature of this concert was a percussion band, conducted and played by the nuns. Pots, pans, bomb-fragments, empty shells, crowbars, garden forks and spades—all combined to produce a surprisingly melodious effect.

The main item of the evening was a selection from Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Mikado." One of the musicians "dressed up" as the Mikado. That made us a bit apprehensive, for this concert was not given for the Japanese. It was more at their expense. Wary eyes kept watch for them. Everything went off well to our greatest satisfaction, and no evil befell us for our irreverence to Great Nippon and its divine Emperor.

Before the Coral Sea Battle, the Japanese soldiers also used to have their musical entertainments. Apparently theatrical and concert groups from Japan visited the different sections of the army and navy to entertain them. Before being interned, we had a chance to attend some of these concerts at Vunapope. The humorous plays were mostly lost on us

but we could appreciate their music and their soloists. Although ancient music, mostly in ballad form, was an "ear-sore" for us, simply offending our musical and aesthetical sense, the modern Japanese tunes we found pleasant and even appealing.

The simple folk and marching songs of the soldiers seemed closely related to our indigenous music.

Once I was invited to a party in my former house. A special feature was the music. Six younger officers, in shorts and without shirts, clapped their hands and sang old folk songs for the guests. That sort of music fitted exactly into native fashion and performance.

From our very first contact with the invaders I found similarities between the Japanese and native mentality. Knowing native psychology I put it to good use in handling the Japanese and it worked surprisingly well.

When they were celebrating the Emperor's birthday they had a great time, with extra issues of their favourite foods and plenty of Saki. I once had a good chance to observe such a celebration. After a good meal the Japs started to enjoy the Saki. At first there was a lot of hilarity and laughter accompanied by singing and clapping of hands. With martial precision the singing and clapping decreased, gradually diminishing until silence fell. All were sprawling on the floor, happily asleep and blessed with genuine saki dreams.

That particular party took place in a hospital, where, in case of emergency, it did not matter much if the whole crowd were out of action. Grave consequences would have resulted if active soldiers had been involved.

During the first month, when Vunapope was occupied by regular soldiers, we noticed that such celebrations were frequent but each time the roistering took place in a different house. I asked them what new victories caused the festivity. I was told there were no fresh conquests but that this hilarity meant the regular saki issue had been given to the noisy house. The saki was distributed in such a way that there was always a sober majority to cope with any contingency.

By the way, saki is rice wine, a potent drink. Apparently

no big quantity was needed to knock the soldiers out. It is served hot, in small cups and is similar to our grog or mulled wine. In that form it is palatable even to Europeans. Ice-cooled, it has an abominable taste.

Saki bottles contain 1800 c.c. or just under half a gallon. They became and still are popular as water bottles among natives and Europeans. Strangely enough, they are the only things that have survived Japanese glory, victory and doom.

Christmas 1943 was approaching. Father Reischl had, for that occasion, composed a musical Christmas play. Again, all the different communities participated as actors or singers: the Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, boys and girls, natives and half-castes.

It took several weeks' preparation and the actors got historically faithful costumes made by the Sisters. It is amazing what nuns can achieve even in a prison camp.

The practice and rehearsal of the different choirs took several weeks also. This was accepted as a pleasant break in our monotony.

Finally the evening of the great performance came—but this time I did not repeat the blunder of inviting officers and doctors. Instead, I asked the whole batch of the Kempri. We calculated these would feel greatly honoured—besides making us safe from any interference. Our arrangement worked perfectly.

Father Reischl had selected Advent hymns and Christmas carols, those most cherished and most dear to our hearts—a wonderful mixture of ancient and modern music. Acting and singing were harmoniously co-ordinated.

In my 62 years, I have never enjoyed a Christmas play as much as that one. I still cherish happy memories of it.

We were all happy. During the performance I tried to convey an idea of what was going on to the Kempri, but I probably did not succeed.

Christmas Day started with Pontifical High Mass. And, believe it or not, the Sisters managed even Christmas presents for the boys and girls. A fine Christmas spirit permeated our camp. Carols softly emanated from all the different communities.

JAPANESE HOSPITAL, FLIES AND MOSQUITOES

For nigh on 12 months now, Vunapope had been a regular Japanese hospital, with some 1500 Japanese patients accommodated there and a good number of doctors and nurses attending them.

When I say accommodated, I hope it does not convey the impression that they had comfortable hospital beds with mattresses and clean linen on them, nicely spaced in bright wards or halls.

Far from it. The Bishop's House was at that time reserved for sick generals and higher officers. I presume they had beds and clean linen; I had no chance of observing their conditions. But I saw how all the other patients were put up, as once an interpreter took me, under some pretext, to inspect one hospital—the former three storey house normally occupied by 35 priests and Brothers. Now it housed several hundred patients. None had a bed, but each had a Japanese rice-straw bag as substitute. I saw them tightly packed on the floor in long lines. If the room were spacious enough there would be several lines of patients, between which was a path of approximately 12 inches for the doctor and nurses.

A covered walk connected the Bishop's House to the other houses. This concrete path was 345 feet long and 12 feet wide. As, except for the roof, it was open to the elements, the Japs closed one side with rice bags—the hospital was then ready for about 200 patients. I walked through them on a 12-inch path. None of us ever saw a crippled Japanese with amputated legs or arms. We concluded their doctors must have had a very efficient way of curing them.

Quite a number were mentally ill. I was asked if we had any missionaries similarly affected. Sorry, I replied, we could not oblige, we had none.

The poor Japanese mental cases, shell-shocked or afflicted with cerebral malaria, were rather violent and raving. Our Sisters' quarters were uncomfortably close. Some of the patients managed to get through the barbed wire.

Here the Japanese also had very efficient medicines. These raving patients were taken to a special hut. The Sisters noticed that the ranting quickly diminished until perpetual rest was bestowed upon them. In the morning they were stretcher cases briefed for the crematorium.

Our mission doctor was also waging a battle of his own against the Japanese doctors or rather against filth and breeding places for flies and mosquitoes in the hospital compound. His own little daughter, Christa, a lovely child of three, became infected with dysentery and died; so did some Fathers and Brothers. We even had typhoid cases. The Japanese doctors supplied us with outdated and discarded serum ampules. In our desperation we used them.

Dr. Schuy wrote protests and demands asking the chief doctor that hygiene and malarial control be enforced. The answer he received was: "Under present circumstances, we have no time for such things."

Nearby was a huge heap of discarded open tin cans, all full of rain water and infested with mosquito larvae. The Japanese stubbornly refused to destroy the tins. They told us: "The Emperor wants them back in Japan." Unfortunately he never got them. After the armistice, we cleaned up the unholy mess.

Once I emptied an infested can into a water glass and covered it with a piece of gauze. In due time the larvae developed into different varieties of mosquitoes which the gauze prevented from escaping. When disturbed they began to hum all in different keys. One evening an officer called. The shaded lamp on the table kept the room half dark. I lifted the glass to his ear and said: "Listen!" He got excited. "Radio? radio?" he shouted. What an ingenious idea to train mosquitoes to listen to Japanese secrets and then to report them to the Bishop!

I brought him down to reality by explaining: "Oh, no. This is only one of the many thousands of infested Japanese tins. You see the result? Twenty-five mosquitoes out of one tin."

I kept the insects for a few days for observation and for the education of Japanese officers. Then I made a final experiment. Smoking a cigar, I exhaled twice through the

gauze into the glass. The heavy cloud resulted in killing all the mosquitoes instantaneously. Smokers in the tropics should be pleased with this discovery.

The fly problem was attacked by the Japanese, but unfortunately from the wrong end. Instead of destroying their breeding places—open latrines, heaps of cotton and bandages soaked with blood and pus—they decided to kill all the flies. Every soldier had to kill a certain number and report to his officer. It was funny to observe them sitting around swatting the flies.

We, too, joined in the fight against flies. First we kept our camp free of breeding places. Then we devised all kinds of fly traps. The results were magnificent. Still we fought a losing battle, for we could not compete with the Japanese breeding places.

Anyhow, for us, it was a sort of useful sport. Observing that flies prefer to sleep on hanging wires or strings, we co-operated with their natural inclinations. We hung 10 or 20 strings, 20 inches long, from a beam at a set distance apart. After sunset these were black with sleeping flies. In one blow all the flies were crushed between two light boards. Fifty to a hundred of the pests in one swipe is not bad. Our traps also brought good results—about 500 or so each a day. We had one satisfaction: that these flies at least would not pester us any more. But the next day there were many replacements. So our battle went on and on. We could have used some D.D.T. in those days. Now it is easy to keep our kitchens insect free.

SNAKE HUNT

Our air-raid tunnels were growing deeper and deeper. We had them reinforced and lined with the trunks of coconut trees. This gave us a wonderful feeling of safety. So far not a single bomb or machine-gun bullet had hit the camp. Usually, during the evening hours an air-raid alarm sounded. We betook ourselves near the tunnels and if the planes came in our direction went inside. We only used them for a few minutes during the raids.

But others were using our tunnels for quite a different purpose: snakes. Our Sisters did not appreciate their



presence at all. The snakes also found the coconut logs ideal for resting on. Rats, too, were fond of the tunnels and the snakes had a great time eating them. It was a bit of a dilemma for us; should we give free hand to the snakes, or should we kill them, dealing with the rats separately? We decided to get rid of the snakes. That was easier said than done.

We seldom came across a snake in the open space of the tunnel. Nearly all hid between the logs and the earthen wall. Although the logs were placed together as closely as possible, there was always a space of one or two inches. That gave us the chance to detect a small section of a snake by the beam of an electric torch. If we so much as touched the snake, it swiftly disappeared behind another log.

This problem demanded a particular short-range strategy. Surprise tactics and highly specialised weapons were essential. All three factors, properly co-ordinated, brought us full victory.

The snakes belonged to the Python genus of the family Boidae. Non-poisonous, some varieties grow up to nine feet, others to 30 feet. In our tunnels they were usually from six to nine feet long. The small ones go in for eggs, chickens, mice and rats. The bigger ones swallow with great gusto hens, roosters, piglets and even human babies. They kill their victim by crushing it.

In our war on reptiles our weapons consisted of a flashlight, a big bush knife and—most important of all—a pair of big hedge clippers. In strategical terms the whole operation could be defined as a pincer movement performed

with lightning speed and a simultaneous jerk-and-pull action that gave the snake no time to anchor itself round a post.

The hedge clippers, even if sharp, would never cut the snake in two but they kept it firmly in a pincer grip. With a sudden jerk it would be pulled into the open and finished off with the bush knife.

We had a good tally of snakes to our credit and that put our nuns and girls at ease when sheltering in the tunnels.

AIR RAIDS, 1943

During 1943 increased air-raid activity brought us a lot of excitement; still not a single bomb or bullet struck our camp. Some three or four American raiders had appeared every night to take part in a picturesque performance. The Japanese had mounted many searchlights and anti-aircraft guns capable of putting up a terrific barrage. There was many a thrilling sight.

A silver plane would be caught in the cross beams of more than a dozen spotlights. Then fury would be let loose. Anti-aircraft shells would shoot up from every angle. Exploding, they would hurl their fragments in all directions and the little victim would seem to have absolutely no chance. Hundreds of round smoke clouds dotted the sky. The result of the gun fire was usually very poor . . . as I had previously experienced during the First World War in France. In spite of the bursting shells, the plane selected its target and dropped its bombs. Then it would train its armament on the searchlights and ack-ack guns, releasing the deadly contents on them. This done, it would soar and gracefully return to its base, leaving in its wake a red trail of burning houses.

These scenes were frequent, often occurring four or five times in one night. During one attack only did we sorrowfully watch an Allied 'plane burst into a flaming mass and crash down into the jungles of New Britain. In the daytime the anti-aircraft defence was more successful.

On certain nights the Allied 'planes brought us surprises. Half a dozen or more magnesium flares on parachutes would be hung over a certain area. As far as we were concerned they were there for our illumination and admiration. No

doubt their real object was to give the planes a better view of their target and for orientation.

The Japanese, too, had some surprises in store for us. At one period they started to shoot what we called Christmas trees. These were phosphorus shells which shattered into thousands of luminous fragments. Beautiful to behold from a safe distance, they were not intended primarily for our entertainment. The Allied 'planes distinctly disliked them and, when possible, gave them a wide berth. Apparently the Japanese had only a limited supply and after a few months we never saw them again.

The 26th January, 1943, brought further developments—the first daylight air-raid. This caught the Japanese, as well as ourselves, completely off guard. No air-raid alarm. At noon the aeroplanes appeared from nowhere. Sixteen in fine formation over Vunapope. Some of us mistook them for returning Japanese aircraft, but soon we realised they were American 'planes. Their markings and the first bombs left no doubts for anybody.

The ages in our community ranged from four to 80 years. With this mixture, in an emergency like that a professor of psychology could easily find as many as 80 different types of reactions.

I would like to record only the most obvious ones. When the intense noise of the 'planes took some unaware in the houses, they dived under tables, chairs, pews, beds and anything else that had a semblance of security. Some natives held banana or pawpaw leaves over their heads for protection. Others, caught in the open, stood there rooted to the spot through shock and fear. The majority ran for the tunnels. Nimble legs flew to the trenches but the not so agile ran, stumbled, fell, ran again, fell again, obstructing the path to safety. I saw half-caste boys darting ahead, jumping over heaps of living obstacles and making for the tunnels' openings.

I was sorry the approaching 'planes did not permit me more time for observations. I stood there and concentrated on their movements and direction. I was pleased to see that they were not flying directly over us, but kept more to the shore. Some hundred yards from Vunapope, a Japanese

freighter was unloading. They made straight for her. I saw the bombs actually falling and crashing on her. She sank, was grounded and only half submerged. On the spur of the moment I did not realise what a wonderful gift Providence presented us with in the form of this wreck. For 12 years now our mission ships have found a very good shelter behind her. She is a perfect breakwater.

The 16 'planes by-passed Vunapope. We were glad they ignored us. Intently they headed for Rabaul but while on their way the Japanese anti-aircraft woke up and gave them an awfully hot reception. There were quite a number of Japanese ships in the harbour. Some received direct hits and were sunk. The total was never disclosed to us.

The attacking 'planes had their casualties also. At least one of them was shot down. Some of the surviving airmen were co-prisoners with some of our missionaries in Rabaul. To these the pilots related the story behind the daylight raid. An American General, who was leading the flotilla, had insisted on this venture against much contrary advice. When over Rabaul, his 'plane was hit, but did not crash in the vicinity. Possibly it came down in the jungle. We do not know if he survived but we are sure the Japanese never heard about him . . . otherwise they would have triumphantly boasted about it.

The raids increased after that. We had our own air-raid alarm. When it sounded all communities went in an orderly way to the tunnels. Near the houses we had some smaller shelters for the sick and those unable to walk. Although of some consolation during the period prior to the bombing of our camp, these shelters were absolutely inadequate against bombs and not even bullet proof.

Our air-raid warning was usually sounded 10 minutes or so before the official Japanese alarm. The Kempti questioned me on how this was possible. They suspected secret outposts and wireless connections. "Oh, no," I said, "nothing of the kind. To begin with, you fellows sound your alarm when the 'planes are nearly above us and the first bombs fall. We scan the horizon every morning between eight and ten o'clock. Our Kininigunan boys have very sharp eyesight. They do it for us. Tiny specks on the horizon,

which cannot be seen by us, are detected by them and off goes the alarm." "Ah, yes," they admitted, "now we can understand it."

Our ears, too, were pretty well trained to distinguish between Japanese and American 'planes. The latter had synchronised motors. The sound of the propellers was harmonious. The Japanese motors revved unevenly and the result was discordant.

In the first half of 1943 we witnessed many dog-fights and aerial battles between American and Japanese fighters. A thrilling and most exciting experience. The Japanese were not cowards. Many a battle ended with 'planes from both sides crashing in flames. Often we witnessed pilots parachuting from the falling aircraft. Often, too, it was difficult for us to decide which side was victorious.

One morning I was celebrating Mass at 6 a.m. for the M.S.C. Sisters' Community. Just before Holy Communion a dog-fight began in the air above us. Howling, screaming motors, machine-gunning from both fighters combined in a hellish roar. I had no intention of deserting the altar at this stage of the holy liturgy. The moment came when I turned to the Community, presenting the Sacred Host to them: "Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi: Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world." I started to distribute Holy Communion: "May the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life everlasting. Amen."

If we were to be killed by bombs and bullets, could there be a more propitious moment to depart from this unfriendly world than after having received Holy Communion? We were all united in this conviction. There was no panic or even nervousness among the courageous Sisters. We felt secure in the presence of Our Lord.

One fine morning an armada of more than 200 heavy bombers, escorted by as many fighters, passed over Vunapope and headed for Rabaul Harbour. The fighters, being faster than the four motor bombers, circled round them like a swarm of hornets. Japanese patients, who were able to get up, and all of us, looked on fascinated. The harbour was crowded with warships and freighters. The

noise was thunderous over Rabaul. To our amazement we saw the American 'planes falling pell-mell from the heavens. It seemed as if they were all crashing. The Japanese patients clapped and cheered, presuming the American squadrons were being shot down.

Their cheering did not last long. In less than five minutes the American aircraft crossed Vunapope, flying very low over sea, regained formation and triumphantly returned to their bases. Something was wrong somewhere. As our first interpreter, Sugai, put it: "Sometimes they mistake." They certainly did on that occasion. Far from being shot down, the Americans had swooped in a mass dive-bombing attack on the ships. The Japanese never told us how many vessels they lost.

We could not count the victims for the distance from Rabaul to Vunapope is 20 miles.

However, the most amazing thing was the news the Japanese radio flashed over the world: A great Japanese victory! Two hundred and one American planes were brought down over Rabaul this morning!

They were brought down all right, attracted by alluring targets. Too bad they smoothly took off again. We do not know if they had any losses.

From now on until July we had a pretty lively time. Air-raid alarms, taking shelter by day and night, was a matter of routine. From July to October there was a lull in the Allied activity. This was all according to plan: to give the Japanese a sense of false security. It worked. Often the occupation forces boasted that they were now so strong that the Americans would never dare to attack them. They cast aside all precautions. They even unloaded their ships during the night with glaring lights.

Their pride toppled them.

The result was the smashing blow made by the Allied 'planes on 13th October, 1943, a blow that caught the Japanese absolutely unawares and ended in the total destruction of their air force.

ANOTHER MASSACRE OF MISSIONARIES

Some time after March, 1943, a letter arrived at our Kempri office. Addressed to Father Charles Borchardt, who was a

missionary at Papitalai, Manus, it had been written by one of his catechists, asking him: "Where are you, Father, at Rabaul, or Kokopo or Vunapope? Please let me know." The catechist then related to Father some of the latest parochial events, such as deaths, births and marriages. As the letter was written in Pidgin English, the Kempis found it difficult to interpret. They approached Rev. Father Dahmen to translate it for them.

That letter indicated something was amiss with Father Borchardt, for he had not arrived at Vunapope. We began to fear for the safety of our three M.S.C. Fathers and three Sisters (F.D.N.S.C.) on Manus.

We ascertained later from the natives on Manus that all the missionaries were taken to the Government station at Lorengau. There they were put aboard the Japanese destroyer "Akakase." The missionaries told the natives that they were going to the Bishop at Vunapope.

Already on board were His Lordship Bishop Larks, my co-consecrator, and 35 members of the Society of the Divine Word from the Vicariate of Wewak, New Guinea. According to official information issued after the war by the Department of External Affairs, Canberra, three missionaries of the Sacred Heart—Rev. Father Bernard van Klearwater, a Dutchman, and two German Fathers, Charles Borchardt and Francis Utsch—together with Sisters M. Ancilla, Kunera and Elizabeth (F.D.N.S.C.), all natives of Holland, were shot on the "Akakase" on 18th March, 1943, and their bodies thrown into the sea.

As the natives reported that Bishop Larks and his missionaries were also on that destroyer, we are sure they met the same fate.

Some time in April staff officers had called on me inquiring if I had any friends in the Philippines and if we would like to be transferred there. I gave a definite "No" to both questions. The Japs, however, did not accept my refusal as the opinion of the whole camp. They went to the Fathers, Brothers and Sisters and asked them separately the same questions. In every quarter they got the same answer. The officers said they were concerned about our safety at Vunapope.

Were they? We knew of their double plan to destroy us by starvation and malaria; we knew the fate of the "Montevideo Maru," of the 96 British officers and of the Geishas. We grew suspicious about what had happened to our Manus missionaries. Our only conclusion was that they were up to some new devilish scheme to exterminate us all.

I was surprised when one of these staff officers came again next day and told me: "Bishop, you were very wise to refuse a transfer to the Philippines." He then revealed the experiences of His Lordship Bishop Wolf, S.V.D., and his missionaries from the Vicariate of Madang in New Guinea.

The Bishop and Fathers, Brothers and Sisters were taken on board a Japanese ship. On the way to Dutch New Guinea 12 American 'planes attacked her and machine-gunned her. The Bishop and the missionaries were forbidden to take cover. (That he did not tell me.) Many of them were killed, while some, including the Bishop, were wounded and after the attack were put ashore. The survivors confirm this story. Bishop Wolf and several of his missionaries died later as a result of their wounds.

Taking into consideration all these facts, we were convinced that as long as we managed to stay at Vunapope or near it we would be able to frustrate their plan of destroying us by starvation and malaria. We were quite confident that our tunnels would afford us adequate protection, even during the heaviest bombardment.

JAPANESE SURPRISE TACTICS

After the crippling blow dealt by the Americans on 13th October, 1943, to the whole enemy air force, the skies became clear of Japanese 'planes. There were no more thrilling air battles or exciting dog fights. The Americans, New Zealanders and Australians were unopposed masters in the air.

But at Vunapope we noticed something of which the Allied Command seemed unaware. Usually before sunset, where there were no American 'planes around, we saw maybe three or four Japanese 'planes—never together—making a few rounds at low altitude. They would then go into hiding again. One of them, having engine trouble, made



a forced landing on the Vunapope beach. The pilot walked cut unharmed and the plane was left for us as a souvenir.

When the Americans had landed in Manus on 1st January, 1944, they established a most powerful base, complete with floating docks, capable of taking the biggest man-of-war for repairs. At night they worked with blazing lights; in fact the whole base was beautifully illuminated. They were sure the whole Japanese air force had been annihilated and neglected all air-raid precautions.

One fine night they got the surprise of their lives. Ignored by everybody a Japanese bomber flew in, dropped a torpedo bomb on to the floating dock and returned unharmed to Rabaul. The shock he caused was greater than the damage to the dock, which was repaired in no time.

We never heard of the Japanese playing any more tricks with their two or three remaining planes.

But they had some other cards up their sleeves. They planned a surprise attack with their remaining landing barges on the Australian base in Jacquinot Bay. Their barges were wooden and smaller than the American type. They

were kept concealed under dense beach trees and in big tunnels on the road to Rabaul. We saw these ourselves after the armistice and they still exist after 14 years. Bombs and even earthquakes could not destroy them. The Japanese had lined the tunnels with coconut logs as we did our own at Vunapope. But in the moisture and fungus-laden atmosphere of the caves, the posts rotted and crumbled in less than two years. There is hardly a trace of the wooden supports left now; just a bit of brown humus on the ground. The raid was planned for August, 1945. The Japs intended to kill us before its execution. The armistice on 15th August saved us all.

GERMAN GRAVY

While the Japanese air force still existed, an officer and six of his men came to see our prison camp. It was a sort of a picnic for them, for they brought their food with them. The air force officer was a friendly fellow and he understood English. I "tapped" him for news and he gave me the latest about the European war. As it was lunch time, I invited him to have lunch with me. He accepted and enjoyed the meal immensely. We had fresh beef, tapioca and some fresh vegetables. What really "got him" was the gravy prepared, as was the whole meal, by the German Sisters. Delighted, he asked permission to call his six men in to sample it.

When they came in we cut the remaining beef into six small pieces in order that each of them could taste it. They dipped it into the gravy and I could see that it was a real treat for them. The officer explained to them that the meat and the gravy had been cooked by the "deutsu" (German) Sisters.

I liked the way in which this officer treated his subordinates. It was exactly according to the Emperor's proclamation: On duty Japanese officers should be strict and authoritative but off duty they were requested to act like fathers to the other ranks.

CO-PROSPERITY

Occasionally Major Wami turned up, seemingly just for a chat. He was growing friendlier every time. On one such occasion he said to me: "Bishop, you may believe it or not but I am your best friend and apparently your only one

compared with all those other fellows in the High Command." I asked him once if he could explain to me the term "co-prosperity," used so frequently in official proclamations. He obliged with an abstract definition.

"Well," I said, "let's take it in a more concrete and practical way. For instance, you have a case of beer and I have glasses. Would co-prosperity mean that we should share the beer glasses?"

"Oh, no," he said, "I drink my beer out of your glasses and that's that."

"Oh, yes, Major, I thought so; that makes the term pretty clear to me."

Again he came begging a favour of me. Censoring my papers he had found amongst them a draft of the booklet (later printed): "Psychology of the Natives." The draft impressed him so much that he sought permission to copy it. I tried to persuade him to wait until it was finished but he insisted and I granted his request. I even thought it would be a good idea for him and others to read that treatise in order to understand the natives better and, consequently, to treat them with more justice and human kindness.

I frankly told him what I thought of the Japanese method of dealing with natives. From the beginning, the Japanese made the blunder of telling the natives, by pointing to their coloured skin, that they were brothers.

Some islanders were pleased with this new relationship. In a brotherly way they helped themselves to army rations and rice. When caught, they were court martialled, flogged terribly (we witnessed these thrashings) and sentenced to forced labour. The tribesmen soon realised that this new brotherhood was an extremely onesided affair. For the Japanese it proved a very efficient way of turning the natives into bitter enemies.

Coinciding with the Japanese invasion of New Britain, some of its tribes were obsessed by the so-called "Cargo-cult" or rather "Cargo mania." The root idea behind the cult is that of the coming of the "golden age," a desire coloured by their own ideology.

"Cargo" stands for all goods brought in by ships, such

as bully beef, canned fish, cigarettes, matches, European clothes, sawn timber and galvanised roofing iron.

Essential to the Cargo mania is the belief that their forebears create all these things. These ancestors pack the goods in cases distinctly marked with the names of their descendants and send them in big ships.

But, alas, the sunning and greedy whites divert the ships to their own harbours, eliminate the names of the natives replacing them with their own, thus robbing the poor natives of the precious cargo that belongs rightly to them.

Under the leadership of Batari, a Nakanai native, the cargo mania was in full swing on the north coast of New Britain when the Japanese appeared.

Batari boldly declared: "Here it comes, our cargo! and look! this time our ancestors themselves have come to deliver the goods to us."

He proclaimed himself Commander-in-Chief of all ancestral and contemporary Nakanai forces. He boasted: "At last they have come. All the warships with their guns and firearms belong to me now. My native battalions need no more drill with sticks from the bush. Everyone will get his rifle and plenty of ammunition. The 'planes also wait for my orders to drop bombs on places I shall select."

When the Japanese landed they received a great welcome. There was Batari saluting; all his battalions presenting arms (or rather sticks). The Japanese felt greatly honoured and flattered when they learned of their ancestral relationship with the Nakanais.

Batari explained to his people: "Look, what a wonderful lot of dear great-great-grandfathers and uncles they are; and how young they look. True, they are a bit off colour but both phenomena can easily be explained by their amazing powers which they are going to bestow on us also."

The Japanese were more than pleased when Batari offered them ready-built storehouses for the cargo. With great enthusiasm all his battalions lent a hand in carrying it into the stores. It was a nice assortment: rice, tinned meat, tinned fish, all kinds of vegetables pickled in wooden casks, plenty of cigarettes. The natives were amazed; it was more

than they had expected. "I told you so," Batari boasted.

When everything was in, Batari suggested: "Let us start feasting now." They smashed a case to get the contents. Crack! Crack! Two rifle shots rang out. The Japanese guards attacked them furiously and kicked them out of the store.

Perplexed, the tribes wonder: why that? It's rather strange behaviour for our dear ancestors, isn't it?

Next day the Japs ordered Batari to line up his battalion. They were commanded to exchange their sticks for spades and hoes. "We are going to build a big aerodrome," they were told. Batari was allowed to act as a "boss-boy." They ordered him about during the next few weeks. His battalions had to work hard on the new aerodrome. They had to provide their own food. If a native became sick or had a sore, he got no medical attention. He had to work until he collapsed—then he could go or be carried home. Instances of "bigheadedness" (insubordination) were easily cured by smashing the "bigheads" with a hammer. After that they were silent forever.

Batari was extremely bewildered: strange ancestors these! They did not recognise him as their Commander-in-chief and kept all the precious cargo for themselves. He decided to teach them a lesson and started to play up and give them orders.

For such an emergency the dear ancestors had a very efficient remedy. They grabbed him, stripped him and gave him a terrific flogging. Blood was oozing from his lacerated back. They put him into an improvised gaol and gave him plenty of time for "soul-searching"—a Japanese specialty.

There he was now, sore and disgraced and ridiculed by his followers.

Feelings of bitterness and disgust welled up in him. Was that the reward he got for his great deeds in their favour?

Didn't he tie up his missionary and keep him prisoner to hand him over to them? True, the missionary had been liberated by the faithful and escaped. But at least he had the good intention of doing them a great service.

Yes, and didn't he arrest two American airmen who

crashed, tie them up securely with wire, and post guards so that they could not escape? Did he not deliver them safely into their hands? Was this the gratitude he was to receive?

True, he was all for flogging. He applied it himself to recalcitrant individuals. But now he realised it was quite a different experience when he was the victim.

His soul-searching went on. Disturbing doubts crept up. Could it be possible that he had made a ghastly mistake? Could it be that the Japanese were not their ancestors at all? His dark suspicions materialised more and more; no cargo for the Nakanais; hard work, cruel treatment, insults, instead of recognition.

He came to the painful conclusion: "The Japanese are not our ancestors and I have made a perfect fool of myself and now I have to pay for it." His followers, too, very soon abandoned their idea about ancestral relationship with the Japanese. Resentment and bitter hostility took its place.

JEWS—AMMUNITION DUMPS

While all these things were happening in Nakanai in 1942 and 1943 we were fighting our own problems in our prison camp.

Up came a delegation from the High Command. Some of the "brains-trust" got the bright idea that all the missionaries were Jews. That delegation had come to ascertain if this were so.

From the Bishop down to the last Father, Brother and Sister everyone was questioned separately. The investigation took this form:

"Are you a Jew?"—"No."

"Is your father a Jew?"—"No."

"Is your mother a Jewess?"—"No."

"All right, you are out of suspicion."

So the process went on and on to the last in the long line. It was a thorough way of finding the facts—and the amazing thing was that it proved to be correct, for none of us were Jews. Quite satisfied, the party reported its findings to the High Command.

Soon there was another inquiry, but this time conducted more according to Secret Police methods.

An ammunition dump blew up. It was so near to our camp that big chunks of bombs and other missiles were hurled, screaming and howling, into our compound. A very unpleasant affair that! The dump kept exploding for three days and nights. Nobody was hurt.

The Kempri got the job of discovering who started the explosions. Their first suspicions fell on us, especially on our Brothers working outside the camp in the workshops and gardens.

They were not so silly as to ask us: "Did you do it?" expecting a decisive "No" to that approach. They worked in the following fashion: "All right, you are out of it," they assured us, but then started to question a number of natives working with our Brothers. The Kempri even used extortion to make these confess that the Brothers had instigated the business by making them light a grass fire near the dump. The natives remained truthful, denying this emphatically. If the tribesmen had been less faithful and if they had incriminated us, even under duress, the Japanese would have executed us all.

Divine Providence again intervened to prove our innocence.

Two natives were skinning coconuts. To remove the shell, a hard wooden stick is rammed into the ground and on this the fibrous part is torn off.

One of the natives had a small basket under his arm. A shiny cylinder fell out of it and exploded, wounding the boy's leg extensively.

The Kempri heard of the accident and investigated. The boy told them he had found a small white silk parachute with a shiny cylinder attached to it. This had attracted him and he had put it into his basket.

These small parachutes with the explosives attached to them were dropped at high altitudes from Japanese planes onto Allied aircraft during an attack. In theory if an Allied plane collided with it or even touched it, it would burst and damage the plane. We never heard that this ever happened.

THIS CROWD BEATS US ALL

A bright idea that . . . but sometimes it worked the wrong way round! One of these small explosives, if it hit a shell in the ammunition dump, was sufficient to blow up the whole camp. Even the Kempri could see that. A few of these parachute explosives were found in the vicinity of the dump.

After this accident they stopped suspecting us.

Another petrol, ammunition and bomb dump near Rabaul blew up on 13th September, 1942. Great mystery surrounded the cause. Although at the time the explosion started no air raid was in progress, the same explanation might apply here.

Had an air raid occurred some miles away and the Japanese dropped their parachute explosives there, the wind could have carried them away and dropped them on the dump. Whatever the cause, the destruction of the second dump created great consternation amongst the Japanese troops. Imagine their sorrow at those beautiful bombs and torpedoes, destined to bring disaster to the enemy, being destroyed like that!

In the future they stored their big bombs and torpedoes in specially constructed tunnels.

PART II.

DESTRUCTION

MISSIONERS' DEATHS

During the last two years, 1942-43, we lived through our captivity without any major disasters. Both Japanese plans to exterminate us had not succeeded. We had just three cases of death, none of them from starvation or malaria.

One of our fellow prisoners, Rev. Father August Kleintitchen, died from old age. His health was never the best, even in normal times. He was a great linguist and anthropologist. His books about native folklore amongst the Gunantuna people are very valuable to the surviving missionaries and scientists.

Another who died in our camp was Rev. Father W. Barrow, parish priest in Rabaul for two years prior to the invasion. When the attack began he remained near Rabaul hoping to help the dying and wounded. Although an Irishman he was captured with hundreds of Australian soldiers and for five weeks he received rough treatment. He had to unload ships, chop wood and do other menial work. Whilst in the prison camp in the town he contracted dysentery and, like all the others, got no medical treatment.

An old Dutch Brother who had worked for more than 40 years on the Mission was brought into the same prison camp. The restrictions and regulations were beyond him. During the night he struck a match, with the result that the Japanese threatened to punish him severely. Father Barrow intervened and offered to be punished in his stead. Impressed by his heroic act, the Japanese refrained from carrying out their threats. Following my agreement with the High Command, Father Barrow, Brother van der Zanden and the other missionaries confined in Rabaul were brought to Vunapope.

Here Father Barrow, always full of wit and humour and now helped by the sunshine of the camp, was his old self. He volunteered to teach the seminarians.

But in November he suffered a serious relapse and, in addition, had ulcers on the liver. When the doctor gave up all hope, I told Father that Our Lord was going to come



John L. Goff

for him soon and asked him to offer his young life for the mission.

Father wanted so much to live: yet when he knew it was God's will for him to go, he willingly assented and offered his life for the success of God's work amongst the native peoples.

Father Barrow was loved and admired by all—Europeans, Chinese and natives. He was idolised by the seminarians. When we buried him in the cemetery there was not a dry eye. We mourned him as a great missionary and beloved confrère.

Another young life yet was destined to be taken from our camp, Sister Mary Celsine, M.S.C., who suffered from diabetes. Normally, she would have had a long life-expectancy. We tried our best to get some insulin for her from the Japanese doctors. They would not give us any. A saintly, kind soul, she, too, offered her young life for the progress of the mission. Surrounded by all her Sisters and with their loving care, she gently slipped into heaven. She was the last to die in the comfort of a death bed and to be buried in a coffin. All who followed her were denied this "luxury" by the cruel conditions caused by the devastating bombardment.

THE FIRST BULLETS

In the early hours of 1st January, 1944, we got our first taste of a machine-gun attack. Some night raiders sprayed our camp with furious blasts.

What bullets they were! In my first war experiences I never saw such calibre. They were about two inches long, with half-inch diameter. They were fired in assorted varieties: tracer, incendiary, explosive and solid steel capable of penetrating walls, concrete and ground-cover up to six feet. They easily went through our roofs and walls but except for leaking roofs and smashed walls and furniture did no damage. There were no casualties, as many of us were sheltering in the tunnels.

However, it was a serious warning. It is true, a lot of us were getting careless. Despite many alarms during the past year, we had walked repeatedly to our tunnels and

nothing had eventuated. We were inclined to believe that nothing would happen to us.

There was Brother Joseph, S.M., still recovering in our small hospital. He kept repeating: "Vunapope will never be bombed." An Australian captain, who was his co-prisoner in Rabaul, had told him that Vunapope was marked on Allied maps as a place not to be bombed. That assurance gave us a sense of security. The optimistic among us believed it. Others said: "You never know, they may change their minds and then we are done." My outlook was: Safety first.

The first hail of bullets brought us into line: Safety first became the motto for all.

OUR TUNNELS AND SHELTERS

The First World War had taught me that even the heaviest shells then in use could not harm us if we sheltered in a properly constructed tunnel. I recalled my experiences at Verdun, the Somme, Chemin des Dames and Kemmel. Everywhere it had been the same: the more cover the more safety. Working on this principle, we excavated our two sets of tunnels.

They were six feet wide and about as high. They were supported by coconut logs, which we cut into proper lengths, not caring at all that they were valued at one pound each. On both sides we placed planks for seats.

Each tunnel had four separate entrances meeting in the deep interior which was the safest part, giving maximum cover.

When unoccupied the tunnels had fresh air and a gentle draft, but it was a different story when they were packed with 150 to 200 people. We soon realised that the ventilation afforded by the four different entrances was not sufficient and provided both tunnels with special air shafts.

One of these built on a slant served as a lookout for our air-raid wardens—two seminarians. As soon as they detected approaching 'planes, they gave us the alarm and came tumbling down through the shaft.

As long as the Vunapope power house worked we even had electric lights in our tunnels. After its destruction we



M.S.C. Nuns at the entrance to our tunnels.

installed coconut oil lamps at certain distances throughout their length.

Some Fathers volunteered to keep these lamps in order. At the sound of the alarm they went in first and lit them. After the raid they extinguished them. This was a matter of routine for two years.

During these months it happened that some Japanese soldiers from the hospital sneaked through the barbed wire and entered our tunnels. This was strictly forbidden by their own authorities. Although sorry for these poor fellows, who trembled for their young lives, I could not allow it either. I was responsible for the safety not only of my missionaries but of all others in our camp. Were I to permit the Japs to use our shelter, soon we would have no space left for ourselves.

On receiving a report that Japanese soldiers, usually

one or two, were in the tunnel, I went in and with a firm grip of his arm would say to each: "Sorry, my boy, you are not allowed in here. Please get out." They would follow me like lambs, without the slightest resistance.

The Japanese had no tunnels at Vunapope. Instead, each house had its air-raid shelter. This was a hole dug into the ground, roofed by coconut logs, with the excavated soil on top of them. Usually it had no more than three feet of cover.

Officers advised me to do the same. Their idea was to get under cover at a moment's notice. They declared our tunnels unpractical, being too far away from our houses. I contradicted them and explained that we were fond of running a bit before reaching the shelter.

Another safety principle was also involved and, not being aware of it, the Japs had to pay a terrible price for their ignorance.

We based our calculation on the experience that when a bombardier aims at a house, more than nine times out of ten he misses it by several yards.

Our conclusion proved disastrously correct from the first bombardment onwards. Bombers aimed at the houses, missed the targets by a couple of yards and landed their bombs in the Japanese air-raid shelters. Some of these contained 50 to 100 men. The result was an indescribable mess. Total Japanese losses at Vunapope the first day were over 500, nearly all of them killed in their air-raid shelters.

These Japanese shelters were absolutely inadequate. They were not even bullet-proof, and utterly useless against 500-pound bombs.

We, too, had some covered trenches near the different community houses where the inmates could slip in immediately the warning came. We built them at the insistence of the old missionaries who contended that the tunnels were too far away for them.

I permitted their construction knowing only too well that their value was merely psychological. They were of some consolation to those who wanted them, during bombardments miles away.

During the first bombing the occupants of these small

shelters lived through hell. None received a direct hit but bombs 50 to 100 yards off rocked them in such a way that they caved in and the covering soil fell in, burying those within waist deep. Every bomb brought more soil down on them. That lesson was so convincing that it needed no repetition. From then on everybody was only too glad to shelter in the tunnels.

Those who could not walk or who were sick were carried there on stretchers.

BOMBS

The tragic and never-to-be-forgotten day dawned. It was 11th February, 1944.

In the early morning I celebrated Mass for the M.S.C. Sisters in their grass church. Everyone in the camp received Holy Communion.

After breakfast I made my usual rounds, visiting the sick in the different communities. Nobody was seriously ill and even little Brother Joseph, S.M., was showing marked improvement. When I saw him he was as happy as a boy. The doctor had given him permission to get up and try to walk about a little. We got a pair of new shoes for him. That made his happiness perfect. In his cheery way he assured me again: "My Lord, don't worry. Vunapope will never be bombed."

"Well, Brother, I hope you are right, but the blast of machine-gun bullets we got on 1st January makes me very suspicious. It might have been a warning."

I told him that in the beginning of February a rumour had reached the camp that leaflets had been dropped warning of an impending raid. As the Japanese had told us nothing, we had no evidence to go on.

There was also another rumour. Another few days later it was reported that an Allied air force prisoner was overheard to say: "God help the missionaries." In that case also, we could not confirm it.

I told Brother Joseph to be on the safe side and be prepared for the worst.

And the worst happened one hour later. After an air-raid alert we saw long lines of bombers and fighters by-pass

Vunapope over the sea. "That is all right, let them drop their stuff somewhere else," we thought.

In a few minutes the 'planes changed course. I saw them heading straight for Vunapope. I had been detained by two Japanese doctors at the X-ray plant. I had to cover a distance of 100 yards to get to our deep shelters.

Realising the danger, I broke into a sprint. Ten yards from the entrance to our tunnel I was caught in a spurt of machine-gun fire. I threw myself on the ground, with bullets kicking up the soil around me. Lying down, I was a better target. So I jumped up and gained the entrance, just as the first bomb crashed above the tunnel, showering me with loose dirt.

I was not hurt, but the raiders had smashed my cigar case in my side pocket. I thought it rather inconsiderate of them.

The first part of the tunnel was empty. Here the Sisters and half-caste girls were in the habit of sheltering. Instinctively, everybody had on this occasion pressed into the innermost recesses.

By the time I reached them, hell had broken loose over Vunapope. The ominous sound of diving 'planes, the scream of the falling bombs and their ear-splitting detonations, the rattle and whistle of machine-guns and their bullets all combined in terrific pandemonium. In the tunnel all this noise was somewhat muffled but the exploding bombs made the shaft shake in the same manner as we experienced during an earthquake.

All the lights were out. We were engulfed by an infernal darkness. Yes, hell round us but not within us. All had received Holy Communion. There was grace and light in our hearts.

There was no hysteria, no terrifying screams, no swearing or shouting.

But listen, what is that? It comes in gushes from all parts of the tunnel. Harmoniously blended, fervent prayers, charged with full confidence in God's and Our Lady's protection, winged their way to Heaven.

After a few minutes (it seemed hours to us), the pandemonium without stopped. We heard the sound of the departing 'planes fading fainter and fainter. We ventured

outside. What a sight! Our kitchen, laundry, hospital, pharmacy and half-caste girls' house were completely wrecked. Most of the big mission houses beyond our fence which made up the Japanese hospital had taken direct hits or were terribly battered. Japanese losses were in the vicinity of 500. Our community houses were still standing but the roofs were riddled with bullets and partly torn off, the walls bashed in and the furniture and all other things in the interiors almost destroyed by bullets and shrapnel.

We checked up on our casualties. Where was Brother Joseph? He was so sure that Vunapope would never be bombed that he had not gone to the tunnels. The small hospital in which he was had disappeared. A big bomb crater was in its place. Brother Joseph was all right. He was beyond the range of bombs and bullets. He was in Heaven. His remains fitted into a drawer that was his coffin and we buried him in our cemetery. Poor Brother, he had been so happy only one hour before. He was our only direct death from the bombing.

One priest, four Brothers and two Sisters were seriously wounded. After the raid they received the Last Sacrament. They, too, had all happened to be outside our tunnels.

Father Bley, our senior pioneer missionary, who was over 80 years old, died from his wound. So did the four Brothers, after a few days of miserable existence during the following air raids.

The two Sisters, though seriously wounded, survived. Somebody mentioned after our first raid: "Poor Sisters, in a week's time all of them will be dead." But our gallant nuns showed us just how much we, the so-called stronger sex, underestimated their powers of resistance. Before we left Vunapope, when Fathers and Brothers were dying in the tunnels (sometimes two in the same night, totalling in all 17) the M.S.C. Sisters had only one death.

In the morning after that first raid when the Sisters returned to their little convent, which was quite close to the Japanese quarters from where they used to get the quinine, they came upon a ghastly sight. Pieces of human bodies were everywhere. Nearly 300 Japanese had fallen victims to bombs or bullets in the area. One of their air-raid

shelters, only a few yards away, received a direct hit and its 90 occupants were partly buried, partly blown all over the convent. Another house, where sick soldiers were sheltering, had likewise been struck by one of the big bombs and the remains of its inmates were scattered all over the country-side.

On the other side of the convent a gruesome scene met the eyes of the Sisters. The body of a Japanese soldier was lying half way through the barbed wire fence. The legs had been torn off but the rest of the body was intact. The nuns helped the Red Cross men to get him through the fence.

The more heroic amongst the Sisters gave themselves to the horrible task of gathering up the mangled remains of the Japanese soldiers. Bucket after bucket was filled up and handed over to the guards for burial.

Two hundred Japanese airmen had occupied our native Sisters' former convent. An aerial torpedo had blown them out of existence.

Towards evening a representative of the Kempi paid me a visit of condolence. He expressed his sympathy and I believe he was sincere. In Japanese fashion he offered me and the four missionaries staying with me one bottle of Saki and some little presents, usually supplied by comforts funds.

The Japanese were amazed to hear that our prison camp had only one death from the raid compared with their 500. They were not particularly pleased with the news. Perhaps it dawned on them that our precautions were better than theirs and that Powers unknown to them protected us.

Our grotto and its surroundings had been smashed beyond recognition. Our Lady and her grotto had attracted an abnormal number of heavy bombs meant for us.

The very evident and almost miraculous protection with which Almighty God had over-shadowed us filled us with untold joy and a feeling of security even in the face of things to come.

The sun went down that evening on a desolate picture in Vunapope. Orders were given by the military police that we were to remain near the air-raid shelters at night.

So each took a blanket and pillow and went off to the tunnels. Inside everyone took turns at lying down.

Soon we discovered that our tunnels were not built for comfort. We had seating for 350 people, but if everybody wished to lie down and stretch their legs, the tunnels had to be four times as large. When we realised that the shelters would be our only abode we worked feverishly to enlarge them by burrowing deeper and making new side entrances.

Ventilation became a major problem. When the tunnels were packed to the last place, the heat and moisture became intolerable. We all got "prickly heat" and skin complaints. Soon we had the trouble solved through the new side entrances and by digging special air shafts.

Another worry, even more important, was water. Until now we had an excellent reticulation system—supplying water to all the houses of Vunapope. Even in our camp we had our taps. The power house worked the pumps and these brought the water into the two reservoirs on top of the hill in which we had our tunnels.

Anticipating an emergency we had a second well dug in our camp. A small petrol engine operated the pump.

The first bombing destroyed the power house and our emergency well was filled in from a direct hit. Here we were now without drinking water and without a drop to wash ourselves. Our clothes were drenched with perspiration.

On the foreshore of Vunapope the Japanese had dug, near to the water's edge, water holes five to six feet deep. In spite of the nearness to the sea, it was clean, drinkable water, not at all brackish.

The calmest time of the day was between 5 and 6 p.m., when hardly any raiders disturbed us. At that time we would see columns of people armed with buckets, jugs, saucepans, saki bottles and anything that would hold water heading for the well. They were our Kininigunan boys, seminarians, half-caste boys and girls. Some Sisters accompanied the girls. We thought it wise to give the Sisters and girls some Guardian Angels, as there were many Japanese near the well. Three Fathers escorted them daily for nearly four

months. There were no unwarranted incidents nor any accidents from bombs or bullets.

Our water supply was safeguarded in that way. We could drink and wash.

A few preferred a dip in the sea and a short swim. I was amongst them. However, I went to the sea in great style, escorted by deacon and sub-deacon, all three of us solemnly arrayed in dressing gowns.

The life of my sub-deacon was particularly dear to himself. Rev. Father John Mayerhofer (Karlai) had been tortured and nearly flogged to death by the Japanese for helping Australian soldiers to escape and for not betraying the whereabouts of the coast watchers. No wonder he looked after it more carefully than the others. At the sound of an approaching 'plane he would disappear and take cover with the agility of a native. The danger gone, he would reappear to escort me. Except for a few scares, we had no accidents.

The harbour, so full of life a few months ago, was dead now. A good number of Japanese warships and transports were there, but they rested on the bottom of the sea. Blinds were no longer needed in our camp, as there was nothing that could be "damaged by our eyes."

The first bombs had blasted our kitchen out of existence, but the Brothers lost no time in rigging up a stove under a shady tree near the tunnel. We tried to point out to the good Sisters the advantages this new cook house had over the old one: here they would have plenty of fresh air, with an unimpeded view of dive-bombers . . . they could communicate their feelings easily by shaking clenched fists, frying pans or kitchen knives at the attackers. Strange to say, this did not appeal to the Sisters—and in the next bombardment this new kitchen suffered the same fate as the old one.

We had our bombing attacks every day, after they started on 11th February. Raids became a matter of routine with us. During that week the programme never varied from day to day.

Mass and Holy Communion was at 5 a.m. After breakfast the Sisters started the washing that had to be done every

day on account of the wounded. Between 8 and 10 a.m. the air-raid alarm was given by our watchful natives. In an orderly fashion we went into our tunnels. Everybody knew his or her place. In a few minutes the roar of the approaching 'planes grew stronger. They came in formation and some of us counted: 100, 200, 300, 400, 500. O God, have mercy on us!

The bombers, too, followed a routine. They used to break it gently to us, by giving us a murderous blast of machine-gun bullets first, then they released the block-busters intended to finish us off.

There was silence in the tunnels. Nobody talked. Each was preparing to meet his Creator. It could have been that last hour for which we so often in life recommended ourselves to our Heavenly Mother.

The first machine-gun blast was the signal for the priests, who were placed in the different sections of the shelters, to give General Absolution. I was in charge of a side entrance which we called the "Council's Cellar" after a famous restaurant in Salzburg. There was a slight difference between the two cellars: in Salzburg they served drinks and refreshments, but here bombs and aerial torpedoes were offered.

As usual, the first bomb extinguished the oil lamps and submerged the tunnels in an infernal darkness. All except the "Council's Cellar." There we had electric light. Our battery flashlights had been out of action for more than two years but I was lucky enough to possess a hand-operated generator torch. I kept it going by just moving my fingers. And what a blessing it was! We could see each other and knew that our part of the tunnel had not yet caved in.

This precious little torch is still going strong after 15 years and does good service for me on my Confirmation tours when other lights fail.

During the next few days we were harassed by rainy weather and the lack of adequate cover. Our houses were too far gone and too leaky to give us any protection.

For the sick and wounded our Brothers built a couple of small shacks as shelters against rain and sun. When the alarm was given the ill were carried on stretchers into the tunnel.

The Brothers put up a shack for the Bishop also. It was my Episcopal Palace No. 7 and consisted of a slanting corrugated iron roof, heavily camouflaged on top by a layer of twisted iron and rubbish.

It was luxuriously furnished. In one corner was my bed. There was even a table and a dozen chairs for the Fathers who cared to share the palace with me. It was perfectly ventilated, as there were no walls. During rainy days and generally during hours free from air raids it proved a great boon to us.

For a couple of nights I tried to sleep in the tunnel but then decided to stay in my palace on my bed, leaving to others my place in the shaft. It was not all comfort, really, to sleep outside. Every night some 'planes had to make a nuisance of themselves by dropping bombs or machine-gunning.

If the roar of a 'plane woke me up, I jumped out of bed and slipped into the nearest tunnel. We were all a bit allergic to the noise of aircraft engines by now. Though a heavy sleeper, their sound got me out of bed without difficulty. Rev. Father Franke was my faithful companion in these nightly gymnastics. Sometimes we met two or three times at our common asylum. Normally a 'plane kept us there for a few minutes only. Then we returned contentedly to our beds.

After being bombed for the whole week we reckoned it was getting somewhat boring. The Allies obligingly sprung a surprise on us by shelling us from the sea. Six destroyers, unseen in the pitch dark, started to give us a fiendish concert. It was a change, certainly, but I am not sure that we appreciated it.

With practically everyone in the tunnels, I was soundly asleep in my palace. Bursting shells made me dive with extra speed for safety.

And what a concert it was: broadside on, the guns roared at us, the shells screaming in varied keys and exploding with noises different from those we were used to. Although they tormented us for three hours, we felt pretty secure.

A few days later they returned to play the second

part of their programme. We sat in our tunnels praying. When it was over, we came out into the night to get a little fresh air. The Fathers and Brothers' house, a three-storey building, was ablaze. The sight was magnificent but terrible. Until the Japanese commandeered it for their hospital it had been the home of our missionaries for 50 years.

Every few minutes there would be a deafening explosion which sent glowing sparks hundreds of feet into the sky. A number of other houses, though demolished by shells, were not set on fire.

Some at Vunapope suspected the Japanese of hiding explosives under the Red Cross. I would not credit them with such foolishness.

Besides, as I have mentioned before, I had a chance of seeing that house crowded with patients to the last square inch.

The reason for the fire and the successive explosions were petrol drums, which had been stored in the vicinity of the house for their ambulances and cars.

Next morning we inspected the effect of the shelling. Some of the buildings were knocked down, others just damaged. We were amazed at the small shell holes. These were about a foot deep and four feet in diameter. We compared them with our average bomb craters which were 20 feet deep and 33 feet across. We felt degraded by the four-inch shells.

We had expected the Japanese artillery to go into action during the night shelling. We knew of its existence from occasional shooting practices during which the heavy missiles flew over our heads and landed in the sea. But the Japanese guns kept absolutely silent, not betraying their positions by even a single shot. ———

Actually, we could not complain very much about the small shells, for the next morning brought us a new air raid. The bombers hurled destruction again and again on our weary heads. Apart from more mission buildings, fowls, pigs and goats were the main victims of that morning's work.

Therefore, when the "all-clear" sounded, all the able-

bodied Sisters were recruited to pluck fowls or skin goats and the Brothers to cut up the pigs.

Rumours circulated in the camp: "Did you hear? To-morrow the Sisters are going to throw a big dinner for us. Yes, it will be a three-course dinner: pork, goat and chicken. I assure you, never before was there such a banquet and never again will there be the like at Vunapope. Yes, and liver sausages galore to cheer us up in the days to come."

The good Sisters worked the whole day. Rain poured down on them but no one budged. Wet to the skin, they continued preparation for the morrow's feast. Towards evening all the cooking pots were filled. How we looked forward to the next day's dinner!

It was not to be, for next morning the Americans brought over another load of bombs. Not THE GOOD SISTERS, but THEY threw our dinner into the mud. They planted a bomb right in the middle of our banquet-to-be. There they were, "the flesh pots" of Vunapope blown to pieces or twisted and the precious contents scattered hither and thither. We did not get a mouthful. Too bad! "Never mind, Sisters," I said, "here is a dish full of tapioca and a few slices of coconut for you."

Further bombings, however, brought fresh farmyard victims and the plucking and butchering began again, but this time only half-heartedly. Intuition told us we were not destined to have a feast. As we expected, again not a mouthful was left for us.

Sunday, 27th February, brought for us the climax of all the bombardments. It was our Gethsemani; it was a reliability test Our Lord wanted us to undergo; it was a test, as well, of the strength of the resistance of our tunnels.

RELIABILITY TEST

After three days of heavy bombing our nerves were beginning to fray. But the most terrible of our trials was still in store for us. The mere sound of a 'plane caused a universal shudder. At 9 a.m. the alarm was given. We walked to the tunnels hurriedly. Soon came the customary blast of machine-gun bullets immediately followed by the

crashing of bombs. The priest gave the General Absolution. We felt that this time they were meant for us. They were out for a kill. The little half-caste boys left their side shelter and squeezed into the innermost part of the main tunnel. The poor Sisters, too, were clinging to each other like orphans attacked by an ogre, trembling with fear but murmuring quietly: "Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in Thee," "Sub tuum praesidium."

Only a few minutes and all was over; it had seemed like hours. We had just time to relight our oil lamps when this announcement shocked us: "The 'planes are coming back."

The 'planes gave us again a terrifying going-over. The side entrance, where the half-caste boys normally sheltered, was smashed in by a torpedo bomb. As they had previously abandoned this position, none was harmed. The bomb hit the tunnel only a few yards from the entrance and the cover proved insufficient to withstand the explosion.

Ten minutes' respite. We flocked out to get a breath of fresh air. We began to think that the ordeal was over for the day.

Another shock: "What is that over there?" someone asked. A third group of 'planes was heading straight for us. The sight made the bravest heart sink. One and all thought the bombers were determined to pound the tunnel till they bashed it in completely.

In fear and trembling we began the prayers again. We felt our last hour in this world had come. Our emotions were like to Our Lord's when he suffered in Gethsemani. He, too, was overwhelmed with fear; he trembled and perspired blood. He prayed fervently and asked His Divine Father three times to let the chalice of suffering pass.

But there was this difference between His agony and ours. He knew with certainty what was going to happen to Him; we just feared the worst. Still a bright spark of hope remained in our troubled hearts.

What really mattered in both cases was: "Not my will but Thine be done."

As yet another group of bombers was announced, we followed the example of Our Saviour; we made our act of resignation to death. "Not my will but Thine be done."

It echoed from young to old. "Accept, O Lord, our lives and grant Thy grace to those entrusted to us that they may find You and follow You."

Yes, that was it, the grand finale of our reliability test. We did not renounce Our Lord or doubt His existence nor did we reproach Him or murmur or grumble against Him—we simply resigned ourselves to His Divine Will.

Divine Providence spared us. There was not a single casualty in our tunnels. The sacrifice of our lives was accepted; not that we might be mangled and buried in the bowels of that hill but that we might live and do God's work according to His plans.

When, at last, we were able to emerge once more into the light of day it was a fine feeling to be still alive. Our hearts welled up in gratitude to God Almighty for His absolutely miraculous protection of His missionaries.

Our relatives and friends in Australia did their utmost to get reliable reports concerning us. The Red Cross was not allowed by the Japanese to contact us in any way. The only source of information was the American High Command. The inquirers got the official reply: "The missionaries are no longer at Vunapope, but if they are, they are not alive. No human being could survive the bombardment that Vunapope underwent in February, 1944."

Well, we were alive, very much so. Perhaps some might imagine us sitting there with drawn faces, crying, wringing our hands and bewailing the loss of all our earthly possessions.

Far from it. Hadn't we, when we entered religious life, pledged ourselves to perpetual poverty? Here our vows were exacted, only in a more severe form than we ever anticipated.

Divine Providence stripped us of everything, down to the barest necessities of life. Our houses were gone, our water supply had been destroyed and now our store of food, which we so proudly estimated to last for more than one year, was annihilated. Our 30 tons of rice were a smouldering heap of ashes. The flour we had milled was no more, all our tinned meat and butter and jam had been devoured by the bombs.

But two things remained: half a drum of caustic soda and one sealed tin of wheaten flour. It was providential, as we shall see, that both these items were left for us.

OPERATION "CARGO"

The afternoon after the heavy attack was relatively undisturbed by strafing 'planes. We surveyed the damage done. Destruction was all around us. The environs of both tunnels looked like a landscape after a volcanic eruption. Huge bomb-craters ruined the road between our tunnels, the piled earth blocking the way. Although we did not know the weight of the bombs dropped on us, we called them block-busters or torpedo bombs. We all agreed on one thing: the craters had an average diameter of 33 feet and were 20 feet deep. The whole of Vunapope, and an area far beyond, was disfigured by them. Even our cemetery received seven hits. All the cement crosses were blown away and the graves indescribably disturbed.

Most of the houses in Vunapope had disappeared. A few still stood, with torn roofs and battered walls. These included the cathedral, the Bishop's House, the half-caste boys' school and a pre-school building.

I took upon myself the duty of a first reconnoitring patrol beyond our camp limits. There was no wire any more, except for twisted scraps lying about. Here was the spot where the prison camp gate used to be. No need for me to ring the bell; it had gone. And the Kempfi quarters had vanished. Their personnel had left for more peaceful realms in the bush, as had all the patients, hospital attendants and doctors.

I entered the pre-school building. It was more or less intact. What a surprise! The house was not very big but it was crammed with precious foodstuffs. Cases and cases of tinned meat, fish, biscuits, coffee, tea, cocoa, mixed vegetables, boxes of caramels, hospital wine and even some beer. Nearby was a shed with a torn kunai grass roof. It was stacked full of rice in bags.

There and then I decided to proclaim myself Commander-in-Chief of all combined mission forces and Japanese stores.

I blew my whistle three times shrilly and joyfully. As if by magic our gallant Kininigunan boys came out of their tunnels and holes to await my orders. I appointed Brother Landinger and his battalion in charge of "Operation Cargo." I briefly explained our objective and then they went into action. In a few minutes reinforcements arrived to lend a hand with the second store. What gladness to see food coming in by the tons. I had indeed found a treasure trove!

So the Japs had intended to kill us by starvation? Our Father in Heaven frustrated anew their plans. He even gave His children some pleasant extras after making good their losses caused by the total destruction of their provisions.

When the "Operation Cargo" was in full swing I lost no time in investigating the boys' school.

Here I struck a new hoard. This building was used by the Japanese as dispensary and medical store. Medicines galore! Stocktaking was a bit difficult, as most of the labels were marked in Japanese characters. But a goodly number had both Japanese and Latin names on them. I admired their kind consideration. I took mental notes for later reference. What I sought just now was quinine and atebrin. I spent quite a time looking for both but I failed to find any. I was puzzled. Surely the enemy forces would have quinine in their dispensary.

I noticed a pair of dirty Japanese shoes in the lowest compartment of a filing cabinet. Two bottles of quinine were hidden in them, each containing 1000 tablets.

For once I bowed in true Japanese fashion and said: "Arigato gozaimas"—"Thank you very much,"—to the unknown donor who had put them there for me. With considerable pleasure I pocketed both bottles and searched for more. I was lucky to find another two bottles. A total of 4000 tablets of quinine was the result from preliminary investigations. Later we found other stocks, and even some atebrin.

Yes, hadn't the Japs schemed to exterminate us by lack of quinine and other medicines? Well, our Father in Heaven had a different plan. By this time their chances of success ran at low ebb indeed.

When this eventful day was declining, towards six

c'clock, dinner was announced. In fact, it would be a buffet dinner, followed by a buffet breakfast, lunch and dinner the next day and thereafter for the next two years.

I have participated since in quite a number of buffet dinners, amongst them one given in honour of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh at Rabaul.

I have thus learned that we had rigidly adhered to the essential requirements of such a banquet.

Of course I had the power to dispense all the gentlemen from wearing dinner jackets, black ties and miniatures but it remained obligatory for the ladies to wear long frocks. This our Sisters did in an exemplary way.

At the official dinner in Rabaul, everyone picked up a plate, spoon, knife and fork.

We had done exactly the same, except that everybody was allowed to keep these implements for good, devoting personal care to them. I doubt if even His Royal Highness was granted that privilege.

At Rabaul there was a confusing variety of dishes laid out. It was very difficult to select what one really wanted and that could easily lead to a dilemma.

We did not like confusion and to spare everybody embarrassment, we served only rice, bully beef, fish and Japanese vegetables.

Dinner tables are not according to etiquette on such occasions. In this, we were very correct, for we had none. Seating was ample and optional; one could sit inside the tunnel or in the fresh air on fallen trees, on the edge of bomb craters, empty boxes, etc.

We all agreed that the buffet dinner was a great success and decided to make it a permanent institution.

But who cooked our feast? The two kitchens with all their pots and pans had been blown away. Soon we learned that we had two new kitchens with two new chefs. One was Brother Landinger with some of his boys as assistants and, at the other tunnel, Sister M. Petra, helped by some of the seminarians. Personal qualifications for the cooks were courage, agility and some knowledge of the trade.

After the big raids we were pestered the whole day through by strafing and bombing 'planes. It was a very

tricky business for our gallant cooks. In spite of all the difficulties they managed, without exception, to serve our meals every day.

And the kitchen? In a sense it was ultra-modern. No fussing about with failing gas, steam or electricity. We had none of these.

Four stones, a drum cut in half on top of them, a home-made lid and the open-air kitchen was ready for action. And some 350 people were fed by it every day!

There was another pleasant surprise for us in the evening of this eventful day. The "Commander-in-Chief of the combined mission forces and Japanese stores" invited all members of the mission to a musical beer party.

What! Did somebody mention beer? Yes, good Japanese Kerin Beer, the same as His Divine Majesty the Emperor Hirohito drinks. All who desired it got a tiny bottle of beer. Our sick members were served hospital wine. We cheered and toasted each other. Everybody was convinced that after torpedo bombs in the morning, beer in the evening was good for you, especially for your constitution.

Father Kersken played his guitar, he sang and we joined in. It was a grand concert and a tonic for our nerves and mental balance.

In our evening prayers we thanked our Heavenly Father for the bombs and for His protection, for the Japanese stores and the quinine, for the buffet dinner and for evening entertainment.

We had an undisturbed night.

Up to this time we had had bread. It was dark brown and tasty. But now our stocks of home-milled flour and mill had been destroyed. What a surprise awaited us next morning. Our Father in Heaven provided our daily bread for which we had been praying every day. Each of us received one packet of Manila biscuits and according to taste, tea, coffee or cocoa. This supply lasted for more than two months. The buffets offered an appreciated variety in addition to the garden products which our two Zebu oxen brought in every day, often with great difficulty. The Brothers remained in the gardens in spite of bombs and hardships. One of them,



Brother Schultingkamper, later became seriously ill and died in our tunnel.

After the destruction of our various chapels, Holy Mass was said in the two tunnels, one in each. We had quite a number of priests, so we offered Mass in turn. We all received Holy Communion daily. It was as if we were in the catacombs. The priest distributed Holy Communion walking through the different sections of the tunnels. Because of their narrowness we could not kneel and so we received standing. We had a niche carved into a wall and there, in a tabernacle, we reserved the Blessed Sacrament. A red lamp reminded us of His presence in our midst. That was what gave us strength, consolation and courage: Our Lord with us and we partaking of His Body and Blood every day.

At nine o'clock that morning we had our customary air-raid alarm. We counted the approaching bombers and with throbbing hearts took to the shelters. We could not guess the 'planes' target. Would this raid be worse than that of the day before? We went through the usual routine. A few bombs in the vicinity extinguished our oil lamps but, generally speaking, it was not to be compared with the four-act extravaganza of the day before.

Still we felt its effects. You know, bombs give you a parched tongue and a sour taste in the mouth. The sound of the homeward bound 'planes was fading away and lo! caramels were being passed through the tunnels. What a marvellous way to alleviate our bitter existence and to sweeten our troubled lives. The lollies were highly appreciated by everyone, from the Bishop to the last school child.

We decided: "Caramels after bombs are good for you," and we made it a permanent feature of our air-raid ritual.

The "glassman" (that is what the natives call a reconnaissance 'plane) faithfully spied on Vunapope after every raid, but by this time we were not quite so keen on disclosing our whereabouts to the observer.

A few days previously we had formed, by means of pieces of galvanised iron laid on the ground, a message for him. "MISSION" it shouted in huge letters.

We got his reply promptly by the next air raid: a

torpedo bomb landed directly on our sign and did not leave a trace of it. After that we preferred to live incognito.

We speculated about this fellow and his work. It was surely his duty to take aerial photographs and submit a report to his superiors. Now we imagined the American High Command, after examining both, demanding an explanation as to why four houses were still standing at Vunapope after such a tremendous bombardment.

We could have easily given the reasons. One was that the Bishop was so extremely busy with the successful completion of the "Operation Cargo," that he had had no time to check the contents of his former Bishop's House, now abandoned by the Japanese Generals.

At our earliest convenience we went over and investigated. In a way, the result was disappointing: an empty house, battered walls and five torpedo bomb craters adorning the garden. But on the verandah was a big heap of mattresses which looked very much like some of our own. All were drenched with rain water.

Any use for rain-drenched mattresses? You bet we had.

"Hullo, boys, get those mattresses and take them to the Sisters." A funny-looking procession moved towards the tunnels.

The Sisters were delighted. "Just the thing we wanted. We have been so sorry for our sick and dying who have been lying on hard planks. Now we shall be able to give them a little comfort in the tunnels."

Sisters and girls acted smartly. They removed the kapok from the mattresses and dried it carefully in the sun. The covers were washed and disinfected. We could not use the full-size mattresses in our tunnels as they would have blocked them. So the nuns made others, smaller in size, using the Japanese material as well as our own. The new ones were only 12 inches wide and not very thick, as the kapok had to go a long way. It was a great improvement not only for sick persons but for many others as well. We were grateful to the good Sisters.

The next air raid brought us a new surprise. The diving planes were howling, screeching and screaming. Then came a noise that puzzled us. It sounded like very heavy rain.

No explosions. It was rain all right but a fiery rain. The aircraft dropped thousands of incendiaries on us. Each was a hexagonal cylinder approximately 12 inches long and two inches in diameter.

We had camouflaged the tunnel entrances with dry coconut leaves. These caught fire. Heavy smoke poured into the recesses and made some of us a bit panicky.

As soon as the 'planes left, we emerged and put out the fire at the entrances. But what a sight! Vunapope in flames! The Bishop's House and the other residences were still standing. With the exception of the cathedral, all were blazing fiercely. Smoke was coming from my "Palace No. 7." An incendiary bomb had penetrated the iron roof and landed on my bed. A corner of my mattress was on fire. One of the boys grabbed my wash-basin and threw water onto the fire. As a result, it exploded into thousands of sparks, endangering other things. "Oh, no, boys," I said, "that is not the way to extinguish fire bombs. Quick! a spade, put earth on it." That did the trick. To say the least, I thought it a bit disrespectful on the part of the Americans. Imagine throwing fire bombs on a Bishop's bed! That should not be.

Of course, our good Sisters had my mattress repaired in no time, thus assuring me of a good rest again.

Before sunset I went to see my house again. It was just a heap of smouldering embers and ashes by that time. But there was the Bishop's cement safe towering above the ashes like a monument of past glory. I tried my key in the steel door. It did not work. The handle had been broken off anyway.

The general opinion in our camp was that such an all-out attack, a "softening up" as the Americans called it, was a sure sign of an imminent landing. That was my opinion too. I decided not to open the safe by force, but to trust in Divine Providence and leave it as it was.

Further assault raids brought our cathedral down piece by piece, until at last the two towers, with the bronze statue of the Sacred Heart standing between them, crashed to the ground.

Early next morning our Brothers went and unscrewed the statue and the two church bells, all of which were

undamaged. They brought them, over to the tunnels and buried them in one of the biggest bomb craters, carefully covering them with soil and debris, lest the Japanese should get interested in them.

JOSEPH

Our "Operation Cargo" had made rather a clean sweep of all foodstuffs in our operation radius. The following incendiary bomb attack destroyed everything left by us. But Joseph, an auxiliary teacher at the Kininigunan school, had his doubts.

He said to himself that we and the bombers may have overlooked something and that he had better go and investigate.

Sure enough, under the debris he found a case of tinned food. He was just going to shoulder it when he saw a Japanese officer approaching at a distance. Too bad! He left his case and went into full sprint towards our tunnel. The officer ran after him, shouting orders in Japanese for Joseph to stop. But Joseph was too quick for him and reached the tunnel well ahead. A group of Kininigunan boys were standing there but Joseph did not enter. He knew that to hide in the shelter would endanger us.

Instead, just a few yards from where he paused, he disappeared, in true native fashion, from the face of the earth. Lying flat on the ground he covered himself with some twisted roofing iron.

Fuming with rage and brandishing his revolver, the officer arrived at the spot and demanded to know where the fellow was. The other boys innocently asked to whom he was referring.

"That fellow who ran away from me."

"Ah, yes, there, there, there," they shouted excitedly, pointing to the slope of the hill. "Can't you see him?"

"No."

"You'd better hurry, he may escape." The officer took off in hot pursuit. The result was positively negative. Joseph was careful not to meet this soldier in the near future; but he felt he had a personal account to settle with the Japanese. He did not have to wait very long.

GOAT HUNT

Our Sisters had a few goats but all except one fell victims to the bombs. The Sisters were very fond of her and cared for her.

One fine afternoon, an enterprising Japanese soldier appeared on the scene. He was armed with a lasso and a stick. Without much formality he started to rope our goat. The Sisters saw him and protested excitedly, but he only laughed at them. Soon I was on the spot and ordered him off, demanding that he leave the goat alone. But he sneered at me.

Wait, little hero, we will teach you a lesson. Three sharp blows from my whistle and the place swarmed with Kininigunan boys. They waited for my command: "Boys, get him."

In a few seconds he was surrounded and our teacher, Joseph, jumped at him from behind and securely closed his muscular arms round the Jap. Poor little hero! In spite of his lasso and stick he was helpless.

At that moment I noticed a Japanese officer approaching.

I ordered Joseph: "Let him loose, but keep an eye on him." It was hard on Joseph to obey, but he did it. Freed from the not too tender embrace, the soldier attempted to escape.

But exactly, à la cat-and-mouse, Joseph sprang at him and embraced him again. I said to Joseph: "An officer is coming, that makes it much easier for us. We shall hand him over to him, let him go again." He did so reluctantly.

When the captain arrived I explained to him that this fellow intended to rob our Sisters of the last goat the bombs had left them.

He asked the soldier if this were true. "For heaven's sake, no!" he replied. "I was only looking for some pawpaws."

The officer could see he was lying. He asked me what I wished him to do with this soldier.

"Captain," I said, "it is up to you. You may punish him according to your military laws. We are glad to be still in possession of our goat."

He rasped a few orders to the culprit, saluted and both left. We hoped he would not be too severe with him.

ROMANCE SPOILED

On one of those evenings at 8 p.m. I was urgently summoned. The message was: Three Japanese soldiers are attempting to enter the half-caste girls' section in the tunnel.

In a few seconds I was there. It was pitch dark. I could only dimly make out three figures. Without much ado, I grabbed the nearest fellow's arm and gave him a mighty push: "Get out of here!"

"Brr. . . ."

He was not like one of those timid Japs, who, on a previous occasion, behaved like lambs.

Flying into a rage, he drew his Samurai sword (for he was a captain) and started to attack me. However, his two companions intervened, one snatching the arm with which he was brandishing a sword. They talked excitedly at him and pushed him out of range.

Somebody had told me that once a Japanese officer draws his sword it has to drink blood. Too bad for me. Thanks to the other two captains, the danger was diminishing. We heard him on the way out swearing and cursing in Japanese.

Swish, swish, what is that now? Our captain was furiously slashing, right and left, everything that came his way. A number of young pawpaw trees sacrificed their white blood as substitute for mine. Yes, the Samurai sword was drinking blood. I sincerely hope that the old Samurai, in the Japanese heaven, were satisfied with the exchange.

Suddenly the swearing and slashing stopped. What had happened? The sword slipped from his hand and landed deep down in the dense kunai grass. Too bad! All three captains searched for it. The night was still deep. They could not find it.

They set off on the path to their base. But a new misfortune overtook our hero. On the road they met their superior, a major.

The two captains reported the whole incident to him.

On the spot he court martialled our hero by slapping his face, right and left, until justice was done.

In the morning they found his sword. The question then arose amongst us as to whether its honour was lost or restored in the whole affair.

Did the drawn sword lose its honour by not drinking human blood? Or was its honour restored by drinking a substitute?

Was its honour spoiled again by slipping out of the hand?

Was the hero's honour spoiled by slashing a substitute and losing his sword?

Had his honour been restored by the punishment he got?

Were both honours lost or both restored?

As you can see for yourself, it was a very complicated and complex case. We left it to the Japanese court of honour to give the last verdict.

The next afternoon, three visitors called and asked to see the Bishop. I met them and inquired what I could do for them.

Oh, nothing in particular. They had just come to see how I was and to have a chat.

I had a good look at them. They were captains. Last night there had been three captains too. One of these, I noticed, had a slightly swollen face. Must be a coincidence, I thought. The conversation kept to more or less indifferent subjects. The officers were very tame and polite.

Soon I was sure these were our three "knight bachelors." They had come to see if I was still upset and what steps I was eventually going to take. They probably knew of my unpleasant habit of writing letters to the Commander-in-Chief on such occasions.

The conversation did not touch the incident of the previous night. As they were courteous, so was I.

They left, their forebodings of some greater evil almost gone.

I was satisfied that their intended romance had been spoiled. The girls were unharmed and punishment had

been meted out by the major. As far as we were concerned the incident was closed.

When we heard about the court martial on the road we were amazed. That was a new one on us. From discreet inquiries we learned that it was a standard procedure in the Japanese armed forces: the superior in rank is allowed to slap his subordinate. That incident on the road seemed to prove it.

Some among us claimed to have witnessed whole platoons being slapped on the face by their commanding officer. Doing this by hand would prove a rather painful experience for the superior. To forestall such a calamity, it was the habit of the commander to use one of his canvas shoes with rubber soles. That was more satisfactory and practically painless for himself.

A special code exists for such procedures. For the afflicted subordinates it is a matter of honour not to display any resentment. They show their officer that they have courage to take it.

Now this interesting military custom set us speculating. Would this slapping operation "work" on the whole rank-ladder, topped by the Emperor, from the highest officer down to the last sergeant?

Somebody put a theoretical case. For instance, let us assume the General High Command at Tokyo evoked the displeasure of the Emperor for losing battles or some such similar thing. Would the Emperor, in his divine anger, take a slipper and give them a first hand doing-over? If he did, would that result in a gigantic chain reaction consisting of High Command slapping generals and admirals and these in turn slapping colonels with the action then cascading to majors, captains, lieutenants, sergeant-majors and lastly sergeants slapping the rest of the army and navy?

This scheme is not so clear cut as it looks. For example, Kempi or Military Police have powers of Cheka and Gestapo combined. A chief of police might be only a sergeant-major but if they deserved it he could slap an admiral or a general.

Through lack of reliable literature and information on the subject, we were not in a position to determine the final result of the process.

ORDER TO SHIFT US FROM VUNAPOPE

It was the end of March. The daily air raids continued. For us they proved to be just force of habit. The majority was by this time less allergic to the bombs. When the air-raid alarm was sounded there was no need to urge people to enter the tunnels; most of us were in there anyway. Some remained outside to watch the direction and count the bombers, then they came in and reported.

It happened more frequently now that the 'planes by-passed or ignored us. Nobody felt offended by that. At Vunapope there was nothing more to be bombed. Our 72 houses were gone. Huge craters were in their place. Bombs could only enlarge the craters. That the Allies did from time to time but with less enthusiasm and vigour.

On 28th March three officers from the High Command came to see me. They categorically declared: "You won't stay any longer at Vunapope. We are going to shift you all to a better place."

Our first reaction was fierce suspicion. Were the Japanese really concerned about our welfare? These very same fellows who had had a double plan to exterminate us all by starvation and malaria? Realising that neither of their schemes had worked and that even bombs could not kill us, we wondered what were they up to now? Did they want our bomb-proof tunnels for themselves or were they going to put us some place where starvation, malaria and bombs would finish us for sure?

The three officers left to find a suitable site for us. When they were gone we discussed the matter and I got busy with my typewriter composing a letter addressed to the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese forces.

Vunapope.

28th March, 1944.

Your Excellency,

I would like to inform you that it has been suggested by some of your staff officers that we, the Catholic missionaries and civilian population of Vunapope, should leave our present abode and go to another place further inland. If this proposal has your sanction I would like to bring the following points to your notice:

1. As missionaries we desire to be taken to a safe place on condition that it is declared open and the position communicated to the American High Command according to International Law.
2. We desire to be removed from any military objective: guns, camps and searchlights.
3. That the food supply from our gardens at Takubar and a certain amount of medicine is guaranteed.
4. That sufficient tents are provided for 350 people.
5. Transport facilities are of the greatest importance as we have no means of conveyance of our own. Very few of us are able to carry their belongings. Some are very old, some are sick, some are wounded and some are young children. We also have had cases of pneumonia, typhoid fever and dysentery amongst us. In five weeks 14 of us died.

In conclusion, I hope our present case will receive your kind consideration.

Yours respectfully,

✠ LEO SCHARMACH,
Bishop of Rabaul.

After two hours or so the three officers returned and cheerily exclaimed: "Bishop, we got a new place for you fellows. If you wish you may send two of your men to inspect it. Kempfi will provide escort."

"Yes," I said, "we will do that. But will you be so kind as to forward this letter to the Commander-in-Chief?" The letter was not sealed so they eagerly opened it and read it. They handed it back to me remarking: "That's all right."

"No," I said, "I wish you to forward this letter to its addressee."

"No need, no need."

"Do you refuse to forward it?"

"There is no need for it."

"Sir, your name please!"

A number of Fathers and Brothers were standing round us, their eyes flashing anger.

The officer meekly took the letter and promised to forward it. He did.

Next morning I appointed Fathers Murche and Muller, who knew the locality, to investigate the new place. They went escorted by the Kempí.

In the late afternoon they returned, the Fathers slightly ahead of the Japanese. They hurriedly reported their findings to me: "The place is unsuitable for us, there is no water at all in the dry season and in the rainy season it is swampy. The terrain is not suitable for digging tunnels. It is flat. It is too far from our gardens."

A few minutes later the Kempí arrived. They were enthusiastic about the new place. But I gave them an icy reception.

"Sorry," I said, "the two Fathers have just reported to me. The place is unsuitable and we cannot accept it."

They exploded in rage, gesticulating wildly.

"Hey! hey!" I said, "calm down, my refusal has nothing to do with you and is in no way a reflection upon you. You simply report to your superiors that the Bishop finds the place unsuitable and refuses to accept it." They went and did as requested.

REPLY FROM HIGH COMMAND

Only a few days elapsed and in came the answer from the Commander-in-Chief. As usual, the High Command did not commit itself by a written response. They preferred to send a high ranking officer and give a verbal reply.

In this instance it was the highest officer of the military police, Colonel Kikuchi, who was sent to me. I had met him on previous occasions and he always gave me the impression of being a well-educated officer with good manners and not at all arrogant. He was accompanied by the American-born Japanese, who was the official interpreter for the Commander-in-Chief.

I was very pleased with this. A clumsy interpreter could be a menace if matters of survival and death, such as these, were under discussion.

When they arrived at about 9 a.m. the air-raid alarm had just been given. Everybody went into the tunnel. I had asked the members of the Episcopal Council to assemble in our "Council's Cellar" in order to be present at the interview with the colonel.

The three of us remained outside the tunnel, standing on an elevation. We had a good view of the approaching bombers. Although they were not heading straight for us, made wise by previous experiences, I kept an eye on them, knowing their nasty habit of changing direction and targets.

"Say, Colonel, what is the present political situation?"

"Exactly as you see it, Bishop."

What did we see? Our mission buildings razed to the ground, huge bomb craters everywhere, ashes, twisted iron and charred pieces of timber—Vunapope, a symbol of Japanese defeat.

On the other hand we saw the American bomber fleet, in majestic formation, proudly sailing by, escorted by fighters, which circled round it in a frolicsome mood: a picture of proud victory.

Yes, it was a very correct answer the officer had given me.

The colonel now asked me a question: "Bishop, what are your plans for the future?"

"Some question that, but you will have my answer. Colonel, here you see us missionaries at the lowest stage of misery; frightened, pale and haggard; debilitated by malaria, dysentery and typhoid. Perhaps you expect us to implore you and your High Command to remove us to a place of safety. We feel safe enough here and we refuse to be moved from here except on our own conditions.

"Our plans for the future? You can take my word of honour for it: all these missionaries, Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, now miserable and weakened, are all waiting for the day when hostilities will cease and our freedom will be restored. Then, you will see these very same missionaries emerge from their tunnels. You will see these emaciated bodies regain strength and health by decent food and medical treatment.

"You will see them setting out to work and rebuild all these destroyed mission stations and out of the ashes will rise something stronger and bigger than there was ever before. Colonel, it takes more than Japanese forces and American bombers to destroy our faith and our spirit."

The Colonel replied: "Yes, Bishop, we admire you and your missionaries' courage and be sure if we Japanese win the war you will have full freedom to practise your religion and exercise your mission work."

"Thank you, Colonel, for your good intentions!" I invited both into our "Council's Cellar," explaining that in case of a raid we would be safer in there and certainly less disturbed.

We got down to business straight away. The Colonel said: "You did not like the place we chose for you. That is all right, you are welcome to send two of your missionaries and select one of your own liking. Kempfi will supply the escort."

"Thank you, Colonel, we shall be pleased to do that."

Then came the official reply to my letter. We discussed it point by point.

1. He said: "You demand that we Japanese communicate the position of your new place to the American High Command. Sorry that can't be done. Bishop, you don't know the Americans; if we do it, they would soon bomb you out again."

I did not insist, not knowing if such things happened in modern warfare.

2. "Your second request is reasonable and we agree to it. Yes, select a place for yourselves and keep away from military objectives."

3. "The food supply from your own gardens at Takubar shall be guaranteed to you and the Brothers will be allowed to care for them as before."

"You request that a certain amount of medicines should be guaranteed to your camp. I am sure the High Command will do its best, but being short ourselves we can't give you any guarantee."

I understood perfectly what that meant. In the past, they had strictly forbidden the giving of any medicines to us and they would certainly do the same in the future. However, there was no use worrying, we would probably manage without their help. I was sure Divine Providence would not forsake us.

4. I had asked for a sufficient number of tents to house our 350 people. "Oh, Bishop," he said, "we have no tents even

for our soldiers. They have to build bush houses for themselves."

"Well," I said, "we could do the same, if you give us sufficient time to prepare the new place. And we need not only houses, we need bomb-proof air-raid shelters as well, and that means a new set of tunnels with accommodation for 350 persons."

He had no objection to our proposals. He left it to us to send any number of able-bodied men ahead to do the work, but he regretted that he could give us one month only for the preparations.

Why such a hurry? He didn't tell us, but rumours had it that the Japanese expected an American landing in five or six weeks' time.

5. Now the last point remained for discussion: transport facilities to the new location for our old, sick and disabled missionaries. I asked for three military trucks and without much difficulty he promised them.

Our session had not been interrupted by bombs; the Americans had dropped them somewhere else. All those present, my councillors and others, were pleased with the colonel's fairness in answering our questions and requests.

When we went forth into the sunlight again, the colonel presented me with a case full of quinine, aspirin and some other very useful medicines. He said he thought we might make good use of them. He asked me not to make the gift public as this was a strictly private donation on his part.

Both of us were convinced that these medicines would save lives, but little did either guess that in due time these medicines would be instrumental in saving the colonel's life.

As the news on the result of that conference spread in the camp, there was great excitement. "Let's get busy." The first thing to do was to appoint two experienced men to find a suitable place for us. I appointed Brother Overkamping, an old experienced missionary, and Brother Brenninger, our master carpenter, both with plenty of practical sense and knowledge of the locality. I impressed on them the essential properties the new site must have.

Next morning, escorted by Kempfi and accompanied by

my special blessing and the prayers of the whole camp, they set out on their important errand. In the late afternoon they returned to report on their search.

What they had to say made us all enthusiastic. The natives called the place Ramale. It was a deep valley, closed on three sides in the form of a semi-circle by rather steep mountains which were very suitable for a quick "digging in" and for building even better tunnels than those at Vunapope. At the bottom of the valley was a crystal clear spring, which formed a small creek. There would be unlimited drinking and washing water. The local natives told us that this spring would never dry up even in a long drought season.

The distance from our existing gardens at Takubar where the Brothers worked was about 45 minutes. We were pleased about that too.

So far the valley was untouched by bombs. It was real virgin forest and its giant trees would not allow peeping Toms to do any indiscreet spying on us from above. The undergrowth was so dense that one could only penetrate it with the help of a bush knife.

This report brought new life into us all. We began talking, scheming and planning, continuing well into the night. We realised it would be a gigantic undertaking to build everything necessary to provide accommodation for all without endangering our health. This more from tropical hazards than by bombs. The time limit of one month seemed to make it impossible or at least extremely difficult.

First thing next morning we took stock of available tools. We needed axes and bush knives to clear the tangled undergrowth as well as for cutting posts and rafters for the houses. Saws, hammers, tongs and nails were essential also.

For tunnelling we required picks, spades, shovels, hoes, wheelbarrows and a magnetic compass. We were sure we had saved quite a good number of them at Vunapope and the rest could be supplied by the Brothers in charge of the gardens.

The next question was: who will do the pioneer work? Volunteers galore. All the able-bodied Fathers and Brothers

were keen to go. With them went all the boys we could spare from both tunnels. Only the old and sick remained.

We were fortunate in having so many experienced priests and Brothers. As they were experts in handling bush and tropical problems, we could rest assured that they would achieve what was humanly possible under such circumstances. And we were not disappointed.

The priests took two Mass kits with them and each of the party his blanket and clothes.

Oh, yes, we had saved our clothes. Before we were bombed out orders had been given to all communities for their individual members to pack a suitcase or bag with all clothing in his or her possession. We had them securely stowed away under the seats in our tunnels.

Those who remained at Vunapope were not idle. Great activity started in collecting and saving whatever would be of value to us at Ramale.

Galvanised iron was of the greatest importance. We even gathered sheets slightly pierced by bullets and shrapnel, certain that our Brothers would patch them up later.

After our houses had been damaged by bombs, we put the contents which remained out in the open, some distance from the buildings. Many of us put our valuables, such as books, manuscripts, typewriters, tools and other things, into boxes and covered them with a sheet of galvanised iron. Most of these crates had survived the bombardment but our problem was how to get all these articles safely to Ramale.

OPERATION TRANSPORT

The agreement with the Japanese covered only the transportation of those unable to walk. Three trucks had been promised but uncertain whether or not we would get them, we started a transport operation of our own. The two ox-carts bringing in our food supply from the gardens, returned loaded with things we could not carry.

Priority in the beginning was for the galvanised iron, posts and planks needed to build our houses and to make necessary furniture such as tables, altars, etc.

Second priority was given to books. I was convinced

they were essential to preserve our mental balance, especially if the war should last long. Heavy cases from all communities went on the ox-carts. Other things followed.

They could not be brought directly to Ramale as there was nothing built in which we could put them. They were first stored by our Brothers at the gardens where they had erected a special store for them.

Thus our transport worked for about six weeks until we realised we needed some trucks for weightier things such as furniture, drums full of coconut oil, petrol and kerosene.

With no hope of obtaining transport officially from the High Command, we found a way to get trucks privately from the Japanese soldiers.

Of course, they would not do it out of charity. But then we did not ask for that. Our transactions were based on business principles, on the barter system.

There was Father Weigl, a very practical man, who could build a house, yes, a real European house, not just a bush house. He could make you an easy chair if you provided one piece of sawn timber. He did that for a number of us at Ramale. He also constructed a wooden lathe and turned out pipes, candlesticks and other useful things.

But his ability to repair watches roused the Japanese soldiers' interest.

With the barbed wire and the Kempfi gone, some of the troops took the liberty of nosing around a bit near our tunnels. Here they found Father Weigl sitting in the shade and mending watches. Just the man they were looking for. Their watches had been out of order for a long time.

"Could you repair my watch for me?" a fellow would ask.

"It all depends on what is wrong with it. Let me see it." After examination he would tell his client whether he could or could not repair it. If the job was possible he would say to the soldier: "Yes, I can do it for a little compensation."

"All right, how much does it cost?"

"Well," Father would say, "we are not after money. You are a driver aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Do you see that heap of timber there? We need it for our camp in Ramale. Could you take a truck-load there?"

Usually the driver would be glad to do so and he promptly got his watch repaired. In some instances, however, it was not as easy as that. It even happened that some of us had to sacrifice our own watches to make the driver agreeable. By such means we got all the heavy material out of Vunapope, first to Takubar and later to Ramale.

As we were reduced to bare necessities, all goods so removed by ox-cart and trucks were the minimum for our survival. In dire want, you don't worry about luxuries.

SOAP

The absence of soap and scarcity of water in a tropical prison camp could turn it into a hell. Dermatitis and all kinds of skin diseases make the life of one so afflicted miserable. We had a small taste of this tribulation when our wells had been destroyed and our soap was lost.

Before the Japanese invasion, when the price of copra, i.e., the dried kernel of the coconut, was so low that it did not even cover the production costs, we started to press oil. One of its purposes was to make soap.

We succeeded in producing sufficient soap for the whole mission with its European personnel of 200, for our big laundry and other requirements.

We even taught our natives a very simple process of manufacturing soap for themselves from coconut milk, provided they could buy caustic soda, which then was available.

We were rather proud of our achievements. The good Sisters were in charge of operations. Together with the Sister chemist they found new methods of stretching the caustic soda supplies and of producing every variety of soap for different requirements. There was soft and hard soap, toilet and germicidal soap and even shaving cream for the Fathers and Brothers. In addition our soap had the property of lathering with sea water.

At that time, we made soap to save money. After the bombardment we realised its manufacture constituted a major problem. We had to have it not only to secure

cleanliness of body and clothes, but to prevent disease.

To produce soap three things are essential: Know how, caustic soda (or caustic potash) and oil.

We had the "know how." We had the caustic soda. The bombs had devoured half a drum. The other half Divine Providence had reserved for us. The necessary oil was there in the form of coconut oil. Of the 40 gallon drums of it about half a dozen remained intact outside our camp. With the barbed wire and Kempfi gone, we brought them up near the tunnels.

While the pioneer Fathers and Brothers were working hard to prepare Ramale for us, all the Sisters at Vunapope were busily boiling soap. They preferred the "hot process" and discovered that if they added potash solution, a bigger quantity of soap resulted without interfering with its quality.

Where did the Sisters get the potash solution? Well, there was at that time nothing cheaper at Vunapope. The supply was unlimited. Vunapope had been converted into huge heaps of ashes.

These the Sisters took and boiled with water until the potash content of the ashes went into solution. This solution again was condensed by a second boiling—and there was the potash solution ready for the soap.

Who could have ever foreseen that the missionaries would wash themselves and their clothes precisely because their mission had been reduced to ashes?

The main problem was to get containers for the hot and semi-fluid soap.

"Don't you worry," I said. "Do you see that big stack of empty Japanese tins?"

"You mean those mosquito breeders we so vigorously protested against?"

"Exactly."

The king-size tins proved to be a God-send to us. Each held some 100lbs. of fluid soap.

The Sisters filled these tins and let their contents solidify overnight. Next morning each contained a beautiful solid block of soap, packed ready for transport.

Although I did not count them, I'm almost certain there

were more than seven. But one thing I am sure of is that this soap lasted over 18 months. Every one of the 350 inmates of Ramale prison camp got his cake of soap regularly until we were liberated. Our laundry had an ample supply for all our laundry. Thanks be to God for that half drum of caustic soda, for the Brothers who pressed the oil, and for the good Sisters who made the soap.

A discussion arose amongst us as to what would happen if our soap supply gave out and no caustic soda were available. In other words, the problem was: could we make soap in our prison camp with its restrictions. I was sure we could and I had my plans ready should an emergency arise.

This crisis never eventuated but the following simple method later benefited the natives, who are too poor to buy any ingredients and are living under primitive conditions. The materials every native can easily obtain are:

- (a) Quicklime, that is caustic calcium, obtained by burning coral or reef stones.
- (b) Potash, obtained by boiling wood ashes in water.
- (c) Any oil or animal fat.

The clear solution of caustic calcium is boiled with a concentrated solution of potash.

This chemical process converts the potash into caustic potash.

Caustic potash boiled with oil or fat results in soft soap. If hard soap is desired, sea water, with its sodium chloride (salt) content is added, instead of fresh water, during the last boiling process.

While I apologise for the chemistry lesson, I thought people living in highly civilised centres might be interested in hearing how we, under the most primitive conditions, still managed to make life bearable and even comfortable.

The next problem was to get the soap safely to our future prison camp. Another wrist watch solved that and procured a truck for its transport.

Besides watches we had another item very much in demand by the Japanese soldiers: wrist watch arm bands, which they called "bandos." We made them from tortoise shell. They were really good and being non-corrosive most

suitable for tropical conditions. Some Fathers and Brothers were very skilled in making tortoise-shell cigarette cases also.

"Bandos" and cigarette cases also helped us to get trucks, quinine and other desirable items.

If anybody in our camp got into distress through his glasses falling to pieces, he went to Father Kersken. One of his specialties was making spectacle frames from tortoise shell. And how fine they looked! You could not get better in Sydney.

ALTAR WINE PROBLEM

When the war started in Europe in 1939 we in the New Guinea Islands had still open contact with Australia until the Japanese put an end to communications by their invasion of January, 1942.

We had ordered an ample supply of altar wine. As usual we bottled part of it and supplied all the priests in the out stations. The remainder we kept in casks and in bottles at Vunapope.

When the Japanese imprisoned us in our houses and took charge of our store, they had a wonderful time with our wine, until my successful demand got the store back and saved the rest.

Warned by this experience, we lost no time in bringing the wine into safety. There was still a good quantity left.

We bottled it all, packed it in cases of 12 and buried it in different locations. Yes, in different places as a safeguard against Japanese and bombs.

Soon we realised there was another danger even worse than Japanese and bombs: the white ants.

White ants are bad enough when sober, but what would they get up to if drunk with sweet wine?

We could not possibly allow such termite tippling.

They seemed to be fond of the corks soaked with wine. When these were eaten up the wine would flow out or, in the case of a bottle standing upright, deteriorate quickly.

Fortunately, we noticed it before any great damage was done. We dug out all the cases and dipped all bottle necks and corks into hot pitch. That settled it; no more drunken white ants. The insect orgies were over.

Then this problem arose: how were we to get all these cases of altar wine safely to Ramale? Well, a few more tortoise shell "bandos" and cigarette cases procured us another truck for its transshipment.

"BLOOD! BLOOD!"

During the last month in Vunapope the air raids continued daily. We went faithfully to our tunnels but the big formations of bombers usually passed over us; only occasionally did a bomb fall in our vicinity. However, during daylight strafing, planes made a nuisance of themselves.

Once on a sunny afternoon at four o'clock some of the inmates of the tunnels ventured outside to enjoy a bit of sunshine. I happened to be chatting with someone at the main entrance when suddenly, with a terrific roar, a 'plane dived over our heads. It had flown in at a low altitude from behind the hills, so nobody had noticed it.

The result was a rush and a scramble for shelter. Father Baumann, one of our oldest missionaries, happened to be standing just inside the tunnel opening. As he was rather stout and not very agile, the first thing he did was to fall and block the entrance, but the avalanche swept over him. Next to him had stood a Sister serving cocoa. Alas, the pot was knocked out of her hand and its contents landed fair on Father Baumann's neck.

He got a terrific shock. "I am wounded, blood! blood!" he shouted.

In a few seconds the 'plane was gone. We helped poor Father to his feet. He felt the blood running down his spine. After closer inspection we were able to assure him it was not blood but cocoa. He had a good laugh at himself and we heartily joined in.

There was a standing invitation extended to everybody who cared to attend the four o'clock party in the Bishop's palace No. 7.

People in high society used to have tea parties at that hour. We too had tea, coffee, cocoa parties, but we claimed to be more advanced than civilised society. Why? Well, did you ever get an invitation to a tapioca party or a sweet

potato party or a taro party? We had them in harmonious succession and we liked them.

Our Kininigunan boys, who ran the kitchen for us, roasted tapioca, kaukau (sweet potato) or taro tubers over an open fire or in glowing ashes. The skin of these tubers when properly baked is black and charred. They are scraped until they become white and beautiful to behold.

A big dish of these delicacies was put on the table and everybody helped himself according to his heart's, or rather his stomach's, desire.

The tubers have a taste of their own, similar to that of potatoes baked in hot ashes. At that time we found them delicious.

LEPROSY

Our mission doctor diagnosed leprosy in one of the work boys. He reported the case to the Japanese doctors and we demanded from the Kempri that the lad be transferred to the leper hospital at Anelaua, where four of our M.S.C. Sisters, one M.S.C. Father and a Brother were in charge.

We had built him a bush house outside our camp fence, but, of course, we had no specific medicines with which to treat his disease.

Japanese doctors were obviously interested in him, but it proved to be a detached interest expressed at a safe distance.

Several groups called on me and asked to be shown this leper. About 500 yards from the patient they put masks on their faces. I wondered at the reason for this and asked them, "What's the great idea?" They explained that leprosy was both very dangerous and very contagious and that they had to take precautions.

When we arrived at the spot they dared not venture nearer than nine feet. They discussed the characteristic spots on the leper's body and went home.

I repeatedly insisted on the removal of this boy to Anelaua. I declared that if leprosy was as dangerous and contagious as they believed, then surely we had a right to be freed from the danger.

I suggested that they should take him by ship to the

leprosarium which was situated on an island about 25 miles off Kavieng in New Ireland.

My very suggestion really shocked them. "Do you believe we have so many ships that we can afford to burn them?"

I was puzzled: "Who asks you to burn your ships?"

"You do! If we put this leper on board a ship the whole vessel will be contaminated with leprosy. The only reasonable thing to do would be to burn it."

"Well, well," I said, "it must be a terrible disease, this leprosy!"

The boy was left with us. We cared for him as well as we could but when the bombardment of Vunapope started he ran away to one of the nearby villages. Later, we learned that he died there.

LEPROSARIUM AT ANELAUUA

Although a government institution, the leprosarium was staffed by our missionaries. An administration doctor from Kavieng paid regular visits and supervised the hospital as far as the disease was concerned.

At the time of the Japanese invasion some 500 patients were there. When all the European doctors and government officials either escaped from Kavieng or were taken prisoners, the leprosarium staff was left to its own devices.

One old planter, Mr. Herman, when questioned by the Japanese about Anelaua, warned them "for Heaven's sake" not to interfere with the medical staff. He told them that if they removed the missionaries in charge the lepers would scatter and infect the Japanese and everyone else.

They ignored this warning. Shortly afterwards a Japanese ship came to the jetty at Anelaua. Father Stamm and Brother Teutenberg went to meet them.

Both had to wait quite a while as nobody emerged. The Japanese were busy spraying themselves. Finally out came a high-ranking officer, some captains and lieutenants and two dozen sailors with a Japanese flag. They had also brought along a very good interpreter.

As they approached the mission building the soldiers were ordered to sit down on the lawn and told not to move

in any direction. They were forbidden to touch or take anything, especially the oranges, then plentiful there. So they sat there, very well behaved, with one displaying the Japanese flag.

The officers inquired now from the Father and Brother how the whole set-up functioned, asking, for instance, how food and medicines were provided. Father pointed out that the Health Department provided these.

They wanted to know if the staff were paid. Yes, the four Sisters and the Brother, being Medical Assistants, were given £150 each per year. Father Stamm, who attended to the spiritual needs of the staff and patients, was supported by the mission. The officers declared that they were not in the position to pay the staff but promised to provide for the upkeep of attendants and patients alike.

Mr. Julius Lundin, who had been captain for our mission schooner "Teresa," was appointed by the invaders to provide native food for all. The tribesmen of New Hanover were ordered to grow the food. That scheme worked fairly well.

The Japanese regretted they could not provide medicines. The Sisters badly needed rubber gloves for their work and as the Japanese could not supply these the Sisters suggested they obtain them from Vunapope. The officers later called on us and got the gloves.

The commanding officer and all his companions behaved courteously and were very polite. They asked permission to see the Sisters' quarters and met the Sisters there.

Then all the patients had to assemble. Through the interpreter the officer told them that they were now under Great Nippon rule and that they would have to obey orders. Unfortunately, the Japanese themselves could do nothing for them but they delegated the Sisters, the Father and Brother to do the work. Their commands had to be obeyed. Should the lepers be reported for not doing so, soldiers would come and shoot them to death.

Japanese newspapers, printed in English, brought news of this visit. The patients were supposed to be overwhelmingly happy to be under Japanese rule. It was reported that they shed tears of joy in great profusion. These visitors,

surely, had great imagination. Our staff could not confirm any such phenomenon.

Before boarding their ship all the Japanese had to undergo a rigorous decontamination ceremony. Standing on a bag as near as possible to the vessel they were sprayed by a disinfectant and jumped from the bag to the ship.

For two years, until June, 1944, our staff worked on their own at Anelaua. The discipline amongst the lepers was good, nobody had to be reported and nobody had to be shot.

At any rate, there were no Japanese to shoot them. Their fleet and air force had been exterminated. Only a few submarines were supposed to be still at large and these were not interested in leprosariums.

But Anelaua, too, was bombed on 25th March, 1944, not by Japanese but by American 'planes. Two hostile native chiefs informed the Allied forces that Anelaua was occupied by the Japanese and that the island was full of them. The two chiefs were non-Catholics and they had hatched a diabolical plan.

They decided to make a false report in order to induce the American bombers to kill the missionaries and patients and to destroy all the hospitals and houses.

Once that was achieved they calculated that they could resume the island of Anelaua which they had sold to the Australian Government some 20 years before.

As it turned out, only one patient was killed though several were wounded in this air raid. The buildings suffered only slight damage. The greatest harm was done to the lepers. They were terribly scared and the majority fled to the mainland of New Hanover. A mere 25 remained.

In the first days of June an urgent message, sent by an Australian liaison officer, reached our staff at Anelaua advising them to move immediately to Lavangai, on New Hanover, where an Allied ship would pick them up and take them to safety.

The reason given was that a very dangerous time was imminent. They were told that after two weeks or so they might return to Anelaua. Medical staff from A.N.G.A.U. took over the hospital.

The ship transferred our missionaries to Torokina, the

American base on Bougainville in the Solomons. Once there, the authorities decided to fly them to Australia. Only after the war did they return to Anelaua.

Their evacuation took place precisely at the same time as the Japanese moved us from Vunapope. Both Allied and Japanese forces must have expected an American landing.

When I asked the Japanese for an extension of one month to prepare Ramale, it was granted. But a young officer, who was in charge of us for the time being, remarked to me: "Bishop, I am sorry for you and the whole crowd."

I asked, "Why?"

"I can't tell you, but I am sorry."

Evidently he was afraid the American invasion would take place before we moved out.

However, General MacArthur changed his plan and decided to by-pass the area in the vicinity of Rabaul after he had the Japanese there securely bottled up with no chance of escape.

For us, it meant 18 more months of prison camp, but probably it meant too the saving of our lives.

ULAMONA

There was another evacuation of missionaries, by Australian coast-watchers, at Ulamona, on the north coast of New Britain. We had a big saw mill there, providing the whole mission with timber for churches, hospitals, schools, convents and presbyteries and all necessary furniture. It was run by five mission Brothers and an old Father looked after their spiritual needs as well as those of several hundred natives.

Before the Japanese occupied Ulamona, it was bombed by one of their 'planes. Two of the Brothers were wounded, one in the arm and the other in the hip. As their medical supply had been entirely destroyed by the bombs, they sent two natives 120 miles overland to Vunapope. The remarkable thing about this was that the natives managed to get through, in spite of the Japanese. Still more remarkable was the fact that Kempfi at Vunapope allowed them to get the necessary medicines from us and return to Ulamona.

When the Japanese moved in the American bombers wiped out the saw mill and everything else.

The missionaries went into hiding a few miles inland. They built small sheds for themselves. Their own labourers and natives from the villages kept them supplied with food.

Father Leo Bishop was able to offer Mass every day. Free natives came secretly to attend the Holy Sacrifice.

Soon the Japanese noticed that whenever a Japanese ship ventured near Ulamona, it was promptly bombed. Even the whereabouts of their soldiers seemed to be very well known to the bombers.

Their first suspicions fell on our missionaries in the bush. The Kempri called on them and accused them of directing the 'planes. But the 12 Japanese soldiers who had occupied Ulamona put in a good word for them and no harm was done them.

While the missionaries were innocent of these activities, Captain Stocky, the gallant coast-watcher, and his efficient native assistants were responsible. This group had put up its secret observation post some 15 miles inland. From there Captain Stocky could observe the sea. His tele-radio reported each ship and in a matter of hours it was doomed.

The captain's native assistants patrolled the whole coastal area and informed him of even the best camouflaged dwellings of the Japanese. Next day they would be bombed out.

Our missionaries and their jungle abode were well known to Captain Stocky. They kept their position until 29th May, 1944. On that day the captain sent them a message to come up to his observation post, as a first step to their liberation. The natives guided them. It was a two-day walk and very considerately he sent them a few "food bombs"—the native name for food packs dropped by 'planes for the coast-watchers.

After a short rest, the missionaries had another two-day trek to a special point on the coast. Here a ship picked them up. In different stages they were taken to Brisbane. The war was finished for them. They were well treated everywhere. Doctors kindly removed a piece of shrapnel from Brother

Plengemayer's hip . . . two years after he was hit by the bomb splinters.

FAREWELL TO VUNAPOPE

The three evacuations at Anelaua, Ula Mona and Vunapope all took place in the same month, June, 1944.

The date of our departure from Vunapope was fixed for the main body of internees for 6th June. Instead of the promised three trucks, only two were given to us for the transport of the aged and disabled missionaries.

The main body consisted of a group of nearly 200 people—Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, half-castes and natives—boys and girls. Our native Sisters, who were not to be interned with us, volunteered to assist our European Sisters in carrying their bundles.

At 4.30 a.m. we were called out of "bed." The tunnels were scenes of intense activity as everybody proceeded to roll up blankets and pack bags and parcels which were then stacked on the roadside.

The little Mass bell tinkled and called us for the last time to the Holy Sacrifice in the tunnels. The oil lamps cast flickering light over the faces of the missionary priests, Brothers and Sisters. Here they were, the pioneers of Our Lord, who had lifted the pagan cannibals to Christianity and civilisation; 60,000 of these were now baptised Catholics. Was it to be the last Mass of Vunapope? Would there be another Mass or rather would there be again thousands celebrated as before the destruction? Our mission had been laid waste, havoc was all about us.

Only a few yards from the entrance to both tunnels we had buried in the last three months Fathers, Brothers and Sisters—18 in all.

None had a coffin. They were wrapped in their own blankets and lowered into the grave. A priest said the last prayers and three or four attended. All others remained in the shelter praying. It was too dangerous to allow a greater number to attend.

Amongst those buried there was Brother Bockenkotter, our master carpenter and architect. He had designed and built many of our churches, hospitals, schools, presbyteries

and convents. He had provided coffins for all deceased missionaries. It was tragic that when his turn came we could not give him a few planks for his grave.

All those 18 missionaries had watched with us, had seen our houses, our churches, our hospitals and schools blasted, one by one.

Was it for this that they had toiled and laboured through the hard pioneering days?

Indeed not. Our Lord had recalled them to Himself to spare them 18 more months of misery and trials. They went to their eternal reward.

But the survivors, we who were about to leave the tunnels which had saved our lives—what would be our future? Would Our Lord ask still more sacrifices of us? Did He deem us worthy to participate in His Supreme Sacrifice?

As the priest passed along the subterranean passage carrying the Prince of Peace to each communicant, the hearts of His missionaries dilated with holy joy and determination.

"Suscipe." Accept O Lord the sacrifice of ourselves, whatever your Divine Will has destined for us, we gratefully accept it from Your Hand.

After Mass the red sanctuary lamp indicating the Eucharistic Presence of Our Lord was extinguished. The priest had removed the Blessed Sacrament.

Day was just breaking across the sea as we emerged from our tunnels. Like the Israelites of old, with staff in hand, we partook of a meagre breakfast and shouldered our burdens.

Japanese armed guards called us to attention and ordered us to "make line." Then began counting operations. Counting seemed to be a particularly complicated business for the Japanese. Soon they got into a frightful muddle. They started again and gave it up as hopeless.

The procession moved off . . . or rather it was supposed to. Out of the blue a strafing 'plane dived over Vunapope. A bomb landed a few hundred yards from us. That was too much for a group of Sisters. They protested: "Nothing doing," and slipped back into the safety of the tunnel. The

guards did not even notice their defection. These nuns decided to go with the next group.

That bomb, right at the start, was a warning to all that our five-mile tramp over partly open country was not to be considered a pleasant stroll.

While five miles mean nothing for young and vigorous people, the journey proved a hard trial for elderly missionaries, especially the Sisters.

Anyhow, with all the courage we could muster we set out. The Sisters were leading and our native Sisters showed the way. We menfolk made up the rear where the armed guards kept a prudent eye on us.

Dejectedly we took a last look at the 72 heaps of ashes which marked our former mission houses. Yet deep in the hearts of one and all burned faith in Our Lord, a faith that bombs could not destroy.

The track led past our grotto. The statue of Our Lady was no longer there. The place spelt destitution and desolation.

A few hundred yards further on we passed the cemetery. Five months ago we had tended it with all our love and care. Now we were shocked to see the effect of seven huge bombs: the main cross and all the concrete marker crosses on the graves had been blown away; the graves torn open and desecrated.

Dodging bomb craters and occasionally falling into them, we seemed to be traversing a strange land rather than our familiar coconut plantation. Here the Japanese had stacked tremendous amounts of foodstuffs and equipment which they had intended using for the invasion of Australia.

What we saw, all that remained of the whole glory of it, were huge smouldering heaps of ashes and burnt-out food tins. The big rice stores especially kept glowing and smoking for weeks after the bombardment.

The plantation had a ghastly aspect. Most of the coconut palms had been decapitated and a great number, still standing, were scarred by bullets and shrapnel.

We plodded along and came to the tapioca patch where the Brothers had been working to supply us, at Vunapope,

with vegetables. From now on, they would send the garden products to us at Ramale.

We had not seen these Brothers for 18 months but our guards left us no time for prolonged greetings. Nevertheless, we managed to exchange a few cheery remarks before passing on.

Twice on our way we had been terrified by approaching 'planes. It was amazing how quickly everybody managed to take cover. It was effective concealment, too. Apparently the aircraft did not discover us as they did not bomb or strafe us.

After approximately two hours we reached our destination. Pushing a path through brambles and overhanging boughs, tired and silent, thirsty and perspiring, we came to the top of Ramale Gorge—our new prison camp.

PART III.

RAMALE

ENTERING RAMALE

Before we were allowed to descend into the deep gorge, we had to be counted again. Apparently the Japanese had incorporated into their counting system allowance for a large margin of error. The small group of Sisters, who had slipped back into the tunnel, was missing, but that did not interfere with the total present. Quite satisfied, the Japs ordered us to go down into the valley.

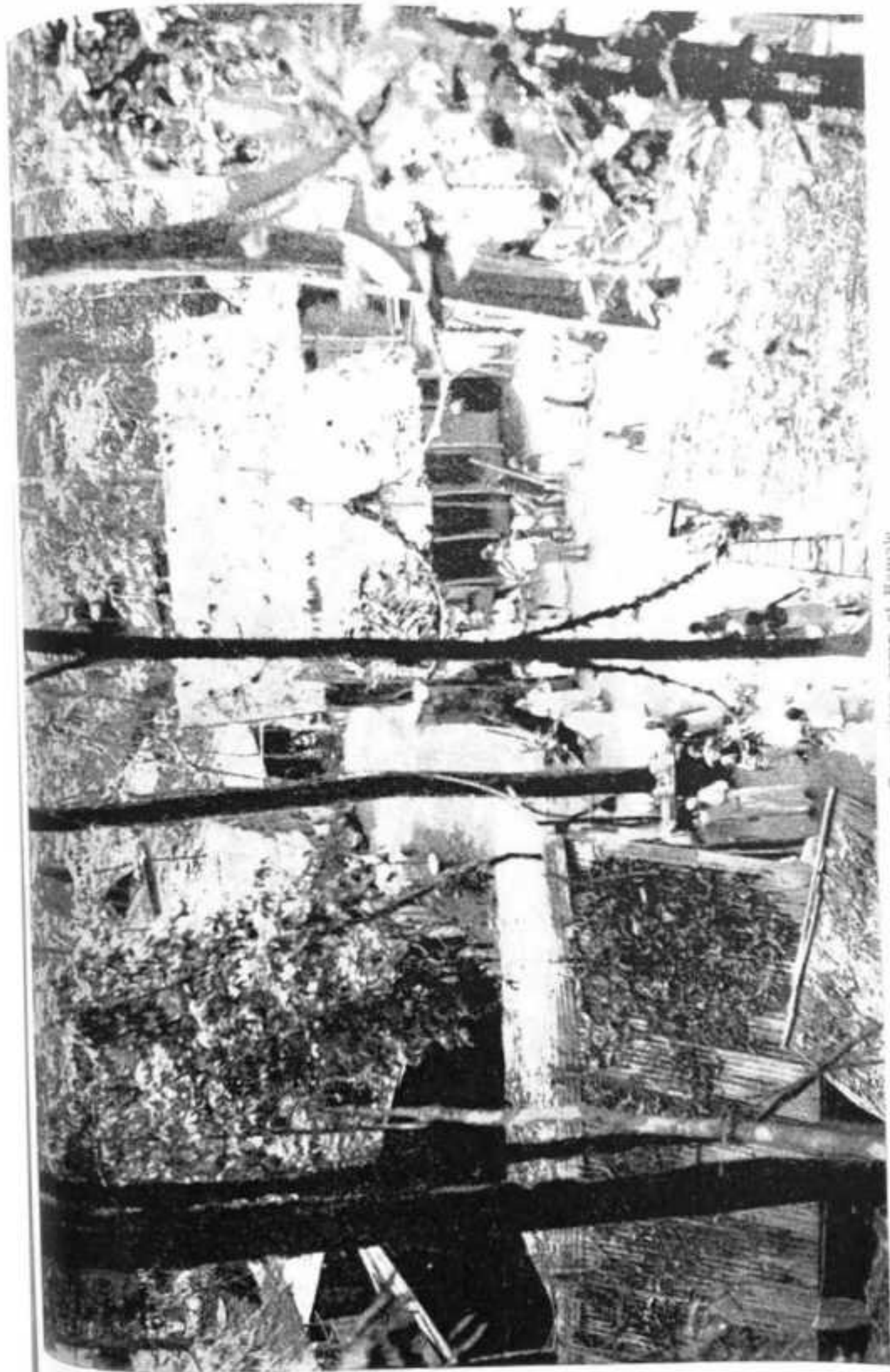
Some of us, for whom it was the first experience in jungle life, gazed despondently into the gloomy depths of that chasm. We began the climb down the almost perpendicular side of the mountain.

For the boys and girls it was sport and fun. But it certainly was no picnic for the elderly missionaries and our good Sisters. The soil was wet and slippery. Down they came, sliding, falling, struggling, with more speed than they anticipated. However, the native Sisters, the boys and girls came to their rescue. They guided and supported the nuns safely to the bottom. No broken or sprained legs were reported.

Then a welcome was extended to us. Isn't that a paradox? Could anyone be welcomed to a prison camp and like it? There were the Fathers, Brothers and boys ready with a hearty and sincere greeting for us. We returned it with happy smiles and cheery remarks. We were grateful to them for all the shelters they had put up for the various communities; even tunnels had been started. Perhaps poor human nature demanded that we should have been despondent and unhappy, but somehow we were not. Best of all, there were no disgruntled gaolers, Kempis or soldiers to bully us about. They left us alone.

Sure, the work in the valley was not completed but here were now hundreds of willing and helping hands.

In the beginning there was nothing except virgin forest in Ramale camp; a real jungle. Wonderful giant trees formed



Our prison camp at Ranale

a dense canopy over the whole compound. It was impossible for us to be seen from the air. The undergrowth had been cut away to make room for the different residences. There was a piece of flat land available but none of us were interested in having our houses built there; it was too far from the tunnels. We found this level stretch better suited for our new cemetery.

In the morning on our arrival we were all soaked in perspiration. The normal thing to do would be to change and put the wet clothes into the sun to dry. At Vunapope this took less than one hour.

However, here, as we soon realised, the thick foliage prevented strong sunlight from coming through. Only very small sunny patches appeared and these shifted as the day wore on. We hung our saturated clothes on lines and hoped for the best. By the evening they were still half wet and next morning they were twice as wet. Many of us got worried. Would clothes ever dry in this dark valley? Things were not that bad: we just had to learn how to cope with this new situation.

The reason why clothes moist from sweat double their dampness during the night is because of the salt content of the perspiration. This makes the clothes hygroscopic. They attract more moisture than they lose by evaporation. We soon discovered this problem was easily solved by washing them.

In spite of the high humidity, laundered clothes dry, although it takes longer than in sunny places.

Next day, 7th June, the rest of the missionaries and the Kininigunan boys came to us in the morning hours. Vunapope was completely evacuated and "Ramale Concentration and Protection Camp for Americans and Europeans" formally established. That was our new name and camp title. Lest anyone should have any doubts, it could be read on a big signboard up at the entrance to the prison.

FIRST AIR RAID IN RAMALE

At about 10 a.m., one hour after the arrival of the last group, the alarm sounded unexpectedly. A large formation of American bombers was heading our way. Most of us

squeezed into the tunnels which were not, as yet, very deep; others hid behind the huge trees. Suddenly, crash, crash, crash. Bombs exploded in our camp, damaging some of the new houses built for the half-caste families. One woman was slightly wounded.

That was a shock and a terrible disappointment for all of us. Was this the place of safety we hoped for?

We found the damage negligible; the houses did not get a direct hit and were still standing. However, this incident revealed that bombs could fall on Ramale and that we should be on the alert, if planes came near us.

There was an aftermath. A young lieutenant, acting as aide-de-camp to the new Camp Commander, came down to our quarters and started a terrific row. He insulted the Sisters and blamed them for the raid. He pointed furiously to the clothes, which were hanging around to dry, contending that they had attracted the bombs.

I was soon on the spot and tried to defend the Sisters, pointing out to him that the planes possibly could not see the garments and furthermore, that the bombs had fallen some 200 yards away from them and that we credited the American bombers with more precise marksmanship.

He was red-hot with rage and would not listen to reason. Up he went to the Camp Commander and angrily reported us.

At 2 p.m. I was summoned to the new Commander, Major Sakakibara. Present were the hotspur of a lieutenant and Dr. Furakawa, the new camp doctor. They comprised one set of authorities. The second consisted of three military police, who were lower in military rank but higher in executive power.

I found them in full military dress, all with Samurai swords and revolvers.

"Well," I thought, "this looks rather tough."

The Major offered me a seat and, before we began to talk, a cigarette. "Hmm," I mused, "does not look like a court martial."

In a conciliatory tone the major explained that if difficulties arose through differences of opinion he preferred to smooth them out by a frank discussion.

I agreed whole-heartedly and remarked: "Here is a test case; let us put the facts down as we witnessed them and then draw our conclusions."

I repeated what I had already told the lieutenant, but, in addition, had a most important fact to relate. Some of our people had seen one of the 'planes on fire. All agreed that if the 'plane had caught fire, the only thing for the pilot to do was to drop all his bombs as quickly as possible and irrespective of target, to eliminate danger to himself.

That proved a decisive factor, exonerating our good Sisters completely. We were all happy that our test case was solved in such a fair way.

However, the bombs had another side effect; a good one.

NEW SET OF TUNNELS

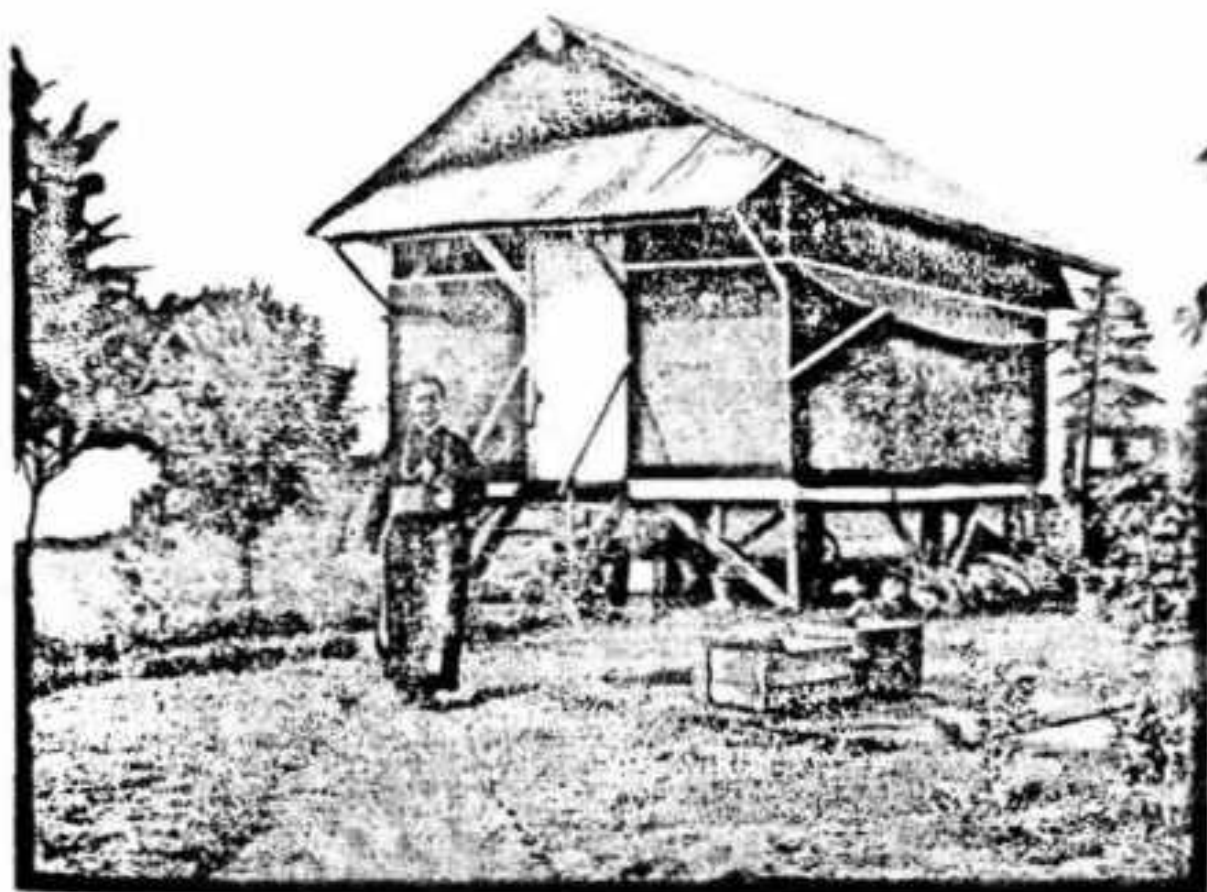
Convinced that we needed a new set of tunnels, we "went for it": Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, boys and girls. Basing the design on our experiences at Vunapope, we made a very efficient job of it. Everything was organised. According to an approved plan, eight separate entrances were provided, one for each community. Following the shape of the steep mountain, the entrances were as near as possible to the respective groups. Deep in the mountain was the main tunnel connecting all the side shafts and affording maximum safety.

This sounds rather simple, but in practice was not quite so easy to achieve. We were fortunate in having our experts. One was Father Reischl. By means of a magnetic compass, he supervised the exact direction each tunnel had to follow and his calculations worked.

Thirty feet above our shelter the military police too were digging in but they muddled their directions and never arrived where they wanted to. They asked Father Reischl for assistance, which he readily gave.

To prevent blast penetrating the tunnel, should a bomb explode at the entrance, we made the opening at a double right angle. We dug straight in, burrowed three yards to the right at right angles, made a right-angled turn again and then drove the tunnel proper.

All eight side shafts were constructed by different teams.



The Bishop's House after his prison camp experiences

The hardest task was that of the diggers who were relieved every hour by a new gang. The Fathers, Brothers and Sisters removed the loose soil and systematically formed platforms outside on which to build the houses later.

The soil here was half-solid pumice rock. Hard to dig, it nevertheless had the great advantage of needing no inside supports. We were lucky again as we had not a single coconut log for that purpose and with no time lost in erecting struts, the work proceeded at a quicker pace.

In a few weeks we had the tunnels completed. This time we eliminated all that made us suffer so much at Vunapope.

The eight entrances assured us of good ventilation. Here everyone had sufficient space to stretch his legs on a home-made bamboo bed. The majority slept in the tunnels but a few preferred to remain in their "villas," which cropped up in various sizes on the hillside.

Soon I had a new palace, No. 8. We called it the "bamboo palace." From the architectural point of view, it fitted

harmoniously into the surroundings. A slanting iron roof was supported by posts which also held in position the three walls of plaited bamboo mats. A partition provided a bedroom. In one corner was an altar where I offered Mass every day and on which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved until a chapel was erected for common use.

This camp chapel, with the Blessed Sacrament in it, was our greatest consolation. Hardly an hour passed during the day without pious visitors there.

NEW PROCLAMATION

During the first month in Ramale, when we were industriously digging tunnels and building houses, the Japanese guards were busy too putting up a fence around our camp.

They were sorry, they said, they could not afford to put us behind barbed wire but they had none. At Vunapope they had used our rusty cattle fencing wire, but that was useless now as the bombs had torn it to pieces. As all prisoners are notoriously fond of barbed wire it was hard on us to be content with a fence made from lianas and bush ropes. But our gaolers did not forget to reinforce it with moral spikes: trespassers would be shot to death. One side of our camp did not even have a barrier; the creek formed the boundary. Sanctions for straying beyond it were the same.

When we were properly impounded on 2nd July, 1944, we all had to assemble in front of my bamboo palace. There was no deeper significance attached to this; it happened to be a flat spot suitable for such a purpose.

The officers and Kempfi appeared in full uniform. The interpreter Tagai announced that there was to be a roll call. Fancy! A roll call! So far we had avoided that. At Vunapope I had to supply the Japanese periodically with a list of all priests, Brothers and nuns. My precious head was the guarantee for the catalogue's accuracy.

Now, too, I had to give them a new list of all missionaries. Everybody was called by his or her name. Papers and persons were all in order. Even the sum total was correct. Simply marvellous how that worked.

In fact, this was the only roll call in our entire camp

life. We appreciated that. In other Japanese compounds prisoners had roll calls twice a day. We were thankful to be spared that nuisance.

Now our new Camp* Commander introduced himself through the following proclamation:

PROCLAMATION

I am Major Sakakibara, newly appointed as Captain of "The Protection Concentration Camp for Europeans and Americans" in Ramale.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, which you have moved here this time, I would like to announce to you our intentions as the representative of Japanese Forces.

Japanese Military Administration, instead of Australian Regime, is now enforced over all the occupied regions of the Island of New Britain.

So you have to obey absolutely to Japanese administration. Especially this neighbourhood is now within the field of battle, so we strictly demand it of you. Those who disobey our orders shall be court martialled and punished severely and then, in an unavoidable case, we may shoot you to death.

First as to the nations of the hostile countries; there are rather many priests and so called Sisters who belong to the nationality of England, America and Holland. In addition to that, as we are not Christian, we shall not be influenced whatever even if in what condition Christians are. Accordingly it may be very natural that we Japanese Corps will regard Britons, Americans, Australians and Dutch as nations of the hostile countries to the utmost.

Next as to the Germans; of all the Germans who are the axis-nation, there are those who have carried out hostile actions against us, and who, it is no exaggeration to say, have clearly a hostile character.

So that, to confess the truth, we must pay attention for those but we do not want to pay regard to past events in conformity with the faithfulness and consciousness to the axis nation.

If one of you happen to carry out a hostile action in the future we hope such things will never happen, we will not punish only that man, but also, as the joint responsibility, punish all of you in the name of "Mission."

By the reason of living together with the nations of the hostile countries, Military Authorities have con-

concentrated Germans within this fence under the necessity of Military Operation.

And we will protect yourselves and escort you to the enemy in the necessary range.

Hereby it will be prohibited to go out of the fence and stream without any military permission.

Suppose there are those who go out of the fence and stream without any military permission, they shall be punished severely and those who run away in the same condition shall be shot. However, Japan originally loves justice and consciousness, and also is courteous on humanity.

So that, as long as there will be no espionage activity, even if you are the anti-axis nation, we will never treat you with such torture as British, American, Australian corps dealt with the internees, our fellow-countrymen in their countries.

You must lead a life inside this limited boundary, but we shall give you freedom in the limit and guarantee your daily life in some range and supplement the minimum for your living materials.

But we are fighting now, the principle is to work yourselves and to be self-supporting in the best way you can. Accordingly we will permit you to work on the farm permitted and give farm by request.

You ought to understand well the above-mentioned items and we demand your absolute submission to the military orders.

The 2nd July, 1944.

Captain of "The Protection Concentration Camp for Europeans and Americans."

MAJOR SAKAKIBARA.

I give you this proclamation in its full text because I still have the original in my possession. This is a true copy. We consider it a valuable document, proving with what tender sentiments the Japs cherished us. Should any be of the opinion that, for instance, the German missionaries had a wonderful time during the Japanese occupation, here is documentary evidence showing what their guards thought of them. And the fact that of 21 missionaries murdered by the Japanese 11 were Germans corroborates it.

We listened carefully to the linguistic acrobatics of the interpreter. When he finished there were thrills and excitement amongst us.

Oh no, not about their intentions concerning their enemies or their dear allies; nor that they would cut our throats or shoot us; that was old stuff, we heard it too often. One sentence caused our excitement, that made our hearts beat faster. This was:

"And we will protect yourselves and escort you to the enemy in the necessary range."

Just pause for a moment and try to make your own interpretation of this sentence. I wonder if you could succeed at guessing what was in their minds.

Remember that at this time the Japanese, as well as ourselves, were expecting an American landing. That gave the colour to our interpretation, which was as follows:

If the Americans landed somewhere in our vicinity, the Japanese would protect us by escorting all camp inmates to within sight of the enemy. That is, when near enough, the Japanese would discreetly disappear into the safety of the jungle and let us advance, perhaps carrying a white flag and a big sign, "Catholic Mission." In fact, at Vunapope we had had one ready for that purpose.

Most of us were inclined to accept this interpretation. Others were not so optimistic and pointed out that this sentence did not fit into the whole context nor did it conform in any way with the Japanese mentality and their inhuman extermination plans.

To end the controversy, I went to the major and asked for his official explanation. He countered by asking me how we understood it. I told him of the conclusion we had reached. He gasped, and in sheer amazement said: "Did you understand that?"

"Well, that is the meaning your words conveyed to us."

He clarified for me, through the interpreter, his real intentions. The explanation went like this:

"We will protect you"—of course by keeping you under death penalty in the protection camp.

"... and escort you in the necessary range"—that meant soldiers would escort us to our work in the gardens and they would accompany our boys to get salt water from the sea for the camp; that was the necessary range.

"... to the enemy" really meant: "keeping you away from the enemy."

When I conveyed this official interpretation to our communities our exultation evaporated very quickly. The sceptics among us could not help saying: "We told you so. They are going to protect us against ourselves by shooting us lest we commit some breaches against their rules."

FOOD PROBLEM AT RAMALE

There was still another sentence that worried us, though not so mysterious. "We shall supplement the minimum for your living materials." This time we did not indulge in any extravagant hopes. Being aware of their nefarious starvation schemes we made a pretty correct guess at its meaning.

By this time, our camp contained 363 persons. The last two missionaries, who had been still on their stations, were brought in, in addition to a number of civilians from plantations and half-caste families.

Too right, we got "the minimum for our living materials": this consisted of ten bags of rice, each containing 100lbs. One bag would allow each person just one plate per day. How generous! Ten bags would give a lease of life for ten days. And we had 425 days of prison life ahead of us; admittedly at that time we did not know the war would last so long.

Another fact considerably marred their reputation for generosity. Under agreement our Brothers in the gardens were still supplying the Japanese with tapioca sticks for planting, to the tune of three trucks per day. They were forced to comply with the arrangements under threat of court martial. Since we had been bombed out six months ago, the Japs "sort of forgot" to pay for them according to the terms of the pact. My remonstrations for payment were ignored. The contract was very one sided.

Actually, it was not very considerate of us to keep on living as we did. We should have been dead long ago.

The extra provisions from the Japanese stores, which we had kindly blessed ourselves with after the bombardment, were by now exhausted. . . . Our only supply was that sent us by our Brothers in the Takubar gardens. Our staple food

henceforth would be tapioca, supplemented occasionally by sweet potatoes, green and ripe bananas, some native vegetables, pawpaws and coconuts.

Our diet till the end of our prison life definitely revealed a strong salt-protein-fat-deficiency.

As stated in the proclamation, the Japanese allotted us some acres of land adjoining our camp for gardens. However, that did not mean that we were free to go there and work. That could be done only under the most severe "safety" precautions.

The whole camp was divided into a number of working teams. Each had a leader responsible for his men or women. He would be punished if anybody committed a hostile act, such as running away or offending the guards.

And not only the leader would be punished. Here is the handy formula, included in the proclamation, which involved us all:

"If one of you happen to carry out a hostile action in the future we hope such a thing will never happen, we will not punish only that man, but also, as the joint responsibility, punish all of you in the name of 'Mission.'"

That looked like a cheap recipe for incriminating us all in order to kill us. Later events will prove that was their exact intention.

For the present, we did not take it too seriously and I did not worry, knowing that I could trust my missionaries.



In the beginning, at Vunapope, I had given full guarantee for the so-called enemy aliens.

We were rather keen to work our gardens. All able-bodied Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, boys and girls lined up every morning, after Mass and scanty breakfast, waiting for the Japanese guards to unlock the gate to the vegetable patch. Of course, the prisoners had to be counted first . . . a rather painful process for both parties, for it simply did not work. But the guards found an easy way out. They asked one of the half-caste boys to do it for them. In no time he had all on paper; even the sum total was correct.

The various groups worked like slaves on their own account. They were in no way bullied or harassed by the guards. Heavily armed with hand grenades, all these fellows did was to sit or sleep under a shady tree. We realised that in order to survive, we had to toil hard. And hard it was. Weak and debilitated, we now averaged a loss of weight of between 40 and 60 pounds.

By contrast, our natives looked well fed and vigorous; this despite the fact that we all shared the same food. Why the difference? The islanders' digestive systems were adapted from childhood to the very food we were then eating, whereas ours, used to a balanced diet of carbohydrates, proteins, fats and vitamins, were badly upset by deficiencies.

Through our new gardens, we tried hard to rectify this by planting cow-peas to provide vegetable proteins and peanuts to supply fat. The lack of vitamins was alleviated by tomatoes, fresh beans, corn, egg plant and other green vegetables. We had an area planted with sweet potatoes, the young leaves of which when boiled were also relished. Even young bamboo shoots were eaten and all the different fungi growing on rotten trees. Special delicacies, like grubs four inches long and larvae living in decayed timber, and occasionally a snake, were reserved for the few privileged ones who found them. There was not enough for all to partake of such luxuries.

A new garden takes time to produce something substantial. After three months, we had already harvested a few general favourites as supplement to our tapioca, which was our staple food and life line. Believe me, tapioca

every day would even make a wild pig disgusted. Some among us were so fed up with it that they swore never in their lives to touch the stuff again.

Egg plant had the same effect. It grows quickly and produces a heavy crop. Consult your cookery book and it will tell you that egg plant is delicious, if prepared according to instructions. But when just boiled in a big drum, without salt, it's just the opposite. Even when hungry we did not like it.

Here is the daily menu during the Ramale imprisonment:

Breakfast: One cup of hot or cold water, two boiled unripe bananas and two ripe bananas. No tea, coffee or cocoa. No milk; no bread and butter; no mutton or pork chops; no jam or honey or cheese. In short, nothing of that sort.

Lunch: One plate of tapioca or sweet potato with one of the different vegetables. Cow-peas were especially favoured by all, but we could only afford them once a week. Nature stimulated our appetites for this food, indicating our need of proteins.

Dinner: Same as lunch.

"Well, how many calories would your daily food have provided for you?" I was once asked.

"Sorry, we did not count them."

Nevertheless, our bodies themselves were fair indicators of the insufficiency of our calories; we felt hungry and cold.

By the way, we had managed to get some fowls into Ramale, maybe 50 or so. Soon the Japanese inquired what in the world we would do with all the eggs. I told them that we would eat them or rather give them to our sick. Did the guards have any objection? Well, yes. According to the co-prosperity idea, they would be prepared to eat all the eggs for us and we could have the satisfaction of feeding the chickens. No, thank you!

A FORMAL DINNER

One evening, after we already had our buffet dinner consisting of tapioca and green beans, I received a solemn invitation to another dinner to be served two hours later. It came from one of the neighbouring "villas."



"Would Your Lordship honour us with your presence at a private celebration and dinner party at 8 p.m.? R.S.V.P."

I answered: "I frankly admit that I wouldn't be surprised if I accepted."

In fact, I was delighted to do so.

At 8 p.m. when I had practically forgotten that I had had another dinner at 6 p.m., I went up to the villa.

The host and three distinguished guests welcomed me. The dinner was served out of three iron cooking pots, according to Ramale etiquette. It had been prepared in one of the private kitchens in the half-caste quarters.

I was given the privilege of taking the lid off the stew. What enchanting flavours emanated from it, conjuring reminiscences of days nearly forgotten by now.

I couldn't help remarking: "Where did you pinch this fowl?" Unanimously they assured me that they had not stolen any poultry. I was satisfied, for, after all, I had not been invited to make inquiries. The light was very dim as the moon grinned down on us through the openings in the trees.

I took the first helping. The anatomy of the object in the pot could not be easily identified; they had taken the precaution of cutting it into handy portions. Sweet potatoes and vegetables completed the course. What a delightful dinner!

All the priests had been let into the secret of this banquet. I myself remained uninitiated. As we were enjoying our meal the other Fathers not at the feast were burning with curiosity as to the effect. They sent one of their number to find out.

When I saw Father A. coming up to the villa I tried to scare him off. "Keep away from here, it's dangerous," I said, "we are eating a tom cat."

He immediately reported to the other priests that the Bishop already knew the type of meat on the menu and seemed to be enjoying it.

Now the surprise was on my hosts. Suspecting a leakage in their plot, they asked: "Who told you? How did you come to know?"

Then my joke recoiled on me. In a flash I knew it was my turn to be surprised. Nobody had told me. Their excited questions conveyed to me the certainty that we WERE eating a tom cat.

Just to show them that I was not afflicted with any allergy in that respect and to manifest my appreciation of this delicious dinner, I asked for a second helping.

We regretted we could not afford to repeat the banquet.

For though we had quite a number of cats still in our camp, we badly needed them to keep the rats in check.

This one, privileged to supply the dinner, was a supernumerary who had made a nuisance of himself by disturbing a whole section of the prison. His lyrical and amorous performances had not met with our approval.

SEARCH No. 3

After we had completed our new tunnels and a good number of houses, I was summoned to the major. I found the whole Kèmpi and all the guards assembled.

The major explained that by order of the High Command they had to search all our personal belongings.

I said that we had no objection, provided the inspection was conducted in a gentlemanly and orderly way. But we would surely protest if our few belongings were to be torn and scattered as on other occasions.

They gave me no chance to warn the inmates of the camp. Together we descended to the compound. The Japanese had their orders in advance and started the job immediately.

In charge of me and my belongings was the chief of police himself. I kept my things in a waterproof rubber bag securely stored away in the tunnel. He wanted to know what was in the bag. One of the priests assisted me and I slowly took one piece of clothing after the other and stacked them neatly on one side. When only one quarter of the contents remained I declared: "Look here, I am fed up with it, you'd better do it yourself."

I knew that among the things left was my precious Leica (already confiscated and saved in a previous search), a pair of shoes, a small bottle of quinine and other small items. Perfunctorily he put his hand into the bag and declared: "Orai, orai" (all right).

Returning to my house, I found it a pretty mess. One of our oldest missionaries, Rev. Father Mertens, who shared my palace with me for the time being, was terribly upset. The Kèmpi assigned to search his belongings scattered them all over the floor. Father Mertens objected and the fellow slapped his face. A few of the prisoners witnessed the

incident and were very angry. When I arrived it was all over. I protested vigorously and told the guard I was going to report him to the major.

In the meantime another row developed in the Brothers' house. Something frightful must have happened. There was the young hotspur of a lieutenant, shouting at the top of his voice, his face crimson with fury, wildly gesticulating with his drawn sword.

Soon I was in it, demanding to know what was wrong. He accused one of the Brothers of giving him an incorrect statement. Yes, to him, an officer of the Imperial Army. A shocking affair!

He had asked the Brother how many bags of rice we had. The Brother had answered casually: "Oh, about nine." The officer insisted on seeing them in order to count them. And oh horror, instead of nine he counted ten! What a crime!

To him it seemed a clear-cut case of hostile action and he himself had caught the offender red-handed. Hadn't the Camp Commander, in his proclamation, told us unmistakably:

"If one of you happen to carry out a hostile action in the future . . . we will not punish only that man, but also, as the joint responsibility, punish all of you in the name of Mission."

Up he went in long strides to the major and proudly reported: "This time I've got them, all of them! According to your proclamation we can punish them all." The major was not so sure about the tremendous importance of this discovery. He called for me.

This suited me nicely. I was in a fighting mood. Without wasting time I launched a double charge: one against the lieutenant and the other against Tagai, who had assaulted old Father Mertens.

I reminded the major of what I had said two hours ago: "We don't mind being searched if you behave like gentlemen."

Now I attacked the lieutenant. He had performed like a dancing dervish with his drawn sword—all because the Brother had made a slight mistake concerning the number

of bags. After all, what concern of this Jap was it how much rice we had? He hadn't given it to us; it was ours. The whole affair was a disgrace.

Then I had a go at Tagai. He had acted like a maniac. He had thrown the aged priest's belongings all over the floor. When the Father had protested he had been slapped in the face by Tagai. I said we were all very upset and I demanded an apology for both outrages.

Believe it or not, the old man apologised. He commanded the lieutenant and all the others to resume the search and act in a gentlemanly way. We had no further complaints.

A day or two later the lieutenant was dismissed from his post and assigned to a different job somewhere else.

We asked ourselves: "What was the purpose of this search. What were they after?"

For once, the Japanese did not bother about my papers. They concentrated on our small belongings and suitcases. Some were asked outright: "Have you got quinine?" "No, I haven't. Would you kindly give me some?" the missionaries answered.

Apparently the searchers did not find any quinine. Probably they would not have recognised it even had they seen it. Most of us had a small quantity but we did not keep it in standard bottles, just in any sort we happened to find. The Japanese must have been delighted not to find any quinine and obviously expected us not to live too long as a consequence.

HEALTH CONDITIONS

According to statistics still in my possession, the average number of sicknesses per day during the 15 months in Ramale was 23.6. That aggregate includes malarial cases confined to bed. If all other afflictions such as digestive troubles and tropical ulcers were counted too the average would go up to 92.9 per day. The first two months and the last six months were the worst. Many suffered from swollen feet and dizziness.

One morning, when I tried to get out of bed I lost my balance and fell over. I realised my legs would not support me. It took me three days to recover. Exactly the same

thing happened to our mission doctor a few weeks later.

Practically everyone suffered malaria periodically. During an attack the patient got a curative dose of quinine supplemented by atebrin and was on his feet again after a few days. Our supply of quinine was still sufficient but the stock of atebrin was dangerously low.

We had a case that baffled us. A young Sister got fever attacks for nigh on half a year. She was free from fever for only a few days between the attacks. Four microscopic blood tests carried out at lengthy intervals revealed no malaria parasites. Her illness seemed to be another disease. During the six months she was given three doses of atebrin, all several weeks apart. After each dose there was a distinct period of alleviation. The last feverish spell lasted 45 days. Sister was terribly debilitated and the end seemed to be approaching rapidly. She received the Last Sacraments. Her loving Sisters, gathered round her, recited the prayers for the dying. She shook hands with everyone, saying *au revoir* in Heaven.

Counting on the slight improvement after each dose of atebrin, I decided to do the humanly possible. I approached the Kempî. Tagai, who had slapped old Father Mertens, but who was always kind to our Sisters, interviewed me. I emphasised the urgency of the case and asked for atebrin. I got a small bottle which proved sufficient to save the Sister's life.

I explained to her: "Sorry, Sister, we had to cancel your ticket for heaven. There are others waiting with higher priority. We simply can't afford losing you for we badly need you for the restoration of our mission."

The youthful nun recovered completely after the armistice. Now she is full of life and doing great work in the mission.

We even had an emergency operation in the tunnel when a Sister suffered from acute appendicitis. Our mission doctor decided on surgery.

An old table served as an operating table. The necessary light was supplied by two pressure lamps. Improvised sterilisation apparatus brought gauze and linen to the required condition. Instruments and anaesthetics saved from

Vunapope were at hand. Dr. Schuy, assisted by the nursing Sisters, operated successfully with the result that the Sister is still very much alive and doing excellent mission work as a teacher.

The Japanese High Command was very considerate in appointing a special camp doctor for us. He was Dr. Furakawa, an elderly man who soon got the nickname: "the Limping Bridegroom."

He was very generous towards us, giving us plenty of good advice on how to keep healthy, but no medicines. When we requested anti-malarial drugs he had none for us. Quinine he kept hidden under his bed. A friendly orderly, who tried hard to get us some, told us that.

Actually, Dr. Furakawa did us no harm, except offend our ear drums and our musical feelings. Being a great enthusiast for the ancient Japanese ballads and lyrics, he gave solo performances in the evenings. His house was situated some 50 yards above our camp. This was an ideal spot from which to let us obtain full benefit of his powerful, croaky and guttural voice. He must have imagined that we listened enraptured by his cacophonics. Why else would he have performed for hours on end?

JAPANESE LANGUAGE ONLY

On one of the first days at Ramale the Camp Commander presented me with a kind of ultimatum. He declared: "Bishop, we give you one month from to-day, after which we will converse with you in Japanese only."

"An excellent idea, Major. Incidentally, I have a supplementary idea of my own," I said.

"Being dear allies, I am in the position to offer you my idea, which surpasses yours in generosity.

"I give you exactly the same time limit of one month from to-day. After that you may converse with me in one of the following languages: English, Polish, German, French, Latin, Sulka, Arawe, Pidgin English, Dutch, Slovak or Ancient Greek.

"If you will oblige me by using one of these languages, I am prepared to speak Japanese to you."

The major opened his mouth in amazement and agreed to continue to talk to me through the interpreter.

The camp doctor, as well as all the Japanese doctors, had a fair knowledge of German but they were better at reading it than at speaking the language. The naval officers could pronounce English in a more or less understandable fashion.

The police and common soldiers soon acquired a way of using Pidgin English, adapted for them for practical purposes in dealing with natives. They were all equipped with booklets in Japanese-Pidgin English.

One captain had been appointed by the High Command as historian. He had to write the story and activities of our mission. Naturally, I could give him all the necessary information. That necessitated frequent visits. We conversed in German.

The Kempri kept a vigilant eye on him. The repeated interviews made them suspicious, especially as he was always polite and friendly towards me. What was going on between us? They sensed a plot, or something dangerous anyway.

One morning, when he asked permission to enter the camp and see me, he was refused. They told him, not very politely, that if he wanted to talk to me, he could do so only in their presence.

I was called in and witnessed a pretty animated verbal duel. I stood there, a neutral observer watching. Apparently, the captain won, for they allowed him to go with me.

On the way, I said to him: "Captain, you seem to be a very dangerous man."

He got excited: "Not ME, YOU, YOU are a dangerous man."

"Oh, I see." Yes, that was it. Kempri was worried that through my influence he might become our good friend and a spoiled Japanese officer. I know that other officers visiting me were warned to be on their guard: "The Bishop is very 'crever' (clever). He may exact military secrets from you."

I met this German-speaking captain again, after the armistice, at my last interview with a Japanese general. He was supposed to function as interpreter in German. I never

saw a man as rattled as he was. He was not able to translate a single sentence and had to give it up. Tagai had to continue in broken English. Yet during our undisturbed conversations, the captain had been quite proficient in the German language.

BISHOP'S RING

Major Sakakibara, though he himself was a Buddhist, was interested in many aspects of our religion. He had ample opportunity to observe us and repeatedly summoned me to discuss religious problems. I found out that his brother was a Christian. It was our experience during the whole period of camp life that, as in his case, those Japanese who at least had Christian relatives were much friendlier towards us.

On one occasion he inquired about the significance of the Bishop's ring. He had noticed that none of the Fathers or Brothers were wearing one. I explained to him that the ring was a distinctive sign of my rank as a Bishop, just as the stars on his lapel showed his rank as a major. He was quite pleased with the information.

Another thing puzzled him: all the distinctive titles of the various mission communities. These were: Missionaries of the Sacred Heart—Priests; Missionaries of the Sacred Heart—Brothers; Missionaries of the Sacred Heart—Sisters; Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; Oblates of the Sacred Heart; Daughters of Mary Immaculate. The major wanted to know if they were members of so many different creeds.

Here again I explained that the relationship of all the Catholic Religious Orders to the Catholic Church was very much the same as that between the different Japanese Forces to the Emperor: army, navy, air force and their sub-divisions. All obey the orders of Hirohito, being loyal to him in fulfilling their appointed tasks.

I pointed out that the Religious Orders were spiritual forces of the Catholic Church, united in faith and morals and obedient to the Holy Father, the Pope. However, they were highly specialised in their work: some concentrated on missions like our religious forces at Ramale. Here we had priests, devoting themselves to the spiritual care of

Europeans and natives; the Brothers, all skilled tradesmen, who helped the mission through manual work by constructing all the necessary buildings for our various undertakings.

The Sisters specialised in charitable institutions, such as hospitals—general, maternity, leprosariums—and in the general education of the children.

The major was amazed to hear all that. It was news to him. Then he only knew us as prisoners barred from all these activities.

NATIONALITY PROBLEM

Another thing mystified the Japanese. They had carefully counted all the different nationalities in the camp. There were 17, if four native tribes were included: Australian, American, British, German, Austrian, Polish, Czechoslovak, Dutch, Luxemburg, French, Italian, Canadian, Half-caste, Gunantuna, Manus, Sulka and Baining.

The major said to me: "You belong to countries in conflict and still you behave like members of one nation only. We have never discovered any animosity or discord or any heated arguments at Ramale. How do you explain it, Bishop?"

"Well, Major, you pay us a great tribute. We are Christians, bound to love each other and we simply live up to it. Further, we are missionaries. Jesus Christ is our Commander-in-Chief, we obey His orders and do the work He assigns to us. As missionaries we are surely neutral and non-combatants. Why should we fight each other?"

"But there is one more common sense motive behind our actions, and this is also responsible for the peace in our camp. We have no preferences; each of us, from the Bishop to the last native boy, partakes of the same starvation diet and we all get the same wages."

"You get wages even here in Ramale?"

"Oh yes, Major, now, just as in pre-war days. No missionary gets a single penny. Yet all of us have our bank accounts up in Heaven. We will draw on them later."

That, of course, was too idealistic for the old officer. In fact, he was about to demand preferences for all the

Japanese half-castes, boys and girls. They were descendants of Japanese fishermen and traders and as such were recognised by the Japanese as full nationals. We had 11 of them amongst our children.

The major demanded better food, better clothes and better houses for them.

"Very well, Major, you are welcome to supply all that for the half-Japanese children. Don't forget to dig better tunnels for them too."

Wasn't it strange that the Japanese should seek preferential treatment for their countrymen now after three years had passed, during which they shared our food, clothes and shelter while the Japanese couldn't have cared less about them?

The Japanese children and the Sisters in charge of them were called up to the Kempri. The major was present too. The police declared that they were going to provide better food for the part-Japanese children. The youngsters got one bag of rice between them and a tin of bully beef or fish each. The Kempri impressed on the Sister: "This food supply is exclusively for the Japanese children." The Sister stated bluntly: "It all goes into the one pot. I am sure the Japanese children will get their share." And off she went.

This incident aroused our suspicions. It seemed a preliminary camouflage for some final action which could not yet be ascertained. We had not to wait long for developments. On 15th June I received a note from the major:

"To-day you deliver to the Nippon Authorities the above-mentioned five half-caste Nipponese till about 10 o'clock a.m. Would you be so kind to talk them of which I have talked with you why we Nipponese Authorities makes them bring.

(Signed) Major Sakakibara."

He meant to say: Kindly explain to them the reason, as previously discussed with you, for their being summoned.

The reasons given to me were that these five boys would be educated in the Japanese language and way of life. A qualified teacher would be in charge of them.

The boys were crying and did not want to go. I gave them a statement addressed to the major:

"Sir,

Herewith, I want to state that the Japanese half-caste children (names . . .) are taken from the care of the Catholic Mission against their own will and that of their Japanese fathers."

I signed the letter, which was witnessed by two missionaries.

This document did not help the poor boys. They were taken to their destination and, as we heard later, they were treated fairly well. They had to work their own garden and the Japanese spoke to them in Japanese. That was about all the education they got.

We had six half-Japanese teenage girls in the care of our Sisters. At least, the Nipponese authorities had the decency not to remove them from Ramale.

Later we found out the real cause of the boys' removal. They had to be transferred to safety before the Japanese third plan for our extermination could be executed.

BISHOP'S PECTORAL CROSS

During the whole of our life in the prison camp nobody ever attempted to take away my Bishop's ring. It was different with my pectoral cross. A Japanese colonel, who spoke quite understandable English, reckoned he would like to have that as a souvenir. Not bad taste really. The cross was heavily gilded and of artistic design.

"Bishop, I would like to have this cross of yours."

"Oh, yes, Colonel, you can have it, but, of course, not just for the asking. You have a good chance of getting it. I would advise you to make an application to the Vatican and get yourself appointed Bishop of Rabaul. As soon as the appointment is forthcoming, I will hand this cross to you; but no sooner, you see?"

He just grinned, "That's all right, Bishop, you'd better keep it."

My cigarette lighter figured in a similar experience. A truck load of Japanese soldiers stopped on the road where I stood. They jumped off and one of them asked me to light

his cigarette. I did so with my lighter.

To my amazement, he made the sign of the cross and extended his hand to get that lighter. I said: "Hullo, boy, you are not a Christian." Again he crossed himself, saying: "Christo, Christo."

"Sorry, my boy, a Christian would not behave like that. You can't have my lighter."

There happened to be a Chinese boy from Rabaul with these soldiers. He could not speak Japanese but he could write Chinese characters, which are common to both languages. Now he wrote something on the sandy road in Chinese characters. The effect was marvellous. They read the writing in the sand, they looked at me. Again they looked at the writing, then again at me. No more signs of the cross; awe-inspired, they retreated, hopped on their truck and hurriedly drove off.

What was the magic formula the Chinese boy had written? I presume it was just "Bishop" or something equivalent; or perhaps "Captain Christo." That was a title I often got from the Japanese soldiers. Anyhow, it proved to be very effective.

SISTERS SMOKING

Yes, our Sisters smoked so heavily that even the Kempi was scandalised and protested vehemently.

"For heaven's sake, you don't mean they were chain smokers of cigarettes or cigars?"

"Oh, no. We had home grown tobacco but the leaves were carefully counted and distributed between the Fathers and Brothers. We could not afford to share it with the Sisters."

"They smoked pipes! Pipes? Did every Sister have her own? That surely must have been an amazing scene."

"Well, Father Weigl turned on his lathe quite a good number of pipes from hardwood, but he could not manage to make one for each Sister; so all of them shared a single pipe, a big one of course."

"It must have been a wonderful sight: the Sisters sitting in a large circle and passing the pipe from mouth to mouth like the Indians of old. But wasn't your home grown tobacco too strong for them?"

"I have told you already, we could not afford to give them any tobacco."

What they smoked was wet firewood and their common pipe was the stove pipe and they certainly did not pass that from mouth to mouth.

But the smoke belching out of this pipe angered the Japanese. They blamed the nuns for giving away our position to the Americans, thus attracting bombs.

To prevent such an abominable thing, the Japanese invented for our common benefit a smokeless kitchen, or rather, a stove whose smoke was diverted and supposed to emerge some hundred yards away.

It was a great idea, with one fault only: it did not work.

The smoke was too lazy to go along the humid and cold channel we had dug for it. The result was that the Sister on roster and the girls assisting her shed bitter tears every morning at 4 when they tried to boil green bananas and a cup of hot water for our breakfast.

MISSIONARIES SMOKING

In pre-war days we had developed the manufacture of our own tobacco. That is, we planted the tobacco, cured it, smoked it and, incidentally, saved a lot of money, for tobacco is expensive.

Our old supply lasted for the first three months in Ramale. Soon after our arrival there we planted another crop in our new gardens.

In three months we had our first harvest and two weeks later our first smoke. To make this possible we designed our own speedy method of fermentation. Properly dried leaves were tightly wrapped in fibrous material, then buried three feet under a fire place where the boys cooked their food. Covered with banana leaves and earth, the tobacco fermented at an even temperature for a week. Then it was ready for use.

The leaves were carefully counted and distributed to priests and Brothers. According to individual tastes they were processed as pipe, cigar and cigarette tobacco. Our small tobacco cutter came in very handy, especially for the fine cut necessary for cigarettes.

Cigarette paper? We hadn't seen any for years. Not even newspaper was available. However, we remembered that in Brazil it is fashionable to use the thin covers of corn cobs. We tried this and found it satisfactory.

The tobacco was fragrant and strong; but there was not enough to indulge excessively. Our Father in Heaven just granted us a decent smoke every day and we were grateful for it.

Our smoking habits were based on the following principle: If smoking improves your mission work, smoke by all means; but don't overdo it. If smoking is harmful to your health and work, stop it.

The majority of us smoked. As mission life even in normal times—and especially in prison camp—offers very few material pleasures, we enjoyed the little comfort given us.

But there is more to it than just pleasure.

When, in 1925, I arrived on the mission, I was instructed in the native language and in practical mission life. Old Father Bander gave me one piece of advice which proved of great psychological value, even in dealing with the Japanese.

Here it is:

"If you have to face an annoying interview or some situation that may upset you, keep your temper. To ensure this, fill your pipe, light it, then start to talk. The greatest volume of annoyance goes up with your smoke and you will be your composed self."

Well, I experienced annoying interviews and situations galore during the Japanese regime and always I remembered the aged priest's hint. When summoned for examination I always had my smoke with me.

Here is an instance that happened at Ramale. A colonel from the High Command called on me. I was sure I would need a big cigar on this occasion.

This officer seemed to me a specialist in bullying people. Right from the start he dropped all pretences at politeness, common decency and most of all at saving his face, a practice so dear to Japanese etiquette.

In harsh guttural tones, he started to bark at me.



grimacing and banging the table; he spoke in Japanese, of course. I had to wait for the translation.

I thought to myself; now's the time for my big cigar. I lit it, calmly looking into his eyes. A Sphinx could not have behaved with less emotion.

After the translation, more life came into me. He accused me and all the missionaries of not co-operating with the Japanese Forces.

Naturally, I could not prove to him that we had co-operated. It was evident we had not done so. Therefore, I put the whole argument on a different level.

I retaliated with cold figures and precise statements; detailing what the Catholic mission had given them in live-stock, plantations, transport, etc.

He parried immediately: "You have not given them to us, we took them from you."

"Exactly, you took them. And according to the statement of Colonel Akita from the General High Command in Tokyo, everything you take or destroy you have to pay for."

I persisted with this line.

"Why don't you pay? Why don't you give us at least sufficient for a decent subsistence in exchange for the tremendous food values you take and on which you are still growing fat?"

So it went on for half an hour. My last blow was: "Shame and disgrace on you and your High Command for starving 367 people and feasting on their property."

He stopped barking at me. He switched to an obliging

smile, declaring: "All right, Bishop, I see I can't beat you that way."

My cigar was still alight when I left.

HOW STRONG ARE THE JAPANESE FORCES?

Soon after this interview I had another visitor from the High Command. This time it was the General's Adjutant. Although he had better manners, he was no less dangerous for that. By now it was clear that they had a definite plan to catch me.

The colonel with his non-co-operation charges had been defeated and he admitted it.

Now the adjutant was here with a carefully prepared snare. After a few minutes of unimportant polite talk he sprang this question on me: "What do you think, Bishop? How strong are our forces around Rabaul and Kokopo?"

I sensed a trap immediately.

"Isn't that a strange question to ask a prisoner of war? For three years now you have kept me closely guarded and out of all contact with the world, so how could I possibly tell you?"

I followed up my advantage:

"But I see from your uniform you are an adjutant, aren't you?"

"Yes, I am."

"Very well, Adjutant, you are surely in a better position to know the strength of your forces. How strong are they?"

An amazing reaction followed. The adjutant let the cat out of the bag.

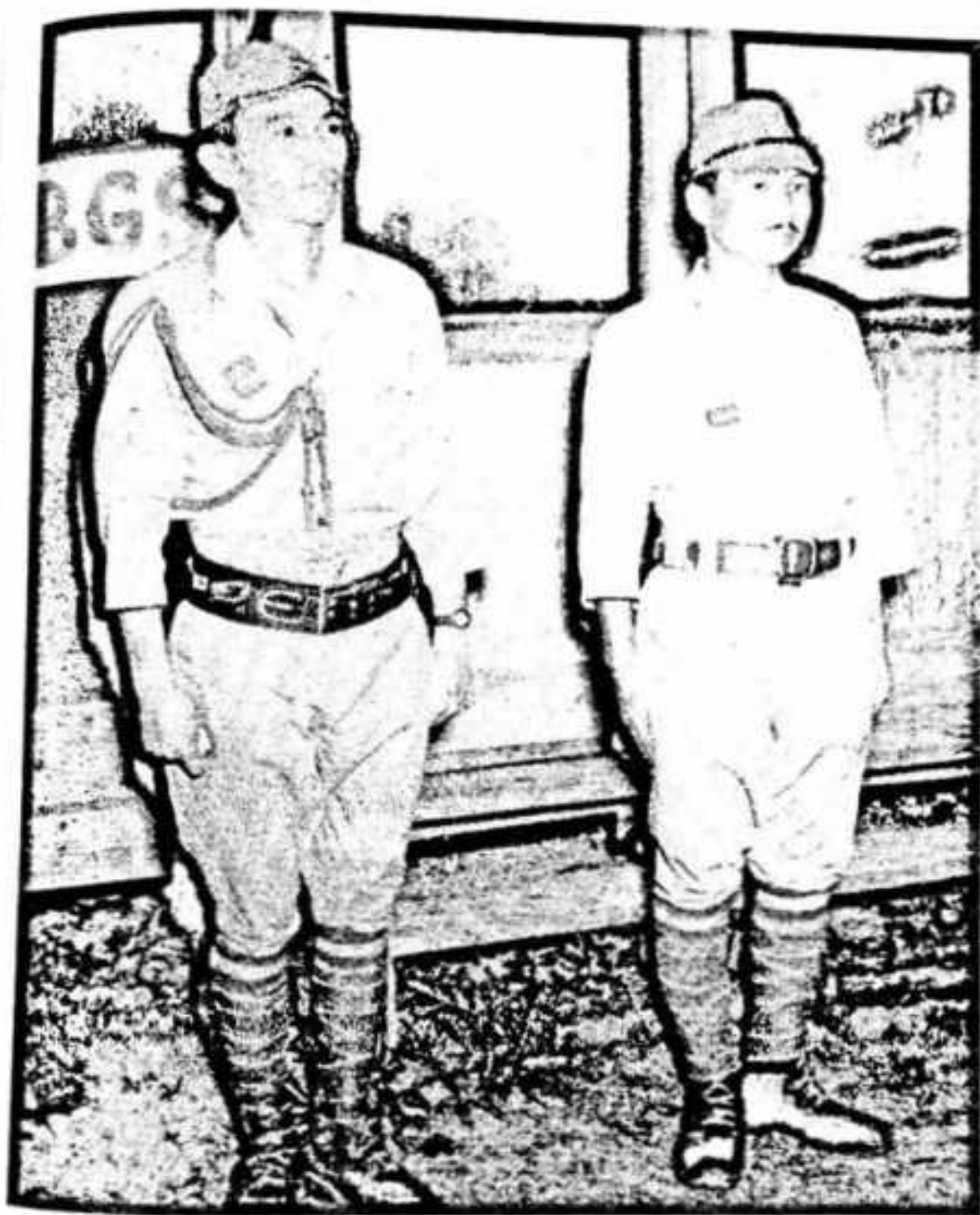
He gesticulated excitedly and shouted: "Secret, secret."

I calmly retorted: "Keep your precious secret to yourself. I am not interested in it in the slightest."

We dropped this topic and continued with indifferent conversation. But after a while, he ventilated this subject again. After all, he had prepared his trap and was still keen to lure me into it.

"Well, Bishop, wouldn't you just guess how strong our forces are?"

"Sure, Adjutant, if I can oblige you with my guess. Here it is: 10,000 or 20,000. Oh, well, let's make it half a million



General Imamura's adjutant (left) who wanted to know how strong the Japanese forces were

or one million; what figure would you like best?"

There he was with his trap, he felt it had snapped on his nose. He returned and had to report another defeat. Sorry, Adjutant.

The dangerous implications in this ruse were these: I knew the strength of the Japanese forces round Rabaul and Kokopo, for an interpreter, a bit under the influence of Saki, had told me they were 150,000 strong.

Had I been careless or foolish enough to mention this figure, they would have arrested me on the spot as a spy. And not only that, but, by virtue of the handy paragraph in the Proclamation, they would have punished all in the name of "Mission." As you know, spies have the unpleasant habit of getting shot, especially under a Japanese war regime.

BRAINWAVES

Against all expectations, time flew at Ramale Camp. We were grateful for the speed of its passing. One week after the other slipped by without any boring intervals. The secret of this was our well-organised programme that kept everybody busy all day long. The early morning was reserved for our devotional life; morning prayers, meditation, Mass and Holy Communion.

After our scanty breakfast, most of us—those not incapacitated by sickness or old age—went to work in the garden.

The rest occupied themselves with household chores: preparing the food, shelling beans, grinding corn for a favourite dish, pumping water for the laundry and the personal needs of the entire camp, and washing and mending our clothes.

Our Brother cobbler had an especially busy time in manufacturing wooden clogs. Most of our shoes were worn beyond repair.

The clogs were particularly welcomed by those suffering from swollen and cold feet.

Artists, too, were at work, carving crucifixes and other objects.

The priests took refresher courses in Dogma, Moral, Canon Law and other sciences. The books we brought from Vunapope proved a great blessing to all the communities.

During the evenings no bright light was permitted; just a small oil lamp or hurricane lamp in a position where it would not be seen by prowling 'planes. By this time everyone had an easy chair or a deck chair. From 7 to 9 p.m. each community came together by itself for a chat or informal exchange of news and views between its members.

The Fathers' multi-purpose parlour was the nearest to

the Kempri quarters. We always looked forward to those evening meetings; they were very interesting as would be expected with such a number of learned priests. Theological, philosophical, moral, anthropological, scientific, technical questions and opinions were discussed. And, of course, political problems. General MacArthur certainly missed out by not "listening in!"

The Kempri, only some 20 yards above us, kept a wary and suspicious eye on us.

They were puzzled. For months and months now the Fathers were assembling every evening, sitting there very peacefully, neither shouting nor quarrelling.

"What are they doing there? Look at the Bishop, he is always sitting in their midst. How concentrated and serious he looks."

The speaker was Tagai, the interpreter, who claimed for himself a higher education than that of ordinary troops.

"Do you remember the tremendous bombardment Vunapope got just one day after they left and moved into Ramale? I am sure they have a means of communication with the enemy. True, so far we have not been able to find any transmitters but our scientists tell us that there exist other ways of sending messages. Have you ever heard about telepathy?"

"No, Tagai, explain it to us."

"Well, listen. Telepathy is the action of one mind on another—at a distance—through emotional influence—without communication through the senses."

"By gosh, Tagai, you've said a mouthful. That would make the old Samurai choke. And are you sure they do such a thing down there?"

"I bet they do. You see the Bishop; how absorbed in thought he seems to be as he sits there. His brains are sending waves, brainwaves through emotional influences, such as love and hatred. We know he hates us and loves the Americans and Australians."

"These emotions are the propelling forces for brainwaves and in case his brains are not powerful enough, all the Fathers round him reinforce them by their hatred of us."

That explains why they are sitting together every evening for months and months on end."

The Japanese did not stop us from holding our sessions. Nor was there any forceful reaction. Instead, Tagai cautiously inquired of some of the Fathers their opinion on brainwaves and their possibilities.

We concluded that either his colleagues did not fully appreciate his high flung theory or that they waited for some occasion to catch me "in flagranti" and smash my precious brains. Fortunately, nothing of that sort happened and I still possess them. All the same, I regretted I could not live up to their high expectations.

JUBILEE PRESENT

On 25th February I celebrated the 25th anniversary of my first vows, by which I became a member of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

In normal times it would have been an occasion for a big family feast enjoyed by all members of the mission. There would have been congratulations, concerts, plays and, as usual, some practical gifts for the Church and house.

Here at Ramale, there were congratulations and concerts and against all expectations I was presented with a bottle, the contents of which were a boon to me.

When I invite people to guess what it contained, some think it must have been milk. Others say lemonade, beer, champagne. It was not. It was something more precious than all of those.

It was a bottle of concentrated salt water from the sea!

"Impossible!" you will say. "What on earth did you want that sea water for?" Well, I put a teaspoon of it on my food and it made all the difference in the taste. People in civilised countries find it hard to believe that a bottle of salt water could be so thankfully received. But those who have lived in prison camps will readily understand. At Ramale we suffered from an acute salt deficiency. In the tropics we lose, through perspiration, more salt than in moderate climates. The body simply demands more salt for its metabolism.

The Japanese allowed a team of our native and half-



The half-caste girls

caste boys and girls to walk under escort a distance that took one hour and a half to cover in order to get sea water. This was carried in bottles and thick bamboos once a week to our camp. The quantity proved to be insufficient for 367 persons, especially for the Europeans, who are used to a greater salt intake than natives.

SALT MANUFACTURE

Salt is the cheapest commodity for the natives living near the sea. They do not bother to reduce it to solid form by boiling but simply fill bottles and add the salt water to their food.

It is different with tribes living in the interior. Periodically they come down to the coast, which may be a walking distance of one or two weeks away. They feel instinctively the need of salt. On the beach they build temporary shelters and stay for a week or more to produce salt. They have discovered two ways of getting it.

The most primitive way is to collect driftwood saturated with sea water. The natives dry it in the sun and burn it. The salty ashes are carefully collected and made into small

bundles, by using leaves as wrappers. These are a very precious article for barter in their home villages.

A more advanced method, also used, is to boil the sea water to concentrate the salinity or even reduce it to solid form. This sounds very simple, but for primitive people without any metal or earthenware containers, it is not so easy.

They use suitable bark, in the form of a basin, which is supported by four sticks. They fill this basin with sea water which is evaporated over a slow fire. Some empty this concentrated brine into bamboo containers. Others proceed with the evaporation until salt crystals are formed. As long as the bark basin is wet the fire does not destroy it.

The Japanese, too, seemed to be short of salt for they prepared it from sea water by evaporation. They had big shallow aluminium pots, normally used for rice cooking. These were ideal for obtaining salt. Their large open surface area promoted quick evaporation and the resulting salt was pure white. They used an open fire for heating purposes, but as both fire and smoke draw bombs, this was a very dangerous procedure.

Realising this they invented a smokeless heating apparatus that really worked. We have to give them full credit for it. Near Rabaul there were natural hot springs. The Japs used these in the following way:

They cemented a large rectangular basin of approximately five yards by ten yards. Through a central eight-inch pipe the boiling spring water gushed out and filled the basin. Petrol drums cut in half floated in the hot water. They were filled with clean sea water. In due time this evaporated and a thick layer of salt remained. It was easy to refill the drums as the whole installation was only a few yards from the water's edge.

This equipment worked day and night without attracting 'planes or bombs. The natural steam rising from the spring was marked as such on the American maps and the bombers did not bother about it. After the armistice this salt factory was still intact. Nowadays nobody cares about it; salt is too cheap. Even the natives find it handier to buy it from the stores.

PRISON CRAFTS

Besides our regular garden tasks and household chores, we had plenty of time for lighter occupations and experiments, which made our prison life more agreeable.

Our botanists found a number of vegetables which we had never eaten before, such as Papaya flowers, young bamboo shoots, all kinds of mushrooms and a variety of young leaves. Not all were tasty but they were fit for human consumption. We even discovered a substitute for coffee: *Leucaena Glauca* beans. Roasted and ground they made a beverage similar to coffee. The supply was very small. Our botanical books told us that horses eating this shade tree lose their tails and manes. Fortunately our missionaries did not lose their beards; probably they did not consume a sufficient quantity. Imagine the possibilities for barbers and beauty parlours if bald heads ever became fashionable!

Coconut oil was a real necessity for us for both food and lighting purposes.

We suffered from fat deficiency. Coconuts and peanuts were our only sources of fat. Besides, they improved the taste of our meagre diet considerably. Tapioca pancakes fried in fresh coconut oil are delicious, especially in prison compounds.

We put all our ingenuity into finding a most efficient method of extracting the oil from the nut.

The ordinary procedure is to shred the ripe coconut kernel. A handful of the gratings is put into a piece of jute bag and wrung out by hand. The result is pure coconut milk. After being boiled in a metal container until all the water has evaporated the oil is left. The process takes several hours. Of course the smoke from the fire again annoyed the Kempis.

The wringing process was very tedious. Our Brothers improved it by constructing a press that was also more efficient.

To eliminate the dangerous boiling stage, we developed new means of separating the oil from the milk. Our method was based on fermentation. To learn how it worked, we cut the bottom off a Saki bottle in such a manner that it could be used as a lid for the inverted bottle. At the bottle neck a tap was fixed. Filled with fresh coconut milk, the white glass

permitted full observation of the fermentation process.

What we saw was an interesting surprise to us. After two hours or so a thick layer of cream formed. It is tasty and similar to real cream. After a few more hours, three distinct layers formed. At the bottom, water occupied the greatest part. Above the water, pure oil formed a relatively thin layer which gradually increased. The top crust looked like cottage cheese. When fresh it was quite tasty but in the last stage, after 24 hours, it was far from pleasant.

By then, the separation was complete. By means of the small tap the water was drained off. Then the oil was run into a separate bottle. The cheesy substance was discarded as food for the chickens. The oil was then ready for consumption and frying purposes. To make it suitable for lamps, it had to be boiled with a small quantity of water in order to precipitate the proteins and other mucus in it.

Oil Candles: For Holy Mass we used candles . . . at least they looked like ordinary candles but in reality they were our Ramale specialty. A metal cylinder was fixed on a candlestick. A lid kept the wick in position. When filled with pure coconut oil, they burned for some 20 minutes and then went out. The oil was too heavy to be drawn up more than one inch. A small quantity of petrol gave it the right viscosity and kept the candles burning for several hours.

The Japanese also tried mixing coconut oil with petrol but the whole affair exploded. Repeated attempts had the same unpleasant results. When they told me about their failures, I quietly took an oil candle and lit it. It burned with a pure, smokeless flame.

They shook their wise heads and humbly admitted: "Kaparisenki," making a gesture as if turning a handle on the side of their heads. They meant that somebody must have rotated their thinking apparatus the wrong way. They were probably right.

For the lighting of the tunnels and houses we used lamps made from bottles cut in half, with wicks floating on the coconut oil; they needed no thinning with petrol.

Fire: Under civilised conditions this is the simplest thing. If you wish to make a fire, you strike a match and get

your flame. But for us in the prison camp it constituted a major problem. The Japanese did not give us any matches. Deprived of them for three years, we still had our fires. Our natives, who belong to the Stone Age people (though nowadays, they are rapidly climbing to higher culture) had not forgotten how to make fire in their traditional way by rubbing two pieces of wood together. A piece of softwood is put on the ground and a stick of hardwood, at an angle of less than 45 degrees, is rubbed against it. The shavings which result and additional dry material placed with them soon start to glow and are then fanned into a lusty blaze. That method is resorted to only if other ways fail. The more primitive tribes use it. When walking for days through the bush, they do not repeat the system every time they wish to light their pipe or homemade cigar. They carry a piece of suitable wood some 24 inches long that keeps glowing after having been lit in the morning. That is their multi-purpose match. By swinging it they keep the stick alight. When walking during the night this match serves them as a torch. With it it is easy to start a bigger fire for cooking and other purposes.

Considering ourselves as belonging to a higher stratum of civilisation, we constructed a community match. We had brought from Vunapope a magneto which produces an electric spark in smaller petrol engines. Our mechanics soon had it rigged up in such a way that the spark lit a petrol-saturated wick. And lo! there was a flame for all our requirements—kitchens, pipes and cigars.

This community match had the great advantage over ordinary matches in that nobody could inadvertently pocket it and walk away with it as often happens with the factory product.

Some, including myself, were in the proud possession of an even more civilised source of fire. We had cigarette lighters and the necessary flints for them. There was no shortage of Japanese aviation petrol. As all their 'planes had been destroyed they had no use for it.

Typewriter Ribbons: We managed to bring quite a few typewriters to Ramale but after three years of use the ribbons became very dry and consequently the writing was

very faint. Our Sister Chemist supplied the chemicals required to restore them to their original condition. When the ribbons were torn and too far gone we even tried to make new ones from available materials. I am afraid, however, that these could not compete with the real thing.

Anyhow, I kept my typewriter in working order to the last day. It served not only for my own private use but also for my official dealings with the Japanese. As I never failed to make copies, I now have quite an interesting collection of documents.

PASTIMES

We had a couple of gramophones and quite a collection of records at Ramale. This contributed a lot to our recreation. From time to time we arranged musical evenings. Amongst some lighter music we had a good number of classics. We all enjoyed those evenings very much.

Soon we realised that our gramophone needles were getting blunt. We reconditioned them by sharpening them and, at the same time, experimented in making substitutes.

The tropics abound with a great variety of plants with thorns and spines. All kinds of citrus, agaves, cactus or bougainvillea came under close scrutiny. We decided on the thorns of the orange tree. A dry branch provided what we were looking for. Although unsuitable for loud music, the thorns were ideal for soft and subdued performances. If a small circle did not wish to disturb their neighbours with blaring records, they could enjoy a private concert on their own.

Chess: Among us were a number of good chess players. To satisfy those interested we set out to make sufficient boards. That was easy. It was more difficult to provide decent men. Father Weigl came to our rescue with his lathe. He turned out all the artistic figures we asked for. We were proud of those pieces.

Playing chess is a pleasant pastime and many even consider it a sort of intelligence test.

Some of our educated natives, the seminarians, were excellent players. It was interesting to watch them play some of the Fathers or Brothers. A European moves after

careful consideration of the strategic situation. The natives were extraordinarily quick in their moves. Of course, that means the right moves. They seemed to judge the given situation with an uncanny instinct and often beat their European opponents at the game.

Cards: Most of us liked a game of cards. Our favourite was Skat, which is similar to bridge. As we had no money, we could not lose any. Still we liked to play just for the pleasure.

Through constant use our cards reached a condition not in conformity with the strict rules of the game. Some were a bit torn and one could recognise their value from the outside. There was no possibility of buying a new pack. Skat does not use cards between two and eight and, consequently, these looked like new.

We eliminated the most dilapidated and replaced them with the brand new ones. The result was a pack of half old and half new cards. This was not according to Hoyle either, but we waved rules aside and enjoyed our game.

The king and queen had to be replaced. I lent a hand myself trying my artistic abilities on them.

Soon we had a new queen, beautiful to behold, smiling at us like a full moon. I must admit she was a bit cross-eyed, but that rather enhanced her loveliness.

You should have seen the new king. He looked stern; but then Kings have to, sometimes. Besides, he was full of majesty, complete with sceptre, crown and slanted eyes. The latter because of our Asiatic surroundings.

Once it happened that the Kempis saw the cards lying on my table. They were delighted with the loveliness of the queen. They were also much impressed by the appearance of the king.

Strangely enough, they did not see any similarity between him and their divine Emperor!

RETREATS

It is a common practice among religious, such as missionaries, to retire from their daily task for a week or so to devote themselves to special spiritual exercises.

It is a time for a check-up, an overhaul of our interior

life. We keep silence during these days of retreat in order to concentrate better on ourselves and not to disturb our communion with God, to Whom we feel near indeed during such periods.

A retreat master is appointed to give us four conferences daily, supplying us with matter for our meditations and spiritual improvement. The retreat is a wonderful time for restoring peace of soul and repose in God.

We made our retreats faithfully every year even in the prison camp, first at Vunapope, then at Ramale. I made mine privately. Having to deal so much with the Japanese I had to be free to shift the four meditations to the most convenient times. In spite of this arrangement I still had to cope with a lot of disturbances.

I was often called out from contemplation in our chapel to meet officers or the Kempis. In due time I developed a sort of radio technique. I turned my meditation off and went to discuss all sorts of trivial matters; then, again in the chapel, I switched back to my meditation. Repeated practice made me quite expert at it.

At Ramale, the various communities went on retreat separately. The Sisters and Brothers succeeded in making theirs without disturbance—it was the nearest approach to one made in the monastery or convent.

The Fathers were less fortunate. The first morning conference was fixed for eight o'clock. It was duly commenced but after a few minutes the air-raid alarm sounded. While the retreat master remained undisturbed, his audience jumped up and stampeded into the tunnels. Well, it was similar to a stampede; the rush and the heavy wooden clogs conveyed that impression.

The 'planes gone, the audience returned and the retreat master continued. After a few minutes, another line of 'planes approached—with the same result.

We decided 8 a.m. was no good and fixed 9 o'clock for the exercise. Unfortunately the Americans made the same decision. Again the devotions were disturbed. Next morning at 9 a.m. we had the same experience, and during the other conferences we had not much luck either. Even at 8 p.m., when we did not expect any disturbance, in came a 'plane

and caused the same commotion. The Fathers finally had to resort to my practice and use the switch method.

Founder of the retreat system was St. Ignatius of Loyola, who, being himself an old warrior and prisoner of war, must surely have looked down from heaven and applauded our valiant efforts to make a good retreat in spite of raiders and prison camp.

OUR NEW CEMETERY

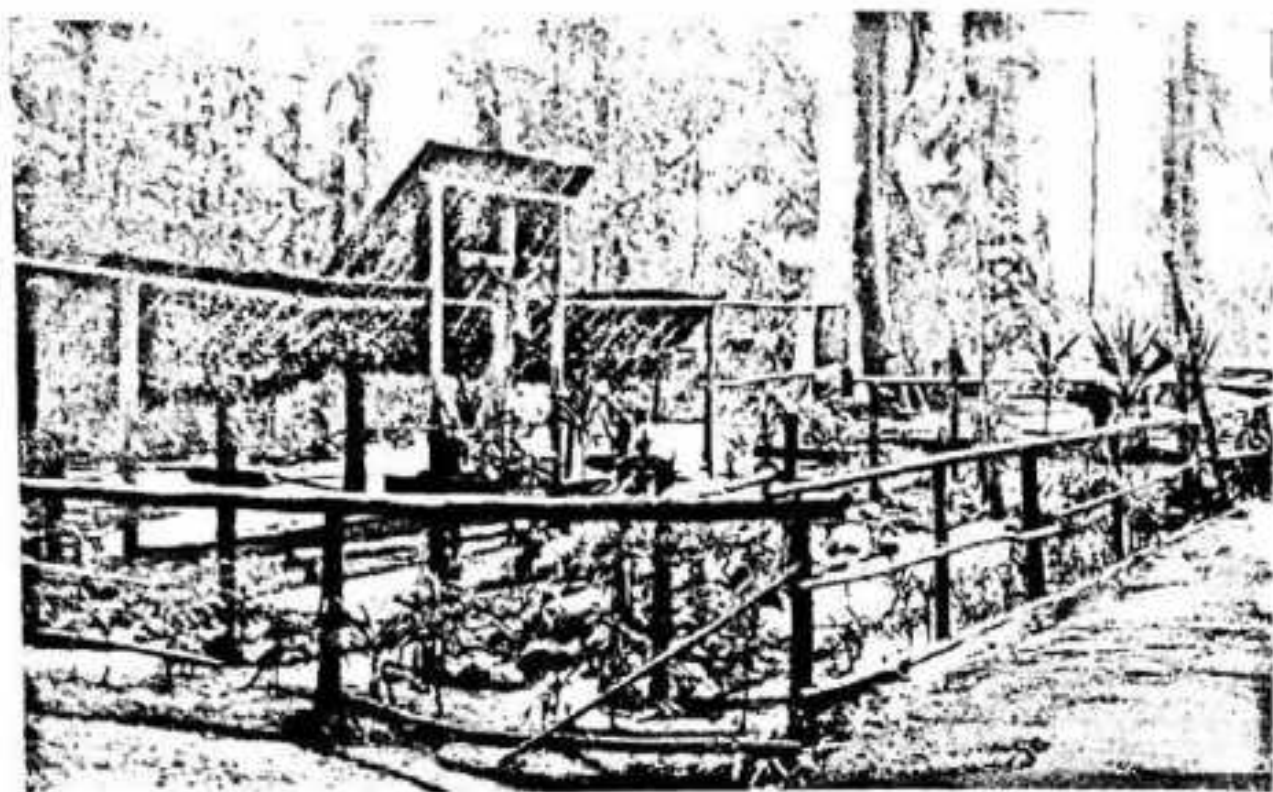
There was a flat stretch of land at Ramale that offered itself as a decent resting place for our beloved ones who had left Ramale for a better realm in Heaven. We fenced the place in and erected a big cross. One of the seminarians carved a corpus, in native fashion, for the crucifix.

We had not to wait long until the cemetery began to be used. Three of our oldest Brothers, famous for their long and successful mission work, were buried there. They were Brother Hessling, our gardener, Brother Mueller, our bootmaker and Brother van der Zanden who had been on a mission station for 40 years as right hand for the respective resident priests. While ten Sisters died during our time in Ramale, only five were buried in our new cemetery. Two M.S.C. Sisters, Climara and Ambrosia, died from sickness and starvation, far away from us, in New Ireland. One of them, when dying, expressed her last wish: "Please catch a rat and fry it for me, I feel so hungry." That indicates something of what these poor Sisters went through. They were not sorry to leave this miserable world.

Death came, too, to five of the native Sisters. Two of them, Sisters Madalene and Bernadetta, were brought seriously ill to our camp. In spite of the doctor's attention and the loving care of the other Sisters, both died and were laid to rest in our cemetery.

Three native Sisters died outside our camp. Their whole community was separated from us. The Sisters dug a grave for them and with prayers and tears put them to rest. They were Sister Juliana, Sister Agatha and Sister Tarsisia.

Three European Sisters also passed away at Ramale. Sister M. Matilde, F.D.N.S.C., died from lung cancer. She had been suffering from it for a considerable time. In that state



The Mission graveyard at Ramale

she had to undergo the bombings and all the other trials at Vunapope. Death was to her a welcome relief.

Sister Louisa, M.S.C., who had served Our Lord in the mission for many years, also did not regret going home. Sister Domitilla, S.M.S.M., was still young. She had come to Vunapope for medical treatment and was caught up in the Japanese invasion. She was lively, charitable and always ready to help. No wonder everybody liked her. At Ramale she contracted Scrub Typhus. Medical aid failed to help her.

One day in November, 1944, we saw four natives from our gardens coming down the steep path and carrying somebody on a stretcher. We got a shock on recognising the dead body of Brother Wochner. He had been killed instantly by bomb shrapnel. He was one of the Brothers who sacrificed himself to provide food for us at Ramale. He, too, was the one who did his utmost to alleviate the lot of the British prisoners near our gardens.

We brought the stretcher to our chapel and from there his body was taken, accompanied by us all, to the cemetery.

A few hours later, Major Sakakibara and Dr. Furakawa,

both in full dress, came to me to express their deepest sympathy in our loss. They wished to see the grave. I showed it to them. Both bowed deeply and remained in that position for a few minutes to honour and pay their respects to the deceased.

We appreciated this kind gesture and I believe they were sincere.

AMERICAN AIRMAN CRASHES!

Another interview with Major Sakakibara began in this way: "We have found out that American and Australian airmen receive instructions that, if they crash in the jungle of New Britain, they must contact the nearest Catholic catechist or teacher and they will get all possible help from them.

"How do you explain it, Bishop?"

That was a question I did not like. It implied that part of my mission staff were evidently co-operating with the enemy and sabotaging Japanese efforts.

My answer was: "Major, you know very well that the Japanese forces have severed all contact between the catechists and me. It is perfectly true that catechists are lay missionaries and as such, being neutral, are bound to extend charity to everybody, friend or foe, if they find him in need or distress.

"Take, for instance, our Sisters. They refused to be evacuated. They volunteered to stay and do hospital work for you Japanese as well as for Americans and Australians if the need should arise.

"Here is a case in point verified by the Father concerned. I am speaking of Father Berger, who was in Nakanai during the Japanese invasion. He is here with us now in Ramale.

"An American airman crashed in the jungle. After several days he found his way to Father Berger. He arrived starved and sick. The priest extended hospitality to him and shared his meagre supplies with him. He gave him quinine which cured his malaria. At that time there was no hope of escape as the Japanese had occupied the whole of New Britain.

"The airman wanted to surrender but was very much

afraid that the Japanese would shoot him at first sight. He asked Father to mediate. Both agreed that Father Berger should send a written message to the nearest Kempri, whose whereabouts the Father knew, telling them that at his mission station, an American airman, who had crashed, wished to surrender.

"The Japanese promptly arrived and took the airman prisoner."

By this strategy, the priest was instrumental in saving the airman's life.

The major and the others present were so thrilled with this story that they forgot their original grievance about the catechists. The interview had a happy ending.

We must realise into what grave danger Father Berger put himself by receiving the airman into his house and caring for him. If by chance the Japanese had surprised them, he would have been executed. This happened to six of my missionaries for the very same reason.

Later on, Father Berger was grilled from midnight to noon by the Japanese, cross-examined about the help he extended to the American airman. He was beaten and ill-treated for five days before he was brought to Vunapope.

CATECHISTS

Each missionary has a rather extensive district under his charge. The number of natives to care for fluctuates between 1000 and 3500. These people are scattered over an area of 20 to 50 miles along the coast plus 20 to 40 miles of mountainous inland. It would be impossible for one priest to give them even a minimum of spiritual care except for the help they get from the catechists. These are native leaders, properly trained in a catechists' school or teacher training college. They are distributed all over the missionary's district, occupying all important centres. They teach the children in school, they instruct the grown-ups, they prepare the pagans for baptism. The priest himself gives these the last intensive preparation. The catechists also attend to the sick and dying. If it is possible, they call the priest to give the Last Sacraments. If not, they prepare the departing Christian to meet Our Lord. Dying pagans are

instructed and baptised. The catechists, too, say the prayers at the graveside.

Normally, they work under the guidance of the missionary. But after the Japanese invasion, they had to carry on, on their own, under most trying conditions. The missionaries were all imprisoned; the practice of religion was forbidden by the Japanese.

The Japs told me: "Your religion is finished; it is dead outside the camp. Inside it, you may practise it as much as you like."

They were badly mistaken. Our religion was not dead.

The majority of the catechists did not accept this pagan edict. They remained faithful. Many were imprisoned and some were executed.

Here are a few instances that show how catechists laboured, suffered and died.

To Pen: The Cargo madness was in full swing at Nakanai on the north coast of New Britain. Batari had proclaimed himself Commander-in-chief and even King of all Nakanais. His forces were 600 men strong, armed with spears, bows and arrows and sticks for drill. As he had no money to pay them, he gave each of them a young girl. He selected the most beautiful one and proclaimed her queen. He dressed her in high-heeled shoes and ladies' long dresses, looted from the neighbouring plantations. The Ten Commandments of God were abrogated and replaced by many more of his own devising. Even decent native customs were abolished and replaced by unrestricted licence, rape, murder and terror.

Under such circumstances the local priest, Rev. Father Weigl, and his catechists, who objected to all this madness, were in the way of Batari and his reign of terror. So he decided to arrest them and kill them.

Faithful natives warned the Father and his assistants that their arrest was imminent. In fact, it was fixed for the next morning.

The priest decided to stay. He refused to desert his flock. The catechists were undecided. Would they remain or flee? They spent half the night in prayer. Overwhelmed by mortal fear, they left for the interior after midnight.

They had not gone far, when the senior catechist, To Pen, called a halt and addressed the others: "Shame on us, aren't we weaklings and cowards to leave the Father to his fate? Let us go back to him and die with him." All agreed and returned during the night.

Doesn't that remind us of similar words spoken by the Apostles when Our Lord invited them to go to Jerusalem, where his enemies waited for him?

In the early morning, when it was still dark, several hundreds of Batari's soldiers surrounded Father Weigl and the catechists' houses. They dragged the priest out of bed and tied his hands with wire. Two of Batari's henchmen tried to split his head with an axe but were prevented by the others. Out in the open, they publicly scourged the Father and slapped his face.

Then they dragged the catechists out of their homes. They were To Pen, To Vakak, his wife Ia Pinia and their three children. All had volunteered to do catechetical work in Nakanai far from their own people.

They were all cruelly flogged. In addition, To Pen was stoned and wounded by four spears. To Vakak's whole body was a bloody mess. His wife, Ia Pinia, was stripped of her clothes, beaten and later raped.

Now the rebellious natives formed a triumphal procession. The prisoners, half dead, were paraded through several villages. Many of the people cried, but nobody dared to help for fear of Batari.

When Father Weigl was finally brought into his presence, Batari declared that he had acted on orders from Hitler. The Nazi spy Zyganek, who indoctrinated Batari, must have told him a lot about Hitler and his gentle ways with Catholic priests! He said his instructions were to keep the Father in custody until the evening when a Japanese 'plane would arrive to take him away for execution.

No aircraft turned up but after two weeks two Australian 'planes came over and bombed and machine-gunned two villages. Batari was furious. He blamed Father for having sent a secret message to the Australian coast-watchers. He ordered the Father and To Pen to be kept

in the bush without proper shelter. For three days no food or water was given to them. •

There they were in utter misery: heavily guarded by Batari's henchmen, handcuffed, drenched by rain, shivering with cold, hungry and thirsty, pestered by mosquitoes. Suffering from a severe attack of malaria, Father Weigl felt wretchedly unhappy; death seemed a welcome release. Under threat of immediate execution, he was forbidden to talk to the guards. He had committed the crime of explaining to them how Cargo is manufactured by skilled men. That, of course, was heresy and sabotage in the eyes of Batari for he knew beyond all doubt that Cargo was created by native ancestors and sent to their descendants.

To Pen, his faithful catechist, was a great comfort for Father Weigl. Though still suffering from the four spear wounds, To Pen did everything he could to alleviate Father's plight. When the priest was shivering with cold and malaria, To Pen warmed him with his own body. The only consolation for both was the consciousness that they were suffering for Our Lord's sake, by remaining faithful to Him and His Commandments and by opposing Batari and his mad henchmen.

By now, Batari was afraid that the Father might die a natural death. He did not want that. He wished to execute the priest. He did not keep his intentions secret. But when he set out, armed with a shotgun stolen from a planter's house, to shoot the Father and To Pen, a terrific lamentation and crying began in all the adjoining villages. Batari did not dare to proceed with his plan for the time being.

A few days later he tried again, but this time his scheme created a dissension even amongst his warriors and resulted in a fight. The opponents pointed out that if Batari were to kill the Father, all the neighbouring tribes who were not infected with Cargo madness might declare war and take bloody revenge. Batari gave it up.

Some faithful natives reported Batari and his atrocities to the Japanese, who were some 75 miles away at Ula Mona. The officer-in-charge sent strict orders to Batari to release the Father and his catechists immediately and restore them to their houses. Batari grudgingly obeyed.

When the Father returned to his house, those who had looted it brought back all the stolen goods, explaining that they had taken them to return them safely to him.

A few days later a big canoe arrived from Vavua, a place ten miles away. The good people had come to rescue the Father and the catechists and take them first to Vavua and then to Ulamona, which was occupied by the Japanese and where one Father and five Brothers were stationed. They arrived safely at Vavua. But when Batari heard of it, he set out immediately with 20 canoes and surrounded the village. He was determined to prevent Father from reaching Ulamona first and from reporting his conduct to the Japanese.

They kept Father at Vavua until Batari, accompanied by a big fleet of canoes, sailed proudly to Ulamona. He had on board two prisoners, American airmen, who had crashed in the bush and who had been captured by his soldiers. Now he was going to hand them over to the Japanese. He had them cruelly tied up with wire. This was his golden opportunity to disprove all the allegations of atrocities and murder and to give them evident proof of his friendship and loyalty. The Japanese fell for it. They were very glad to get these American prisoners and all accusations against Batari were forgotten. Atrocities? Well, they did not believe that Batari could really compete with themselves.

When, a few days afterwards, Father Weigl reached Ulamona and reported Batari, the Japs only laughed and took no action until later, when they landed at Batari's village and he played up with them (as already related under the heading "Co-prosperity").

After a few months Father Weigl and his catechists were brought by the military police to Rabaul. The catechists returned to their home villages and Father was put into our prison camp at Vunapope . . . just one day prior to the heavy bombardment that destroyed the mission. He had come from the frying pan into the fire. Getting into hot water seemed to be his lot!

After the armistice, as soon as we were free to do mission work again, the catechist, To Pen, immediately volunteered to resume mission work in Nakanai. He is still

active there, very much respected and highly esteemed by the missionary and the people for whom he works.

Batari is no longer king and no longer commander-in-chief of all contemporary and ancestral Nakanais forever. He is a common villager, tending his garden and going to church as all the others do.

He had declared the Catholic religion abolished and dead, as did the Japanese. Thanks to the heroic endeavours of the missionaries and their valiant catechists, the Faith is more alive than ever and the Church flourishes throughout the whole of Nakanai.

Batari's wife is no longer queen and does not walk about in high-heeled shoes and ladies' long dresses. To be frank, she says it was a nuisance anyway. Now she dresses in a scant grass skirt and feels more comfortable, especially about the feet, which no longer ache as they used to do during her royal days of exaltation. What a pleasure to go barefooted again!

TO ROT

To Rot's father was a native chief, a Luluai as we call them here. He wished his son to get the best possible education available there at that time so he sent him to the Teacher Training Centre.

To Rot became a very efficient catechist and teacher. He had a winning personality and was much respected by everybody.

When the Japanese occupied his district, they sent Father Laufer, the priest in charge of the station, to the prison camp in Vunapope. The Father entrusted To Rot with the spiritual care of his station. Full of zeal he took on the difficult responsibility.

He witnessed marriages, visited the sick and prepared the dying to meet their Divine Lord in the state of grace.

He exhorted the children and grown-ups to lead a truly Christian life and not to fall back into immorality and pagan practices. This task was the more difficult as there was no Confession, Holy Communion or Mass to give them spiritual strength.

But one source of gaining grace was not blocked: the

daily prayers. On account of the air raids, it was too dangerous to assemble a big community for prayer. To Rot organised smaller groups who met in special houses and later in dugouts and tunnels.

In the beginning, the Japanese had no objection to this practice, especially on Sundays. The different groups assembled in the early morning and, after their ordinary morning prayers, would recite the usual prayers for the different parts of the Mass. They even rang the bells while reciting those at the Offertory, Consecration and Communion. As they had not the Blessed Sacrament with them and no priest, all made a "Spiritual Communion," preparing themselves by contrition and lovingly inviting Our Lord into their hearts.

That was the normal practice in the numerous Catholic communities during the Japanese occupation.

However, when the fortunes of war turned against the invaders and they realised their doom, they openly blamed the faithful for it.

"You hate us and you pray to your God for our defeat, depriving us of our victories."

An order from the High Command was published stating that all religious activities had to cease, immediately and entirely. That was about the time the military police told us at Ramale that outside the camp our religion was dead. Apparently, they planned to finish it inside the camp too—by killing us all.

To make known this new edict, they assembled a great number of native chiefs and proclaimed that they were no longer bound by Christian principles; polygamy and brothels would also be established.

This order caused a great stir amongst the people. Very few indeed welcomed the new era. The overwhelming majority declared: "What do these pagans take us Christians for? Do they think they can tear religion out of our hearts by a foolish decree? We will show them!"

To Rot and the other catechists continued to gather small groups secretly for prayers and instruction.

Young couples who intended to marry came to the catechists, especially to To Rot. He saw to it that they

contracted a valid marriage. He put the questions to them in the presence of two witnesses. He kept a perfect register of all marriages as well as deaths and baptisms. Marriages could not be kept secret—and that brought To Rot to his doom.

The Japanese employed natives as police boys. The people called them spies. They ferreted out everything and carried it to their Japanese masters.

One of them, a non-Catholic, To Metapa, wanted to marry the Catholic wife of another man. To Rot and the local native chief dissuaded her effectively and she refused to desert her husband for To Metapa.

The police boy, his wish frustrated, swore revenge. Soon he reported To Rot for assisting at marriages and leading prayers.

To Rot was arrested. The chiefs and faithful tried to buy him his freedom. The Japanese refused the money. They told the Luluai who interceded for him: "To Rot is a bad character. He interferes with polygamy to which the people are now entitled and he still incites the people to say their prayers. That is a crime. Don't you know that he is a criminal?"

To Rot himself discouraged his friends from pleading for him. He told them: "I know they are going to kill me. Don't worry, I am prepared to die for my religion. Tell everybody to be faithful to Our Lord. Show them that we are capable of living up to the precepts of our religion."

There was, apparently, no formal court procedure. When the Japanese announced that a Japanese doctor was coming in the evening to give him an injection, he knew what that meant.

To Rot washed, shaved and put on his best clothes and went into the prison dug-out. He prayed and recited his rosary, patiently waiting for his hour.

The Japanese took unusual precautions. His fellow prisoners and everyone else were removed. They were sent some distance away and told to play ball and to be as noisy as they could be. Such nocturnal recreations had no precedent.

The idea was to eliminate all possibility of witnesses.

There were none by the time the two doctors arrived, even the Japanese police boys had been dismissed.

After about an hour a police boy was called to inform the local chief that To Rot had died, so that the people might come and remove the body.

At first glance the natives noticed unusual symptoms. A sort of foam was exuding from To Rot's mouth, nose and ears. It differed from the normal thing and had a peculiar chemical smell which they could not identify. His throat was discoloured and on his left arm was a mark of an injection needle. The people knew To Rot had been murdered. Even non-Catholics frankly admitted he had been killed for being faithful to his religion.

Nowadays, the people consider him their martyr and are proud of him. Since his death he has been an even greater inspiration to them. His grave is still daily decorated with fresh flowers.

FIDELITY

Quite a number of catechists were imprisoned, beaten and killed, some for giving help to airmen who crashed or soldiers in distress; the majority for refusing to neglect their religious duties. They preferred to die rather than to become traitors to their Faith.

Some parts of New Britain were fortunate enough to be liberated long before the armistice.

At Arawe on the south coast of New Britain, the American and Australian forces landed after a terrific bombardment and drove the Japanese out on 15th December, 1943.

At Cape Gloucester General MacArthur launched an even larger combined operation, an assault which gave him a grip on western New Britain on 28th December. Diversionary air attacks on Rabaul and Kavieng, some 360 miles away, deceived the enemy into thinking the blow was not going to fall on Cape Gloucester.

Three months later when Talasea was taken on 10th March, 1944, General MacArthur announced that the major part of New Britain was now under Allied control.

The natives, mostly Catholics, were happy. The Japanese did not succeed in abolishing their faith. Far from it.

American and Australian army chaplains took charge of them. They went to the trouble of learning enough of the Pidgin English to be able to hear confessions, bless marriages and preach to them.

At the same time the chaplains warmly praised the achievements of the missionaries, who were now imprisoned or killed. Father Daniel Meehan of Newark states: "I have only admiration for the solid and enduring work of Father Cadogan and the other missionaries. The natives' sterling and devout faith never flagged during the dark period, when they were without a priest."

Another chaplain relates his experience when offering the first Mass after the landing.

He sent word to the catechists that there would be a Sunday Mass for the Catholics. He wondered if any would turn up. An altar was set up in the open under a big tree. Early on Sunday morning, he was amazed to see hundreds, up to a thousand men, women and children flocking in. The men were attired in a clean loin cloth, some even had a shirt. The native women in their Sunday best, all of them wearing fibre skirts, tastefully coloured with native dyes. The local fashion does not require any blouse. Babies and children up to four years were wrapped in natural beauty and innocence.

The priest started the Latin prayers at the foot of the altar: "Introibo ad Altare Dei."

Here he got the surprise of his life. The whole congregation answered in a thousand harmonious voices. "Ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam." So it went on clearly and surely to the end of the alternate prayers.

Another surprise awaited the priest. For next he heard the catechist leading the people in prayers in the native tongue adapted to the different parts of the Mass. After each, the catechist intoned an appropriate hymn in which all, old and young, joined, forming a massed choir in two voices. So it went on till the end of the Mass. "Well, well," thought the chaplain, "I expected to find religion in a primitive state. They have shown me what they really are. They can compete with any Catholic community in America or in any other civilised part of the world."

When transferred to another sector, the priest left a note with the catechist, addressed to the local missionary: "Dear Father, I don't know if you are still alive, but I definitely know that the Catholic Faith you planted in the hearts of this people is very much alive. You erected a monument of your mission activities that can't be destroyed."

OUR NATIVE SISTERS

DAUGHTERS OF MARY IMMACULATE

When, in October, 1942, all the missionaries were brought into the prison camp at Vunapope, the native nuns were declared free, by the Japanese, to go where they liked.

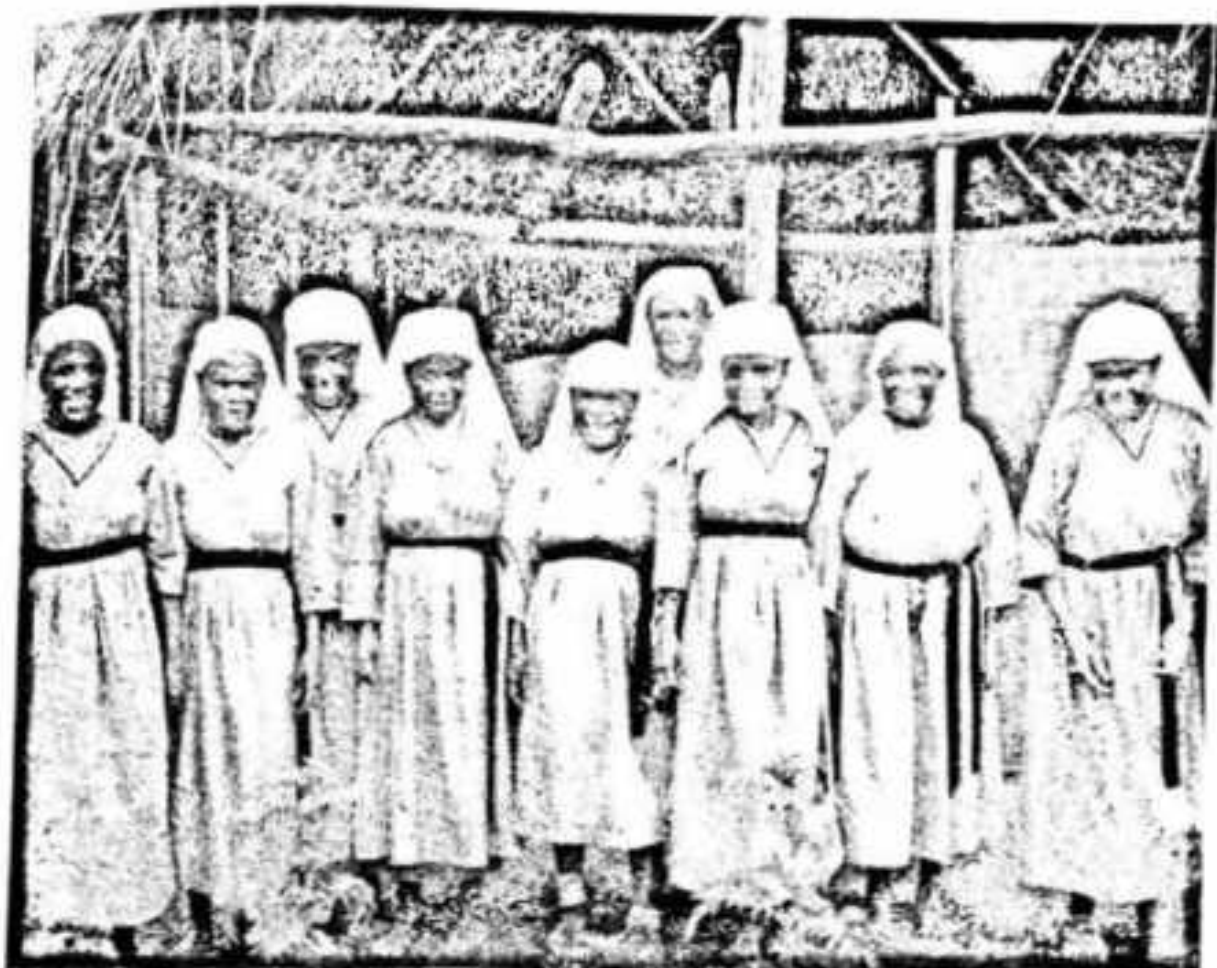
The poor Sisters felt like orphans on being separated from their spiritual Mothers and Fathers. Crying and lamenting, they packed their few belongings; their residence was already occupied by the Japanese soldiers.

I assembled the poor Sisters and explained to them that under such circumstances, I was willing to give them permission to exchange their habits for ordinary secular clothes and allow them to go home. Not a single one accepted the offer; they emphatically insisted that they would stay together and wear their religious dress. With a sorrowful heart I gave them my last blessing and they departed, crying, to Takabur, a village some eight miles away. The novitiate of their congregation, where their Mother Superior and old Father Zwinge, their Spiritual Director, also resided, had been established there.

After a few days, military police arrived with a truck to transfer Father and the two European Sisters to our compound. Before leaving Father summoned the nuns to the church and gave them his last instructions and blessing. He appointed Sister Cecilia their Superioress.

The Japanese drove the priest and European Sisters hurriedly away. The native Sisters were now really deprived of all spiritual care. The Blessed Sacrament, also, was no longer reserved in the church.

The Sisters remained there for a long time, praying, sobbing and crying. Some of the Japanese soldiers laughed and jeered at them. Others felt sorry for them and tried to



The native nuns who endured torture by the Japanese

comfort them. But the Sisters flatly refused all consolation from them.

Then came another shock. By order of the military police they had to evacuate immediately their convent and all other buildings, the church included.

They shouldered their bundles and walked off. Where would they go? They went into the bush and took shelter in their banana groves. They were in a desperate plight. They were exposed to the weather, without a roof over their heads. There were 45 in all. Who was going to build a house for them? Surely not the Japanese. Divine Providence took care of them.

We had a teacher training college some ten miles away from the Sisters' place. The Father and Brother in charge had been imprisoned with us. The students were expelled and their large school building occupied by the Japanese. The boys constructed houses for themselves near their own gardens and felt quite happy.

When they heard what had happened to the native

nuns, the whole lot of them, armed with axes and bush knives, appeared on the spot where the Sisters were sheltering.

"Here we are, Sisters, don't worry, we will take care of you and build decent houses for you." The boys did the hard work of cutting the trees for the posts and rafters while the Sisters lent a hand in providing the long kunai grass for the roof.

In a few days, sufficient houses were standing to accommodate all the nuns. The lads even dug air-raid shelters for them. The Japanese did not give them any rations but their gardens were close by. In fact, during the three and a half years, they were not without food for a single day.

Sister Cecilia took charge of her community and held the nuns together in a way no European could have done. She arranged the community into little groups, assigning to each its daily work. They were close enough to enable them to meet for community prayers, morning and night.

Not one day, during those three and a half years, did they miss their morning and evening prayers, their meditation and office. On every First Friday, without fail, they spent an hour in prayers of reparation.

For Sunday Mass they walked eight miles to Vunapope during the period when Father Dahmen had been allowed to remain outside the camp with our Brothers in the workshops. They started their journey on Saturday afternoon, slept in one of the villages and arrived at Vunapope at 6 a.m.

Those Sisters who were unable to walk the distance gathered as many natives as possible in their little compound and recited together the Mass prayers and the Rosary.

They did this for two years in spite of terrible bombings and Japanese occupation. As natives they were free to move about and were not afraid of the soldiers. Two of the native Sisters fell victims to the bombs; two others died from disease.

When Vunapope had been destroyed and we were removed to Ramale, the Sisters promptly decided to transfer their quarters to the same area because a priest had been

left free in the vicinity. The gallant teacher students put up new houses for them, new air-raid shelters and planted new gardens.

NATIVE SISTERS TORTURED

Their happiness lasted only a few weeks. The Father was then imprisoned in our camp and the Sisters were once again deprived of Holy Mass and the Sacraments. There was nobody now to protect them against the solicitations and atrocities of the military police.

One of the native police spies had reported that Sister Theresia had spoken disparagingly of the Japanese. She was accused of saying that the Japanese were "number ten" and that she liked the Americans and Australians better. That, of course, was a crime.

One evening about sunset all the Sisters were rounded up for court procedures. The mustering was not done in front of the police station, as was usually the case, but up on the mountain top, where we could not see or hear them.

Sister Theresia was charged with having made the aforesaid offensive remarks. She emphatically denied it. The Japanese had no witnesses; probably they had invented the charge for purposes of their own. Sister Cecilia accompanied her. The Japanese tried violently to push the latter away, but she clung to Sister Theresia. "She is my child," she said. "I will not leave her."

The whole night through the Japanese continued their interrogation, with a bayonet at Sister Theresia's throat and body, jabbing it at her in a savage manner.

When they remarked that they would take Sister Theresia into the police tunnel, Sister Cecilia retorted: "I am going with her, you can't separate me from her."

"We are going to kill her tonight," they said.

"Then you have to kill me first," said the Superior.

When the other Sisters heard that, they shouted, one after the other: "Kill me, kill me, leave Sister Theresia alone!"

Now Sister Theresia spoke up: "Let them kill me, I have done no wrong and I am not afraid to die."

In the meantime, the other nuns had not been standing around idle. The Japanese saw to that. The guards had

devised a special treatment for all of them: the so-called bamboo torture.

The nuns were ordered to form lines and kneel down. A long piece of bamboo was laid across their legs behind the knees. Two native police boys had to stand on both ends to weigh it down. The cruel torment was very painful. The poor Sisters started to whimper and to cry with pain.

Now Tagai, the interpreter, put in an appearance, sadistically laughing at them and sneering: "And you pretend to be true followers of Kristo? Did Kristo, when hanging nailed to the cross, whimper and cry as you do? You should be ashamed of yourselves."

That jeer silenced the nuns instantly. The Japanese admitted to them that there was no charge against any of them except Sister Theresia.

Why then were they tortured?

It was a devilish plan to force Sister Theresia to confess her crime. Besides being tortured herself she was compelled to watch her Sisters suffering on her behalf. The other Sisters, in order to free themselves from the bamboo torture, were expected to prefer charges against Sister Theresia.

The diabolical plan failed miserably. The inhuman treatment continued until four in the morning. Then the Japanese gave it up. By then they knew that the Sisters were true followers of "Kristo" and that there was nothing that could break their morale. The nuns had even volunteered to die.

They were sent home and told that the court procedures would be resumed later in the morning. They went limping. The anticipation of further torture prevented sleep.

They waited the whole morning for the summons, but it never came. Neither were they tortured again. The Japanese had learnt their lesson.

After having recovered from this ordeal, the nuns diverted their activity to keeping us supplied with vegetables at Ramale Camp. Our three Brothers worked in the gardens about four miles away from the camp. Two ox carts conveyed the food as far as the top of Ramale mountain. From there it had to be carried down to our camp. The native Sisters immediately offered to undertake

this difficult task. They carried on their heads big baskets of bananas, tapioca roots, sweet potatoes and other vegetables. Soon they realised that the two cartloads were not sufficient for 360 persons.

Sister Cecilia and her community rose every morning at 4 a.m., went to the gardens and carried an extra load of food for us. We watched them, heavily laden, descend the steep path.

On Saturdays, I stood there at a spot where they could see me well. I lifted my hand: Attention!

A whisper went through their single file: Bishop, Bishop, Bishop. . . .

A second sign; I struck my breast as at the Confiteor, indicating contrition.

Then finally, I made the sign of the cross with my hand giving them General Absolution. They understood me perfectly and rejoiced.

Every Saturday morning for nearly a year and a half, as private confession was impossible, they got the General Absolution. To allow all to attend, they divided the provisions so that every Sister bore something. The Kempis never woke up to it. The Sisters deposited the supply near the Kempis office and returned. After they were gone, our boys went to pick it up. Any communication was strictly forbidden and practically impossible.

The native Sisters also kept a correct check on all our patronal feasts. When the feast day of a Father, Brother or Sister came round, the good nuns sent parcels with specially cooked food, such as bananas, sweet potatoes or vegetables cooked in coconut milk. These treats were wrapped in green leaves. We enjoyed them as a special delicacy and looked forward to them with great pleasure. These parcels were intended not just for one person but for his or her whole community. God bless these devoted women for their thoughtfulness.

SECRET MESSAGE

On Christmas Eve just one food parcel arrived. It contained cooked bananas and was for the Bishop. Hidden between the bananas was a secret message: "Dear Bishop and Father, We want to let you know that we are in distress.

For days and nights on end we have been crying and unable to sleep for sorrow. Christmas is so near and we know there will be no Mass and no Holy Communion for us even on Our Lord's Birthday. Can't you help us, dear Bishop? Your Little Sisters."

This note stabbed like a dagger in my heart. I had tried repeatedly to make Mass and Holy Communion possible for them but so far I had failed.

I decided to try once more, and to try hard. As on many other important occasions, I remembered what Our Lord had told His Apostles:

"You will be brought before governors and kings on My account. . . . Do not consider anxiously beforehand what you are to say; use what words are given to you when the time comes; it is not you that speak, it is the Holy Spirit" (Mark 13:9).

Ascending the steep path to the major's house, a thought flashed like an inspiration through my mind: in less than a second's time, a new plan, in all its details, came to my mind.

Present for the interview were the major, doctor, chief of police and the interpreter. After outlining the meaning of Christmas, I requested permission for the native Sisters to have the benefit of Mass and Holy Communion on this great day.

First proposal: Allow the Sisters to enter our camp under police escort. In a secluded spot one priest would say Mass for them and give them Holy Communion.

An animated dispute followed between the two independent authorities: the major and the police. They talked and talked while I sat there and wondered. After some 20 minutes they declared the concession could not be granted as it would be against the prison regulations.

Then I brought forward my second proposal: Let the Sisters stay in their compound but let a priest go there under escort and say Mass for them.

Again, a long palaver with the same negative result: against regulations.

I was ready with my third proposal: "To safeguard your sacrosanct regulations, I would suggest that tomorrow morning at 6 a.m. the Sisters stand outside the camp behind

the fence, opposite my hut and about 30 yards away. From there they can see me saying Mass. We are just asking for that. There will be no talking from either side. If you wish you may even post your guards armed with hand grenades and fixed bayonets."

I considered this proposal foolproof. They discussed it for nearly half an hour. My hopes began to waver and dwindle. Then to my great relief they granted my request.

"All right, Bishop, tomorrow at 6 a.m. the Sisters will be at the spot indicated by you."

I thanked them and said I had still another favour to ask. I pointed out that on the morrow, Christmas Day, they would witness a special ceremony. All the priests, Brothers, Sisters, boys and girls would come to the Bishop. Bending their knee they would kiss my ring. We would all shake hands and wish each other a happy Christmas.

"I am asking for this favour to be extended to the native Sisters also," I said. "I wish to shake hands with them in the presence of all the authorities and the whole police force here at the station."

This suggestion seemed to meet their approval. After a short discussion, they agreed. They could not find any possible danger to Great Nippon in that.

In happy anticipation I left for my hut.

CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR THE NATIVE SISTERS

Before 6 o'clock on Christmas morning I began the first of the three Masses. After a while my altar boy whispered that the Sisters Immaculata were there. I was happy and continued the Holy Sacrifice.

After a few minutes he whispered again: "The Sisters are gone. Chased away by the Kempis." When I had finished my Mass I saw them sitting on the steep path leading to the camp, crying.

Rev. Father Kersken had already vested for Mass and was just about to begin when I advised him to put his altar table out in the open, right in front of my hut where the Sisters could see him. He was delighted to comply and the good Sisters still happier to hear Mass from approximately 100 yards distance.

When I had offered my third Mass I walked up to the police office, where all the authorities were assembled. I was attired in purple soutane, rochet and stole. I started with the major and shook hands with him and all the rest, wishing each in turn a happy Christmas. They grunted something in return.

Then I exclaimed: "Major, now I wish to shake hands with all the Sisters." He assented and beckoned to them to come down. In single file they descended.

The first nun knelt and kissed my ring. I calmly opened the ciborium-I had hidden under my rochet and gave her Holy Communion. Quietly they approached me one after the other, going through the same ceremony of kissing the ring and receiving the Saviour born for us on the first Christmas night.

Then the storm broke loose. The two authorities, the major and the Kempf, started to argue at the top of their voices only a few paces away from where I stood. I prayed: "O Lord, help me to continue undisturbed. Your daughters cry for you."

I continued without interference and when I had finished the Japanese ended their argument too. Apparently the major had won for he asked me to address the Sisters if I so wished.

I did. In fact I delivered one of my shortest sermons, but one which was unsurpassed by my longest sermons in its effectiveness.

I said: "My dear Sisters, you have wept for days and nights, longing for Mass and Holy Communion. You thought there would be none for you. Our Lord has not forgotten you or forsaken you.

"This morning you had your Holy Mass and Our Lord Himself came to your hearts and offered Himself to you as your Christmas present.

"Go home now and show Him your gratitude."

Now all the nuns burst into tears. But they were not tears of distress. Joy, happiness and gratitude welled up in their hearts and warm tears rolled down their brown cheeks.

The Japanese looked on amazed: it was a mystery to them.

On the way home the Sisters did not talk to each other. They sobbed happily until they reached their houses. Here Sister Cecilia assembled her community and they thanked Our Lord, using the words of the Post Communion prayers.

During the whole of Christmas Day they felt as though they were in a holy and happy daze.

PEACE FORECAST WITH GUARANTEE

The whole Ramale camp was abuzz with excitement. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, all were talking about the news Brother Roesel had spread. On 1st July, 1945, peace, or rather an armistice, would be declared.

Who wouldn't get excited at such news after waiting for it for three years?

Of course, everybody wanted to know from where Brother had obtained his wonderful information.

He declared his source was absolutely trustworthy and reliable, but unfortunately he was not at liberty to disclose it, not even to the Bishop. Should the Japanese hear of it, they would cut his throat. That made things even more mysterious. We were then sure it must be a dangerous sort of source.

Brother Roesel's confreres were very realistic about it. They told him: "Look here, you are not going to pull our legs. You write down your forecast, complete with date and signature. We will keep it in a sealed envelope. On 1st July we will open it; at the same time you will disclose the source of your information and we will see how much truth there is in it. Woe to you if it is a hoax."

Even though so many of us did not believe in this forecast at all, we could not help, at least subconsciously, hoping that it might come true. For four months it had a beneficial influence on the whole camp. It gave us an optimistic outlook.

Finally the 1st July dawned. The Brothers solemnly assembled for the opening of the sealed envelope.

What a disappointment for the whole camp! First of all there was no sign of an armistice, as far as we knew, and secondly, Brother Roesel's source of information sent

cold chills down the most optimistic spines: it was a pendulum!

The Brother was an enthusiast for divining underground water with the pendulum. He had used it on a calendar to find the date of the armistice. It had indicated 1st July and so he spread the story.

In addition to cheering up the camp for four months, the prediction gave us a good laugh at his expense in the end.

ANOTHER ARMISTICE FORECAST

In mid-April, 1945, a Japanese general, accompanied by some staff officers, visited Ramale. As names of generals were taboo, I never learned his. We were both the same age, 49 years. His conduct was very correct, not at all bombastic or arrogant. I must say, all the Japanese generals I met behaved in the same manner.

He opened the conversation by asking me a question: "Bishop, I would like to have your opinion on the duration of the war. How long do you think it will last?"

"General, is not that a strange question to put to a prisoner of war? You put me in this camp, without the slightest contact with world affairs, so how could I possibly know?"

He replied, "Exactly, we know that you are completely cut off from all news. For this very reason, I am asking you, how long do you estimate the war will last according to your 'feelings'?"

"All right, General, if I can oblige you with my intuitive sentiments, I dare say the war will end definitely this year."

They put their heads together and discussed it in Japanese.

"Now, General," I ventured, "I would like to hear your opinion. You have at your disposal all the political and strategical information that enables you to form a better estimate on the subject."

Again they went into a huddle and talked the matter over.

"Well, two more years, Bishop, two more years of war yet."

Looking back now on the history of the war, it is strange to realise that Brother Roesel's pendulum was far more accurate than the general's forecast, based though it was on all the relevant data. The missionary missed the correct date by one month and a half, while the general missed it by about two years.

Then I requested an outline of the present global position of the war. After a short consultation with his officers, the general commissioned one of them to give the desired information.

I quickly got a school atlas and, making use of it, he explained to me the landing of Allied forces in France, the battle of the Bulge, the last efforts of Hitler's crack troops to stem the invasion of Germany.

Well, this news confirmed my feelings that the war would end that year, considering how badly the Japanese in our parts of the Pacific had been mauled.

I switched the conversation to our food problem, and asked the general to give us a horse.

Amazed, he asked: "What do you want a horse for?"

"To eat it."

"You would really eat a horse?"

"We never did so before the war, but now being starved for proteins, we would do it with great gusto."

He promised he would find a horse for us.

And really, two days after his visit it arrived.

"You mean the horse?"

Oh, no, I mean the General's letter about the horse.

A photostat of this letter is published in this book. It was written on a full page in beautiful Japanese characters.

Tagai, our interpreter, translated it for me in the following way:

"My dear Bishop,

I had promised to you that I would give you about some of horse but I could not found the horse, which give to you, and I fraid the day which having spending to spending, so I must give to you one of man pig for instead of the horse.

Please would you receive my friendship to you."

Cheer up, Ramale, rejoice all hungry inmates, your Bishop is getting you pork, plus the general's friendship!

Kempi told me to send some of our boys to pick up the pig. So I enquired how big it was, for on its size depended the number of carriers. I calculated like this: If a general of the Imperial Nippon forces sends a pig instead of a horse, the pig would be at least half as big as a horse. But the Kempis were not so sure of that. Just to be on the safe side, we sent six strong boys to bring it in.

After a couple of hours, the boys returned. The native way of transporting a pig is to tie its "hands" and feet, hang it on a pole and carry it on their shoulders. We watched them descend the steep path leading to our camp. Only two lads carried it. Instead of a strong pole there was a stick less than an inch thick, and they did not support this on their shoulders but each on one finger. The remaining four boys gave the porker honorary escort.

Well here was our pig. Exactly the size and quality of the friendship the general extended to me! A long snout—skin and bone and coughing badly.

We decided to put it behind a fence and fatten it up. But it refused to eat. To prevent it from dying a natural death we killed it, and put it through a mincer and, lo, 360 people had a wonderful meal. Actually, it was nothing to boast about—mixed with tapioca, it had a bitter taste.

In contrast to this experience, we had a real banquet from our own resources. One of the two Zebu oxen that carted our food to Ramale went on strike. It was a "stand still" strike. Nothing could induce it to move. Its misconduct was reported to me and promptly I sentenced it to death. Big chunks of meat arrived in our camp. The Sisters had their hands full preparing and cooking it.

But who would trust a fellow that had already gone on strike! Who knows? He might play another trick on us and disappear during the night! There were too many Japanese soldiers and native spies around. We took no chances. Throughout the whole night, teams of Brothers kept watch in turn in the kitchen. Next day the ox was still present to cheer us up with a truly great feast—no bitter after-taste here!

IN THE LIONS' DEN

One evening at 8 I was called up to the Kempfi's quarters. "Seems to be something unusual," I mused. And it was.

The Kempfi officers and guards were there and also three army officers, whom I did not recognise as the light was so dim.

"Bishop, we called you to say 'yes' to our plan. These three officers want 30 of your Ramale boys to work for them in the Supply Department. We are in a hurry."

"Oh, are you?" I retorted. "I am not so sure that I am. You mean to take 30 of our boys who toil for our common food supply in the prison camp and use them for your own purposes?"

"What compensation in the form of food are you prepared to pay for these boys? You don't give us a handful of food for our camp. You brought a good number of people here who are old and can't work and now you intend to deprive us even of the means of procuring our own food."

"Sorry, we don't consider any compensation. We need these boys and that's that," the Kempfi said.

"Very well! These boys are in our camp under order of the High Command and does your Chief of Police, Colonel Kikuchi, know about this? Please procure a written order from both and I will deal with them. My answer to you is a definite 'No'."

I had the sensation of being a tamer in a lions' den. Twelve hostile lions glaring at me, hatred and annoyance flashing from their eyes.

There! What is that? Crystal clear and pure a song wells up from the prison. Boys' melodious voices sing and pray to our Heavenly Mother:

"Oh! Mary help!

Help us in danger and distress."

Those boys had no idea their Bishop was up there in danger and distress. For me in such dire straits, it was a voice from heaven. All right, let's have another round.

"Bishop, do you know who these officers are?"

"No, I can't recognise them, the light is too dim."

"Well, this is Captain Asuma from the Supply Department."

"Well Captain Asuma, what a pleasure to meet you here. I have been looking forward to seeing you for more than a year. How are you and how many millions of tapioca sticks did our mission supply you with, according to the agreement signed by both of us? You enforce the delivery of 10,000 sticks per day, yet you threaten Brother Sehr with court martial if he does not supply them. You, Captain Asuma, you are bound by the same contract to pay five bags of foodstuff such as rice, barley, flour, salt, for every 10,000 sticks. When are you going to pay up? If you do, I am quite agreeable to lend you 30 of our boys."

Asuma was stunned. That was a surprise attack. He was speechless. The Kempri came to his rescue.

"Bishop, by now you should know us Japanese better; you should know that you don't mix two problems in order to solve them."

"Very well, Tagai, but take the most important first."

"Captain Asuma, when are you going to pay?"

The three officers rose. They were in a hurry to leave the room. So was I. I wished Kempri good-night.

BAD OMEN

Again I was summoned to the station where Major Sakakibara informed me that the High Command had decreed that we had to erect sharpened poles 12 feet high, all over our gardens to make the landing of American paratroops impossible, or at least more difficult.

"Well, Major," I said, "you realise that we missionaries are non-combatants; we are neutral and your order implies a direct defence measure. You may direct your soldiers to do it but not us. Sorry we can't oblige."

The major was not pleased with my refusal but he left it at that and did not enforce the command. A few days later, he was relieved of his post as Camp Commander. Tagai told me: "This major was a good friend of yours and for that very reason a bad Japanese. Kempri reported him and he got the sack."

No army officer replaced the major, but a higher Kempri

officer, Yashiru, was put in charge of the whole camp. Everybody who came in contact with him felt instinctively that he was a wicked fellow. His very look spelled malice.

I had not to wait long before being taken before him. Dr. Furakawa was present also. Point blank Yashiru attacked me in an unpleasant voice for not co-operating. "Why did you refuse to erect those sharpened poles?"

I gave him the same answer as I had given the major. He, too, took no direct reprisal but there was a nasty glint in his eyes. I was surprised that Dr. Furakawa was sitting there, very subdued and not uttering a single word in our defence. He possibly knew Yashiru's reputation.

A few days later a new tunnel was started near the Kempri shelter. Although police boys dug it, our boys were commanded to help. There was nothing suspicious about this tunnel except that it was rather deep and blind. As it was not connected with the tunnel system of the Kempri, we guessed it might be a prison tunnel. We had witnessed repeatedly most cruel and sadistic flogging of natives, arrested for some offence. This was done in full view of our camp, in front of the Kempri office. Some of us ventured the opinion: "Perhaps one day they will kill us all in that blind tunnel." It was just a remark like so many others.

Another incident made us quite happy. The native Sisters got orders to move into our prison camp in Ramale. Full of joy they packed their few belongings and moved in. What made them rejoice was not the fact of being imprisoned but the certainty that they would now have Mass and Holy Communion every day and would be under our protection. The Kempri had arranged that they would move into the married half-castes' quarters. The half-castes in turn were ordered to move out of our camp and to occupy the native Sisters' houses.

THIRD PLAN TO KILL US

Two Japanese plans to destroy us, by starvation and malaria, had failed. So they drew up a third to execute us. They figured that one would be foolproof. Rumours cropped up to the effect that something terrible would happen in

Ramale. The half-castes who had left Ramale were told so. Soon we heard it too, but did not worry about it.

Just before the native Sisters moved into Ramale, the native police boys told them that they were very sorry for them. When the Sisters already had settled in the compound, Tagai turned up, assembled them and said: "Sisters, if you don't want to stay in the prison camp there is still time. Just tell me and I will arrange for you to go out again. You know I am very sorry for you all."

After the bamboo torture affair, Tagai had the highest respect for them; he sort of liked them and wanted to save them.

However, the good Sisters simply laughed at him: "Oh, Tagai, nothing doing, we are so glad to get in here, spare your efforts to get us out again—we want to stay here." Tagai left, shaking his head. He knew what we did not know; there was a definite plan and a fixed date for our slaughter.

But all these hints and indications were definitely insufficient to draw such a conclusion. Thank God, we did not lose sleep over them and lived at peace. Still, there is documentary evidence, found by the War Crime Commission after the armistice, of a definite plan to execute us all at Ramale on 23rd August, 1945. We were to have been forced into the blind tunnel where time bombs had been placed to blow us into eternity. A cheap burial was foreseen also. From the explosion the tunnel would cave in and bury us, some dead, some half-dead and some alive.

That was the third extermination scheme supposed to be foolproof but it too went astray. None of us claim the slightest credit for its failure. Our survival was entirely and exclusively Divine Providence watching over our destinies. God spoilt their devilish plan.

The armistice was declared on 15th August. The Japanese had fixed the date for our execution eight days too late.

Three days after the armistice, Kempf warned us not to be shocked by some explosions taking place a short distance from the camp. These were the time bombs intended to dispatch us to heaven.

THE HAPPY END

During the last six months before the armistice the Fathers were extremely busy with conferences and scientific work. We felt the end could not be far off. All indications of a violent destruction were simply ignored. . . . We prepared for life, yes a very active missionary life, after our liberation.

We solved the problem of a united catechism for the Vicariate. We had a catechism in the Gunan Tuna language, composed by Reverend Father Bender, which all considered the best in our Vicariate. It was easy for me to proclaim it the standard catechism and declare that all others had to be modelled on it. Our difficulty was that we had over 95 languages in our mission so we decided to translate Father Bender's book into Melanesian English, the lingua franca in our mission. We appointed a committee comprising experts from Manus, New Ireland, New Britain and the Solomon Islands. We started straight away, everybody co-operating.

Typewriters clicked busily, but only in 1948, after we had installed a printing press, could we publish the results of our labour. The catechism comprised 314 pages. Now all the missionaries are able to translate it into the various languages. Some started even in Ramale, while our gaolers were making preparations to blast our brains out with bombs.

Our regular evening conferences were becoming increasingly interesting and intensive. Tagai must have wondered what ominous messages we were sending.

Indeed, our messages were received, not exactly by the Americans, but by Divine Providence, Who took care of us and spoiled Tagai's plans and those of his henchmen.

ARMISTICE

The morning of 15th August, the Feast of Our Lady's Assumption into heaven, dawned. The previous night had been an unusually noisy one up at the Kempfi office. Visitors had called and talked excitedly at the top of their voices. They were busily regaling themselves with plenty of saki.

In the morning one of the native police boys came



General Sturdee accepts the Japanese surrender

running near our fence and casually threw in a remark: "The fight is finished!"

It seemed too good to be true.

Then after 10 o'clock Tagai came down to the Sisters. He was under the influence of saki and evidently was prohibited from telling us the great news. But he was itching to give us at least a hint. He addressed the Sisters in Pidgin: "Sisters, you tingting, 'planes no!" Meaning: "There are no 'planes to-day, draw your own conclusions." Then off he went. We were still not certain, having no official announcement. Next morning we gathered at the gate to go to work in our gardens. Nobody came to unlock it for us. We sent a boy up to remind the guards. They gave him the key with the declaration: "Work as long as you wish, no more restrictions." That was another indication that the war was over.

The official announcement came next morning, 17th August. I was called up to the office and the Chief of

Police simply stated: "The war is over, you are free now. Tell all the inmates of the camp to forget everything in the past that was not so good. But there is one thing we want to tell you. We are proud of ourselves that nothing happened to your Sisters or the half-caste girls."

That was undoubtedly a bright spot in their otherwise dark war record. Later we were amazed to find that there was not a single half-caste offspring from the Japanese army in Manus, New Ireland or New Britain. We give them full credit for that.

Talking to them now as a free man, I could not help passing on some good advice: "Soon you will be going home to Japan. Remember how your former prisoners, we missionaries, behaved during the most trying times. During the occupation, prison camp, bombardment, starvation and sickness you found us always cheery and smiling, with no trace of hysteria and desperation. What kept up our morale and good spirits was the faithful practice of our religion. We are grateful to you for not interfering with it. It actually was our secret weapon. There are more powerful things in existence than bombs, machine guns and samurai swords. Yes, we were sending secret messages but not to the Americans; our fervent prayers transmitted our messages to Our Lord and He protected us as you must surely realise now. In Japan there are many Catholic priests. When repatriated, get in contact with them, ask them for instructions and you may become what we are now."

Like small, docile boys they took my advice. No sneering or arrogant refusal!

A week or so before the armistice, three higher officers from the General Staff came to see me. After first talking among themselves, one of them addressed me: "Bishop, many, many times we in the High Command have discussed you and your Missionaries. We can't make you out. **THIS CROWD BEATS US ALL!**"

"Thank you, Colonel."

This was the highest compliment ever paid to us. If there had been a battle waged between us and the Japanese forces, here they frankly admitted their defeat.



The Japanese surrender on board ship

BETWEEN THE ARMISTICE AND THE LIBERATION

When the official news spread over the camp there was great jubilation. We arranged for special thanksgiving service with Solemn Benediction. We thanked Our Lord for His protection and new lease of life. He had spared our lives and we were resolved to use every ounce of our strength in His service.

Now we could relax. With hunger gone we realised how fine it felt to be still alive. We expected the Australians every day now—to come and liberate us from the Kempri. But nothing happened; we were impatient and the time dragged slowly. Perhaps they did not know we still existed!

One night four Europeans were brought into our camp. They had been imprisoned at Rabaul. Each had a few rations with him, and not much else. We made them at home. For the first time in three and a half years they enjoyed being among civilised people again.

Mr. Gordon Thomas, the former Editor of the "Rabaul

Times," was one of them. He gave practical expression to his sentiments in the following form:

RAMALE*

A steep hillside with jungle everywhere,
While down the slopes a twisting, winding stair
Leads to the Valley of the Sacred Heart,
Where stand examples of the building art
When grim necessity harshly demands
A half a hundred houses from Man's hands,
Built only with the woods the jungle yields
And twisted grasses from the kunai fields.

Here stand in neat and orderly array
The war-time refuge homes of Ramale,
Where the Bishop, Fathers, Sisters, Brothers
Have spent so many war-scarred days
And learned the art of war in every single phase;
And yet, despite the load they bear,
Are smiling still, by Grace of Faith and Prayer.

Thro' all the physical and mental strain,
When diving 'planes attacked; comrades slain,
These Labourers in the Vineyard never ceased
Their day's devotions, but rather increased
The fervour of their pray'rs; their call for aid;
And, when there was no need to be afraid
Of zooming 'planes or shells from passing ships,
There rose Te Deums from three hundred lips.

See, walking slowly in the Central Square,
In meditative thought and reverent prayer,
The pioneer priests of these now war-worn isles,
Each having lived through sacrifice and trials
Which proved his loyalty to Allied Cause,
There, to and fro, with calm and peaceful mien
Priests of the Sacred Heart complete the scene.

There are two aged Fathers playing chess,
With expert Continental thoroughness;
Four others are engaged in bridge, and play
As tho' they lived ten thousand miles away
From war-time camps, and all the nervous strain
Of keeping normal, heart and soul and brain.
Reaction after war has dangers, too,
And only stern control can see it through.

But hark! The melody of sacred song
 Rises in richest harmony among
 Those brown leaf houses where the choir boys train;
 Deep notes, as if some organ's sweet refrain
 Had been caught by those giant, straight-stemm'd trees
 And then toss'd out again upon the breeze
 To make such perfect harmony to hear,
 And stir the soul, and fill the heart with cheer.

The very presence of these natives here,
 In this calm, peaceful, shelter'd atmosphere,
 Was all the proof a doubting world requir'd
 And all these energetic priests desired
 To show their preaching of the Holy Word
 Had born rich fruit; and new born Faith had stirr'd
 Responsive chords within each native heart,
 Nor one forsook their creed right from the start.

O war-time refuge of Ramale!
 What lessons you could teach the world to-day,
 If only ears could hear, and eyes could see
 The all-pervading calm tranquillity
 That reigns within the Sacred Vale all times
 Amongst God's Workers from so many climes . . .
 Their peaceful secret is not so hard to find:
 They've learn'd from God the art of Being Kind.

(*Dedicated to His Lordship Bishop Scharmach, M.S.C., whose wisdom and understanding so ably guided his charges through the terrible years of 1942-1945.)

MY LAST INTERVIEW WITH THE JAPANESE

Staff officers called on me declaring their intention to pay their debts to the Catholic mission.

They apparently remembered my demand: "Everything you take or destroy you have to pay for."

Our claims, handed to them in the beginning of the war, were nicely pasted together forming a long scroll.

"Well," I said, "it is very kind of you that you are prepared to pay. May I ask in what currency?"

"In occupation notes, of course."

"Look," I said, "if you take me for a fool, that's all right; but you should not take me for such a fool."

"How do you mean? You don't like occupation notes?"

"Definitely not, you'd better throw them into your waste-paper baskets or make a bonfire of them."

"Would you prefer us to pay in yen?"

"Well, could you first tell me the value of the yen compared with the dollar?"

"Oh, we don't know."

"Well, I don't know either. I presume you have inflation now and your yen may be worth nothing. Sorry, I can't accept payment in yen either."

They went, but next day other officers visited me. They brought a new proposal; payment in goods. Would I accept that?

I told them that I was not sure if they were free to do so, as the Australian authorities might object. But they thought they could do it.

"All right, let's see what you can offer us. We are starved, we need food and medicines.

"According to our papers, you have taken 10 bags of sugar, a specified number of cases of meat, fish, butter, &c. Simply return an equal quantity and we will be satisfied."

They started to sneer and even used offensive language. As a matter of fact, they had all these foodstuffs but their value had increased enormously by being saved from the bombardment. They quoted fantastic prices.

"No, thank you, I cannot accept your offer. You have given me perfect proof that there is not the slightest goodwill on your part.

"Besides, when dealing with a Bishop, don't treat him like one of your coolies.

"That is final, I will give my answer to you in writing."

And I did. Now they distrusted their own courage. They called in the same general, whom I met in April, to mend things.

He asked for an interview and I granted it. I told him exactly what I had told his officers, with a few additions.

"General, you Japanese have taken all our means of subsistence, our coconut plantations, livestock, bananas. You tried hard to kill us by starvation and malaria and you failed.

"Now, after the armistice, we expected you to pour tons of much needed food and medicines into this camp. We would accept it as a token of your goodwill. Instead, you are demanding exorbitant prices for the very food you took from us.

"That is ill-will and I wish to have no further dealings with you."

He took it calmly and inquired if I had anything else to say.

"Yes, General, I have to acknowledge your letter and gift. In April I asked you for a horse for the starving camp. You could not find that horse and you sent, instead, a pig.

"That pig arrived. Its weight was between 15 and 20lbs. It had a long snout, it was skin and bone and coughing and it had a bitter after-taste too.

"Nevertheless, thank you, General, for your generous gift. Three hundred and sixty people will not forget it."

Sudden rage distorted his features. He banged the table, talking furiously in Japanese.

I rose and said: "What is that, General?"

Then to my companion, Father Muller: "Let's go." Bowing slightly, we left.

I could not make it out. Was he offended by the lack of genuine gratitude on my part for his generous gift, or was he angry that his well-meaning orders had been sabotaged by his subordinates?

Poor General, he lost the war and he lost face! It was too bad really.

Next morning some officers again asked Father Muller for an interview with the Bishop. He told them: "Didn't you get the Bishop's letter? That was final, no more dealings with you fellows."

"Yes, we got His Excellency's letter. We don't want to talk any business. The only thing is, we wish to apologise to His Excellency."

"Hm," I thought. "Sounds a bit better now," and granted them the interview.

Profoundly and humbly they apologised for their misbehaviour. That was the grand finale of my official dealings with the Imperial Japanese Forces.

LIBERATION

We had to wait from 15th August to 13th September for liberation. The time seemed dreadfully long.

But we had some pleasant intermezzos. Big bands of Indians and Indonesians streamed into our camp. Like us, they had been prisoners of war. Using their new freedom they came to cheer us up.

They brought their home-made string instruments and gave us interesting concerts. Conversation was a bit difficult as only a few spoke English. However, quite a number spoke Dutch. It was a pleasure for them to speak to some of our Sisters.

The Kempis, who were still in charge of us, didn't like these visits at all. They finally stopped the Indonesians, saying that they were responsible for us and could not guarantee our safety with these fellows.

But our new friends retaliated by telling Kempis: "Look out, should we hear that you harm any missionary, ten Japanese will have to pay with their lives. If you harm the Bishop, 100 Japanese will be killed in retaliation."

This made our position pretty safe. Perhaps it was not just an idle threat. I have already related how 16 British officers were killed by the Japanese after the armistice on Vatuwaile Island, near Rabaul.

Finally, the 13th September came along. Many of us went for a stroll round the camp. Then at 9 a.m. we heard coo-ees and joyful shouting on the top of our mountain. Down they came, running, jumping and in no time were in our midst. Vigorous handshaking, laughing, talking all round. Thanks be to God, our liberators had arrived!

We had planned to give them a formal welcome with songs and speeches. Now they had taken us by surprise. Even the Sisters had no time to put on their Sunday best, as they had intended. Never mind! This welcome could hardly be more joyful and heartfelt than it was.

Amongst our liberators were some of our pre-war friends of the Administration staff, Major Bates and Major Roberts. With them, too, was the army chaplain, Rev. Father Boland, a Redemptorist.

He had expected that for years we would have had no Mass and Holy Communion. Very considerately, he brought us some altar breads and several bottles of altar wine.

How amazed he was to learn that throughout all the three and a half years of our captivity we had Mass and Holy Communion every day!

"That is unbelievable," he exclaimed. "Were the Japanese so kind to you?"

"Oh, no, in spite of the Japanese and every misfortune, Divine Providence arranged things for us."

I told him how we saved the altar wine and how the bombs had destroyed everything except half a drum of caustic soda that had provided soap right up to that day for the whole camp.

All the flour, except one tin, was destroyed. That, too, was pierced by a small piece of shrapnel, but was speedily soldered by one of our Brothers.

In the tropics, once a tin is opened, flour does not keep long, at best a couple of weeks. Weevils come in and it gets mouldy. Our flour kept fresh and intact till the last day. There was still about one tenth of the tin left.

Not knowing when the war would end, I had to give orders that Fathers, Brothers and Sisters were allowed to receive Holy Communion every day, all others on Sundays only. Fortunately, that rule needed to be kept for two Sundays only, then our liberation came.

But Father Boland insisted: "How do you explain it, My Lord? It looks to me like a miracle."

"Well," I said, "we look at it that way. Our Lord put us through a terribly severe test. We accepted it humbly from His Hand. We remained faithful to Him and put all our confidence in Him."

"Over there in the chapel, at the back of the altar, you can read it for yourself: 'In Te Domine, speravi (In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted).'

"The Japanese tried to kill us by starvation—yet there was not a single day on which our 360 people were without food.

"They tried to kill us by malaria: not a single one died from it.

"Our Father in Heaven provided material food and medicine for us.

"But we were in still greater need of spiritual food and medicine; we cried and prayed for it. So He gave it to us in Holy Mass and Holy Communion. As for the flour, it does not seem difficult for Almighty God to keep it fresh for one year and a half, even in the humid climate of Ramale."

"But, My Lord, it is wonderful, simply marvellous."

"Yes, it is. You will notice the spirit amongst us is excellent, but alas, our bodies!

"Compared with you, our liberators, we look like a pious congregation of mummies, who have gone through a revival course."

"Don't worry, My Lord, don't worry. Orders have been given to supply your camp with full army rations and all the medicines you need."

And so it was done. From then on trucks rolled in and brought everything our stomachs desired. All those good things we used to dream of, but missed for so long.

Next day a visit from General Eather, who was in command of the Australian forces, was announced. We gave him a formal welcome.

What impressed him and his officers most was our spirit and cheerfulness. He promised to take good care of us. The food supply had already been arranged. Now he ordered the Japanese to install a telephone line from Ramale to Rabaul to enable us to be in contact with him and the other authorities. Further, the Japanese had to provide a motor car for me. That gave me a chance to get around.

From then on Ramale was a lively place. Long columns of jeeps brought visitors every day. The Red Cross and Salvation Army were very kind to us and brought us a lot of very useful things. I still use an Aladdin Lamp that I received from them. The Sisters were showered with chocolates and candies and the Fathers and Brothers with tobacco.

Doctors checked up on us and compiled a list of the most urgent hospital cases. These were taken to hospitals in Rabaul, Jacquinot Bay and Lae, and later to Australia.

Half of us who needed no special treatment remained

at Ramale. The authorities advised us to have a good time and recuperate there. Plenty of good food and medicine were available.

Our sick missionaries met extraordinary kindness everywhere, both here in the Territory hospitals and in Australia.

Many of our missionaries were operated on at Lewisham Hospital, Sydney. The good Sisters and doctors there refused to accept any payment. Later, when I met the Reverend Mother General at Rome, I thanked her for all the kindness and help extended to my missionaries. She replied: "My Lord, you owe no special gratitude to us. We have no mission field of our own. Your sick missionaries offered us a great opportunity to participate in your mission work by restoring their health. We hope Our Lord will be pleased with our services. That is our contribution to the missions."

I myself underwent surgery in the Sacred Heart Hospital, Baldwyn, Victoria. When restored to health I asked the good Sisters for my bill. They simply declared that there was none.

"After all," they said, "it would not be fair to ask for payment after what you have done for our M.S.C. Sisters at Ramale."

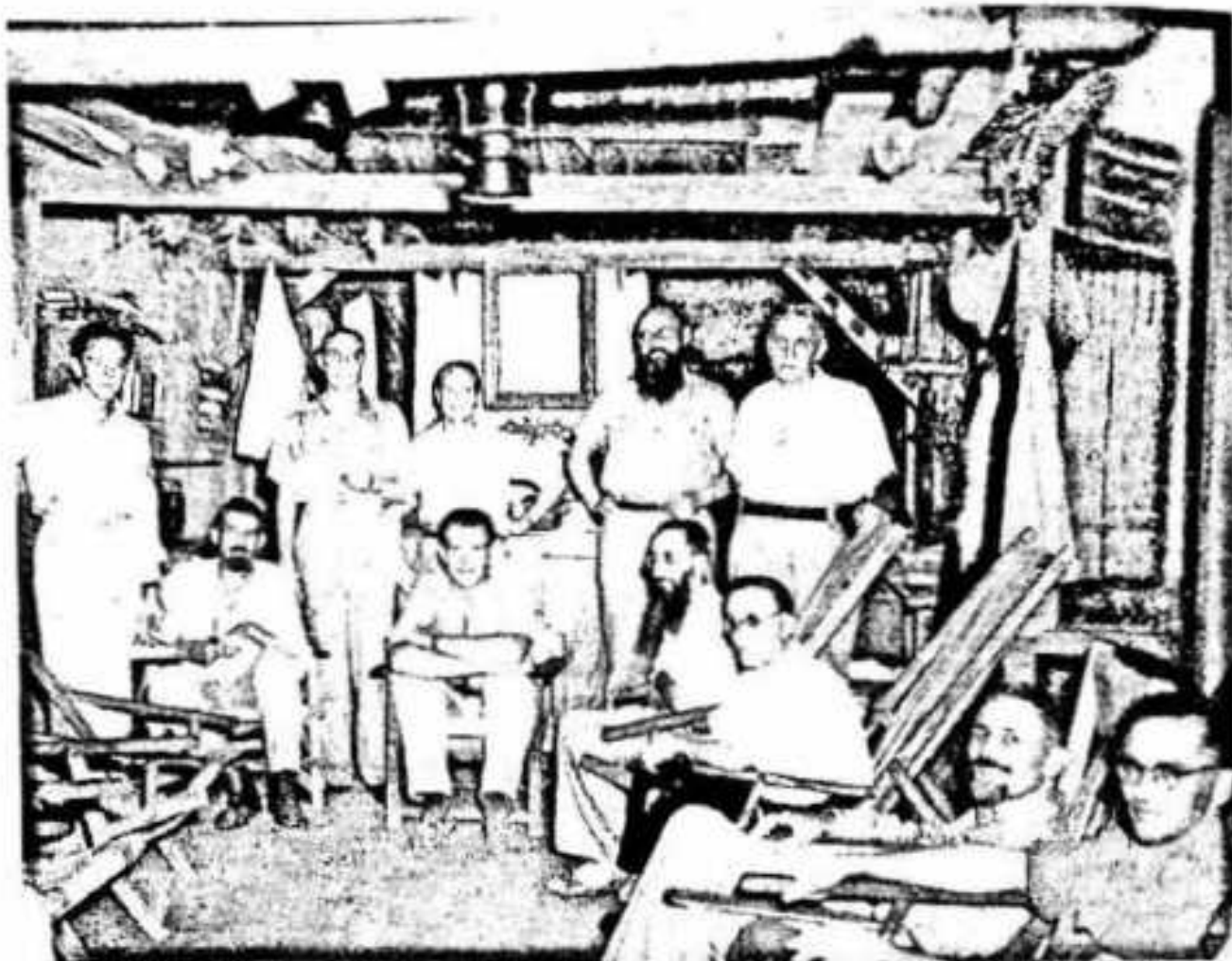
Dr. Stan O'Loughlin, when asked for his account, said: "Oh, no, My Lord, it is the other way round. I am indebted to you for the privilege of having been permitted to operate on you." Well, now, who can beat that?

All this warmth and kindness of heart did us good after the years of Japanese treatment.

LAST UNEXPECTED BLOW

We remained at Ramale until the beginning of 1946. The 150,000 Japanese were, in the meantime, concentrated in 13 different prison camps. In the daytime the whole country round Rabaul and Kokopo swarmed with them. They had to erect their own dwellings and that required a lot of building materials, which had to be brought in from the jungle.

The surviving missionaries improved rapidly and were



Our parlour in which we met for daily discussions

keen to start their mission work again. However, the Australian authorities declared they could not yet guarantee our safety. We had to wait until the Japanese were evacuated.

The repatriation was really a quick job; nevertheless, it took several months. Only the war criminals were detained at Rabaul, where a special War Criminal Court was established.

Throughout the first months after the armistice, we daily expected our missionaries from Manus and New Ireland to be brought into Ramale, but they did not arrive.

We made official inquiries at Rabaul, then at Kavieng; nothing was known about them. We had actually prepared several houses for them at Ramale. Gradually the terrific truth dawned on us: they were all dead, killed by the Japanese.

Later inquiries confirmed our suspicions. We found that they had been seen alive up to 24th March, 1944. Then

they disappeared. We don't know where the members of the New Ireland mission staff were executed and buried, but it is pretty certain that those from Manus were thrown into the sea between that island and Rabaul.

Here are their names: Rev. Fathers G. Borchardt, Utsch and B. van Klaarwater. Sisters F.D.N.S.C.: M. Cunera, M. Ancilla and M. Elizabeth. From New Ireland: Rev. Fathers J. Kakaff, C. Neuhaus, P. Kutscher, J. Krutzenbichler, H. Kohlstette, J. Hemig, F. Utsch (Junior) and Brother H. Zumkley.

Our losses during the Japanese occupation were 23 priests, 17 Brothers, 9 European Sisters, 9 native Sisters—a total of 58 missionaries dead, amongst them, 21 killed by the Japanese. That was a terrific toll. Still, Almighty God, the Lord over life and death, Who calls labourers to His harvest and recalls them at His Will, had so decreed and we humbly accepted His decision.

At the same time, we prayed with full confidence that He would send us new labourers into His vineyard.

Every Bishop has the faculty of ordering a special prayer, the *oratio imperata*, to be said by his priests during Holy Mass. There is a number of specified prayers, from which I selected the prayer for the Propagation of the Faith. We kept it on during the life in the camp.

At times, suggestions were made to change the *imperata* and pray for peace. But we still continued to implore Our Lord to send recruitments to our mission to replace those He had summoned to rest.

Our confidence was rewarded and our prayers were answered. On Christmas Eve, the last Christmas at Ramale, came the good tidings. Rev. Father R. Hyland, M.S.C., who was a missionary after the First World War, suddenly appeared at Ramale and brought us the news that, besides himself, four other Australian missionaries had arrived in the Territory. They were not permitted to proceed to Rabaul, and while waiting for the necessary authority attended to the spiritual needs of the huge native labour camp at Jacquinet Bay, New Britain.

Father Hyland seemed to be a special envoy Divine Providence used to help missions in distress. He had helped

the missions in the Middle East; after World War I he assisted our mission. Now following the Second World War he promptly turned up again. I was happy to appoint him my Secretary and Provicar. His services will be long and gratefully remembered.

In 1946 our M.S.C. provinces in Ireland, America and Austria came to our rescue. Divine Providence answered our prayers by sending us sufficient young and zealous missionaries to replace our losses.

As already mentioned, this was our last Christmas at Ramale, and our first in freedom. We celebrated Pontifical High Mass at midnight with all the splendour the ritual demanded. Father Reischl's choir was at its best.

Our hearts overflowed with Christmas joy and gratitude. And the Gloria in Excelsis Deo echoed in the surrounding hills of Ramale.

After the armistice, I had sent a telegram to His Lordship Bishop Wade, S.M., of the North Solomons, asking him to come and collect his missionaries: five Fathers, two Brothers and six Sisters.

That was a pleasant surprise for him. He did not know that they were still alive. He, too, had lost many missioners.

He, himself, had been a prisoner of the Japanese, but only for two weeks: He told us that there was an air raid and all his guards deserted him. Feeling very lonely, he decided to go bush. He managed to get in contact with the American forces and subsequently was appointed Bishop for the American forces in the South Pacific.

His missionaries, too, were overjoyed to find their Bishop very much alive and well. He arranged their different postings for them.

WAR CRIMINALS

The Japanese army was speedily being repatriated, but approximately 350 war criminals were detained at Rabaul awaiting their trial before the War Criminal Court.

Justice was meted out to them. According to their crimes and atrocities some were sentenced to death by hanging or shooting. Others got a life sentence; the rest received prison terms ranging from five to 25 years.

They had their own Japanese counsel. Even Australian lawyers were assigned for their assistance. The Japanese defence admitted that the criminals were given a very fair deal.

Tagai, our Interpreter. One fine morning, an Australian captain brought Tagai, our interpreter, along for identification, for there were two with the same name. We had no difficulty in recognising our old Tagai. He looked changed and seemed to have adopted a new ceremonial in approaching the Bishop.

Down he went on both knees and with folded hands he made a mighty kowtow, his head touching the ground.

Well, well, I thought, how times have changed since we last met. I bade him get up and we had a short conversation.

I remarked how awfully serious he was. He replied: "I feel my fate terribly. I am a married man. I have a wife and two children. My old father is still alive. It is too bad for a Japanese to be a prisoner of war and I am, in addition, a war criminal. How could I ever look into their eyes and not be ashamed to death.

"Yes, I am a war criminal but I would not be one if I had been a Christian. I was taught that our Emperor is God and that Japan is God's country. I have already found out that these are all lies. The Emperor is a man like all of us and our country is only a part of the world.

"I feel guilty before God, the Almighty in Heaven. I feel grateful to Him for humiliating me so deeply. It was in order to make a new creature of me. I already have made up my mind to follow Him and His Commandments.

"My Lord Bishop, may I ask you to baptise me?"

"Oh Tagai, that is not so easy. If you want to be baptised you must first know everything God asks from you. You must be properly instructed. Here is a book for you: 'Radio Replies,' by Father Rumble, M.S.C. He belongs to the same Religious Order as we missionaries here. This book will give you a lot of useful information about God and the Catholic Church. Study it carefully. When you return to Japan, contact a Catholic priest. He will give you

the necessary instructions and then, if you decide, he will baptise you."

Tagai was accused of killing some natives at Cape Gloucester before he came to Ramale. He was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment. When the War Crimes Commission asked our nuns about Tagai's behaviour towards them, the native Sisters recounted the story about the bamboo torture. Tagai was found "not responsible" for that; the blame was put on the Chief of Police. In addition, Tagai had been kind to the native Sisters. He had even tried to save them from certain death (at least he believed so) when he endeavoured to persuade them to leave Ramale.

The European Sisters had no atrocities to report. On the contrary, they stressed the point that he was always considerate. Once he even saved a dying Sister's life by procuring atebirin for her contrary to the High Command's orders.

That turned the scales. His case was revised and instead of 25 years, he got 10 years only.

In 1956, when Tagai's term of imprisonment had expired, I got a letter from a Catholic priest in Japan informing me that Tagai was attending instructions for Baptism. The priest was impressed by what Tagai had told him about the missionaries in Ramale!

Lieutenant-General Imamura. This officer was the Commander-in-Chief of Japan's South-Eastern Army. To him a number of my letters were addressed; some of them reached him and some did not.

On board the British aircraft carrier "Glory," 28 miles off Rabaul, Lieutenant-General V. A. H. Sturdee accepted the surrender of Imamura and his forces. He announced that 12,395 Japanese troops had been killed in New Guinea, Bougainville and New Britain. The remaining troops, at the time of surrender, totalled 127,500.

General Imamura underwent his training in the British navy. We must credit him with being a perfect diplomat, because he succeeded in getting very easy and speedy conditions for the repatriation of his troops.

We had hoped they would be used for the rebuilding of



Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Forces, Imamura, at the surrender
An Australian officer carries his ceremonial sword

our houses and repairing the roads, but nothing of that sort happened.

Only the war criminals, of whom he was one, had to remain at Rabaul.

I don't know to how many years of imprisonment he had been sentenced. Rumours had it that after getting a light sentence at Rabaul he had been sentenced to death by hanging by a Dutch Tribunal in Dutch New Guinea.

These rumours proved to be without any foundation. He served his sentence at Rabaul and Manus and is now happy and very much alive in Japan.

Colonel Kikuchi. An Australian captain, acting as solicitor for Japanese war criminals, called on me. He explained that he had learned from his client, Colonel Kikuchi, former head of the military police, that I had to deal with him on several occasions.

Kikuchi had been sentenced to death by hanging. His crime was what they called formal murder. The captain told me what had happened.

At Vunamarita, some 30 miles from Rabaul, was a Chinese married couple. A Japanese soldier interfered with the Chinese wife. Her husband promptly killed the Japanese.

The Japanese police arrested the Chinese and executed him without a formal trial and chance of defence. Colonel Kikuchi, as chief of the whole police force, was held responsible. His death sentence was recorded, waiting confirmation from Melbourne.

His solicitor now asked me if I could state any facts in the Colonel's favour.

I assured him I could.

I told him the story already related in a previous chapter.

The relevant points are these:

1. During the two years under his command he gave us a fair deal. In contrast with his predecessor he was polite and friendly.

2. Absence of any atrocities during our camp life at Vunapope and Ramale.

3. During the discussions concerning our transfer from Vunapope to Ramale he was very considerate. He accepted all conditions which we considered essential.

4. Finally, he gave us a personal gift of one box full of quinine, aspirin and other most welcome medicines. He stressed the point that these medicines were his private gift and were not to be mentioned in official papers. His reason was obvious. His act of charity was interfering with the official plan of the High Command to wipe us out through malaria.

To save time, I dictated these statements to the captain and signed them on the spot. He rushed them off to Melbourne. They arrived just in time, before the death sentence was confirmed.

As a consequence the whole case of Colonel Kikuchi was revised. Instead of being hanged his sentence was commuted to five years' imprisonment.

On August 11, 1946, I received the following letter from him:

War Criminal Compound,
Rabaul, New Guinea.
August 11th, 1946.

Dear Bishop,

Since the cessation of war, I have not had an opportunity to see Bishop, and one year has already passed. I believe that Bishop is devoting to the reconstruction of church and the spreading of the Christian Gospel.

Owing to your deepest sympathy concerning my war crime, I was not only saved from my capital sentence, but also I was promulgated a very light sentence, my first sentence having been commuted more than I expected. I shall not forget this deep emotion of my gratitude for my life. Indeed I have no words to express my feeling of obligation to you.

I can not but help cherish the memory of the greatness of Bishop. Reflecting upon that I did not extend sufficient protection to Bishop during war, I am quite ashamed of myself. As the compensation for having been saved by Bishop, I will certainly fulfil my imprisonment faithfully, and at the same time, I will try to be of any use to the world as a man pure, righteous in the sight of God as long as I live. In this way, I believe that I can express my gratitude to the boundless Grace of God.

I am very sorry that I have not written my letter of gratitude to Bishop earlier. Would you please convey my best regards to every member of your church?

In concluding this letter, I pay my sincere respect to Bishop and do wish that Bishop will always enjoy excellent health.

Yours truly,

Bishop Leo Scharmach,
Bishop of Rabaul,
Vunapope Catholic Mission.

Col. Satoru Kikuchi

PART IV.

RESURRECTION

ELEVEN YEARS AFTER TOTAL DESTRUCTION

"Bishop, what are your plans for the future?" Colonel Kikuchi had asked me that question when both of us were standing on a rubbish heap at the entrance of our tunnel.

In front of us was Vunapope, reduced to a smouldering heap of ashes. Over us several hundred American bombers roared to their target.

"Our plans for the future? Colonel, you can take my word of honour for it: all these missionaries, Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, now miserable and debilitated, are all longing for the day when hostilities will cease and our freedom will be restored. Then you will see them leave their tunnels. You will see these emaciated bodies regain strength and health by decent food and medical treatment. You will see them setting out to work and rebuilding all the destroyed mission stations—and out of the ashes will rise something stronger and bigger than there was ever before. Colonel, it takes more than Japanese forces and American bombers to destroy our faith and our spirit."

This statement was made in April, 1944.

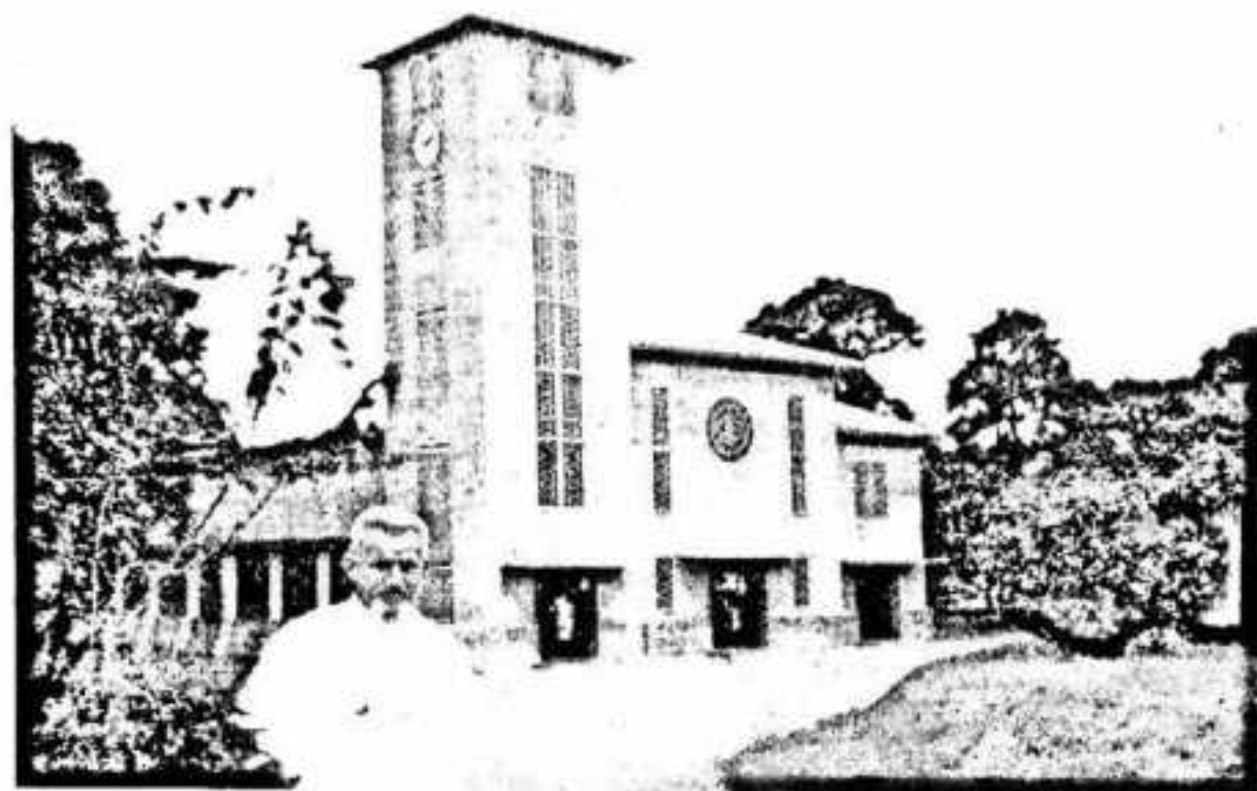
Now, 11 years after the armistice, we are happy to say that every word of it has become literally true.

All of us needed time for recuperation. About half our number remained at Ramale, doing very well indeed on army rations.

The others, who went to Australia, recovered completely under skilled medical care.

The waiting time at Ramale was by no means wasted. Father Herzog, who was in charge of the catechist school before the invasion, got busy and collected many of the dispersed students. Near Ramale, on a suitable plateau, a new school was erected and studies began immediately. We realised the great importance education would have in the post-war era.

I, myself, spent only a little time at Ramale. Most of



The new cathedral at Vunapope

my days were taken up going to dumps where war surplus material was available; places like Jacquinot Bay, Port Moresby and especially Manus, with its huge naval base.

At Port Moresby I met Government representatives from Canberra and settled with them our war damage claims. We were very fortunate and grateful that at least we were compensated for part of the damage. It was handled on an insurance basis. The value of the property in 1942 minus depreciation, was taken into account. Immediately after the war prices for building materials went up to five times higher than before. Therefore it was not possible to rebuild, with the amount received, anything equal to what had been destroyed. Anyhow, it gave us a very welcome start. Most of the money was used in buying war disposal goods.

At Port Moresby still another providential gift awaited me. From the house where we were we could overlook the harbour. One of the gentlemen from Canberra remarked, pointing to a ship at anchor: "Bishop, there is something for you. That is the auxiliary schooner, 'Waimana.' She has

three masts and sails and two Gray-marine diesel engines. She is a 150 tonner."

"Well, yes," I said, "she sure looks fine from here, but I would like a closer inspection." Armed with the necessary authorisation, Father Hyland and I inspected her. We agreed: just the thing we needed to convey the building materials for the whole mission. And we got her at a bargain price too.

Rev. Brother Smith, M.S.C., a former naval officer, was flown to Port Moresby. The Australian Provincial, Very Rev. Father Kerrins, M.S.C., was kind enough to lend us Brother as captain of the "Waimana."

On her way to Rabaul she called at Lae in New Guinea. Several of our missionaries had recovered at the Australian Army Hospital there. It was a golden opportunity for them to return to New Britain. Triumphantly, they arrived at Vunapope.

By now the Japanese prisoners of war had been taken home and the Australian Government gave us permission to start our mission activities again.

Missionaries who had recovered in Australia were returning now, reinforced by new teams from Ireland, America, Austria and later from Germany.

Ramale survivors numbered 179, including 30 native Sisters. Not a single one of us declared: "I've had it, let younger missionaries rebuild the totally destroyed mission. I prefer to go back to civilisation and enjoy its blessings."

Not one of us could think of it. Our Lord had given us a new lease of life. We accepted it gratefully from His Hand, being fully aware of our duty to devote every ounce of our strength to His service.

So here we are now, full of zeal and anxious to start. But the problem facing us looked gigantic, superhuman. Our feelings were like those of St. Peter when Our Lord had told him to throw his net at the right side of his fishing boat. St. Peter said: "In verbo autem tuo laxabo rete" (but at Thy word I will let down the net). It was equivalent to the old adage, "In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted," that had brought us safely through all the dangers of war and prison camp.

That is exactly what we did, now peace had come. We went ahead. Fifty-one mission stations had to be rebuilt. We were confronted with total destruction. Only a few churches and houses in New Ireland were still standing, indeed just standing. Their roofs and walls had been badly riddled by machine gun bullets; some had been damaged by bombs.

MISSIONARIES MOVE INTO ACTION

"Passengers for New Britain mission stations please board 'Waimana' at 10 a.m.," a note informed us.

Thirteen missionaries with their Bishop set out to re-occupy their destroyed stations.

Four weeks later another note told us: "Passengers for New Ireland and Manus please board 'Waimana' at 6 a.m."

Again 15 priests and four Sisters for the leprosarium went forth to occupy the most important positions. I accompanied them.

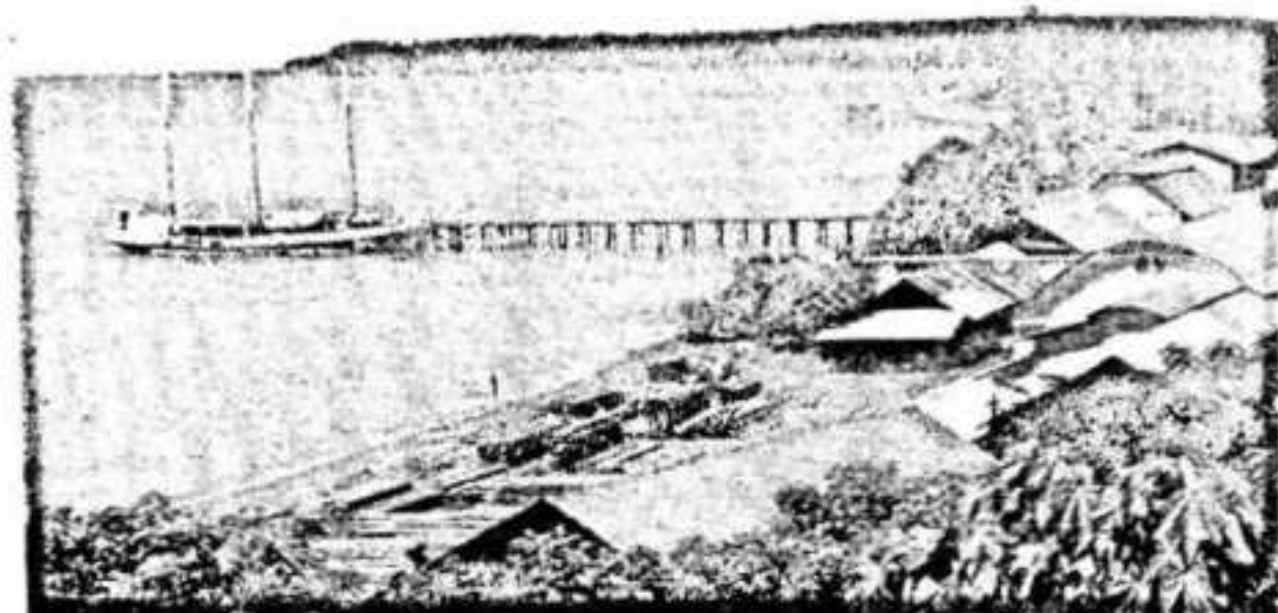
Missionaries on the Gazelle Peninsula around Rabaul and Kokopo used any transport that offered itself, mostly trucks and jeeps.

The equipment the missionaries received was poor indeed. Sufficient rations to keep them alive, a bed with mosquito net, some blankets, a table, some chairs, some cooking pots and cutlery, a couple of spacious army boxes as wardrobes for their clothes and to keep books and papers safe from rats and white ants, and their Mass kit with church vestments.

Further, and most important of all, a fixed schedule was set up, according to which the "Waimana" or another of our ships would bring fresh supplies, new furniture and permanent building materials. And this schedule has worked as near as possible to the fixed date for the last ten years!

What did the missionaries find on their old stations and how were they received by the tribesmen? Many people have asked both questions.

What we found in most outposts were ruins, wildly overgrown by vines and jungle. In many places there were even no ruins . . . the concrete floors had been broken up and used for road repairs by the soldiers. The material



The mission schooner "Waimana" at Vunapope jetty.

destruction of the mission was complete. Now for the second question: "How did the natives receive the missionaries?"

The Japanese had arrogantly claimed that outside the Ramale prison camp the Catholic religion was dead, non-existent.

Now we were able to assess the facts for ourselves.

Hundreds, and in some places thousands, of Catholic natives flocked in to give the newly arrived missionaries a rousing and hearty welcome. They were glad to have their priests back again. The missionaries' arrival was unexpected as there was no possibility of sending a message ahead of them.

The people cheerfully evacuated one of their own houses and accommodated the Father in it. Then the whole crowd got busy. The chief, with the catechist, organised the work: one team clearing the mission property, another cutting the posts and rafters. The school boys got the binding material from the bush and the women procured the long kunai grass for the roofing.

In a few days a comfortable presbytery was ready and the priest could move in. Kitchen, bathroom and fowl house were soon added.

Next came a church, big enough for all, followed by a number of school buildings and a hospital. For four years the tribes had been completely neglected. Now they had their Father back, who would care, not only for their souls, but also for the health of their bodies.

However, there was one place where we got no rousing welcome. The people came together but were very subdued. They gave the impression of a bunch of school boys, caught in wrongdoing.

And, too bad for them, the Bishop was there too. Their consciences were not at all at ease. It looked as if judgment day had come.

When the Japanese had arrested their priest and later killed him, some of them had stolen the Father's property, his furniture, fowls and even pigs. Some had become bigamists, others had tried to revive pagan practices again.

Their old church was still standing, though badly damaged by machine gun fire. The next morning after our arrival it was full to overflowing; they came for Holy Mass and to hear the Bishop's verdict.

In my sermon I explained to them that I did not come as their judge who condemned them but as their Bishop to free them from the heavy load of sins and guilt that was on their souls.

I told them I had brought a new priest for them who had power bestowed on him by Our Lord to take away their sins after they had sincerely repented of them.

Their heavy depression soon gave way to a bright sense of relief. Cheery smiles were everywhere.

At all the stations the Fathers had reoccupied the faithful insisted on going to confession and Holy Communion immediately. However, the missionaries had to tell them that the Bishop had decreed that they could approach the Sacraments only after attending a refresher course in the most important truths of our religion and after the priest had checked up on marriages contracted during the war.

They gladly accepted those conditions. Our census for the first year of our renewed activities showed: Priests, 51; Brothers, 37; Sisters, 105; Catechists and Teachers, 497; Catholics, 55,165; Devotional Communions, 552,944.

Our losses during the war amounted to nearly 7000 Catholics. Of this figure 4000 were due to war casualties, heavy epidemics and tropical diseases—this because there was nobody to care for the natives.

Three thousand fell victims of the Cargo Madness on Manus. They ceased to practise the Catholic religion but considered themselves still Catholics. There is very firm hope now that all of them will return in the near future.

These statistics reveal that the overwhelming majority remained faithful to their religion. That gave us a good start in reactivating the mission.

TEN YEARS AFTER

"OUT OF OUR OWN RESOURCES"

Some years ago distinguished visitors from Canberra, led by a Minister, came to see the Territory and the extent of the reconstruction after the war.

The party visited our headquarters at Vunapope. After having inspected everything, they expressed their surprise and amazement.

Before departing, the Minister made a formal speech. He said that he had to confess that he had been woefully ignorant as to what the missions were really doing. His idea had been—and he was sure that it was shared by many people—that the missionaries did good work by teaching the natives a few prayers and hymns, but that was about all.

Now, after having seen what the mission was doing for them in religious, medical, educational, technical and cultural respects, he could only say that it was an overwhelming eye-opener for him and his companions.

That was about seven years ago. So in order to give an idea of what had been achieved after ten years I have put the summary of our activities in the Appendix I, II, III.

One instance only here: Vunapope. We witnessed its destruction. Seventy-eight houses were reduced to so many heaps of ashes and ruins.

Now the mission proudly stands again, with a new cathedral and 128 permanent buildings, most of them bigger



The brass band which delighted the Japanese

and better adapted for their purposes than before the Japanese invasion.

That summary covers just the headquarters. In addition, there are 51 main stations, re-built with permanent material. Many have many more buildings than before the destruction.

Let's take the Maternity Hospital. Before the war it was just a middle-sized residence. Now with Maternity, Child Welfare and General Women's Hospital, it forms quite a compound of its own.

It started like this:

When we moved back from Ramale to Vunapope all we could see on its former site were huge bomb craters and spreading jungle, new trees sprouting through a tangle of vines.

A small group of natives sought out Sister Theonilla who had been in charge of the Maternity Hospital.

"Sister, help! My wife is in distress," each would say. "I am afraid something may go wrong. Sister, help!"

"Yes, but can't you see that I have no roof over my own head yet?"

"Yes, yes, Sister, we will be back this afternoon. We will find a tent and rig it up for you and your patients, but help!"

That was the beginning. The latest development is a training institute for nurses attached to this big hospital.

Its average number of patients is 500 per day and 927 babies born each year.

Sometimes business men, who run their own vast enterprises and who, consequently, have an acute sense of values and expenses, ask me: "How do you manage to finance this huge mission? It is a mystery to me. Do the subsidies from the Propagation of the Faith and from our own Government cover your expenses?"

"Well, we are grateful for both contributions, but they cover approximately one-tenth only of our total expenses.

"Let us take for instance spending in the last seven years for our medical and educational activities. Their cost took £343,435 out of our own pocket and subsidies are not included!"

"That is fantastic! For this sum you could buy four or five first-class coconut plantations."

"We certainly could if this were a money making concern; but this amount is used exclusively to improve the health of the free natives, to educate and civilise them. Our labourers are not included in the expenses.

"Yet only one quarter of our expenditure goes towards education and medical activities.

"We have a mission staff of 228 Europeans and 61 native Sisters. I leave to you to estimate what the cost of their upkeep and housing may be.

"In addition the mission pays wages to 639 catechists and teachers. One hundred and seventeen qualified teachers and 108 with certificates B and C will in the near future get a 'grant-in-aid' from the Government but the mission still carries the main burden.

"Then there are seven boarding schools with 575 growing boys and girls, all enjoying ravenous appetites. How much would you say it costs to feed, clothe them and to provide

school furniture and boarding schools according to Government regulations?

"If you have the same number of plantation boys it would take £90 to £100 per head; but these workers produce a decent profit for you from your plantation.

"School children and hospital patients produce nothing but heavy expenses for us.

"Of course, you have a car. Well, you may have a pretty good guess as to how much petrol and dieseline 58 motor vehicles and 23 ships and launches devour each year.

"But mind you, there is not a single one amongst them used for luxury or purposes of mere pleasure. All of them run, roll and clatter solely to make our mission work possible and efficient."

Even more puzzled my guests interject: "You say, My Lord, only one tenth of your expenses are covered by subsidies; where then do you get the other nine-tenths from?"

"Out of our own resources.

"It is like this:

"Our mission saves a lot of money. In all our communities we have highly skilled personnel capable of supervising all the particular activities enumerated in Appendix II and III. That makes us self-contained in many respects.

"It is essential that nobody should receive wages. Here, of course, a secret is involved. Even if explained clearly most people simply can't understand it: it is the spirit of sacrifice. That commodity you can't buy on the market but all members of our mission are in happy possession of it. That saves us a lot of money.

"Our mission earns a good deal of money through our coconut, cocoa and food plantations. Our saw mill supplies all the timber necessary for many hundreds of churches, schools, hospitals, presbyteries, convents, colleges and training institutions. And what is equally important, our joinery provides us with all the furniture necessary for all these buildings.

"Finally: Our Mission spends a lot of money. The missionaries don't live in luxury, they are supplied with the ordinary necessities of life. But the main funds go for

the upkeep and extension of our mission work, that means for the benefit of the souls and bodies of the natives.

"The mission manager has a tough job indeed to satisfy all the demands of the whole mission and to keep income and expenses properly balanced."



EPILOGUE

Our fervent prayers offered in the prison camp have been answered.

Our Lord granted us a new lease of life. We accepted it, but not in order to go home and enjoy the advantages of civilisation.

We considered it a privilege to be deemed worthy to reconstruct His mission after total ruin.

When we set out to do it the task looked super-human; but then Our Lord did not expect us to achieve it by purely human efforts.

Before the Second World War our mission was considered one of the best organised and flourishing in the South Pacific.

During hostilities He permitted its material destruction.

When peace returned He blessed our efforts and restored our possessions so that they are now even bigger and better in many respects.

Our mission is flourishing again.

Spiritually, it was never destroyed. After the armistice 54,000 Catholics welcomed their missionaries back again. Now their number is 81,000.

During the time of distress and disaster Divine Providence protected us and guided us.

Now, during the re-construction period, Our Lord blesses our labours.

One overwhelming sentiment fills our hearts: gratitude.

Thanks be to Our Lord
In Whom we believe,
Whom we love,
To Whom our lives are dedicated.

APPENDIX I

(These figures represent the mission as at 1957, before the Vicariate was divided.)

Religious Personnel		Population	
Bishop	1	Catholics	81,293
Priests	70	Catechumens	2,613
Brothers, M.S.C.	40	Adherents	8,509
Christian Brothers	7	Churches	
Marist Brothers	3	With Blessed Sacrament	73
Sisters, F.D.N.S.C.	40	Without Blessed Sacrament	595
Sisters, M.S.C.	65	Spiritual Works	
Sisters, O.S.C.	2	Baptisms	4,667
Sisters, N.M.I. (Native)	61	Communions	1,795,134
European Mission Helpers	3	Confirmations	1,271
		Marriages	675

APPENDIX II

Education		Technical Schools	
Secondary School, Minor Seminary	1	Boys	14
Students	51	Girls	106
Teachers	3	Medical Activities	
Boarding Schools:		Qualified Doctors	3
Boys	5	Hospitals	23
Girls	3	Beds	595
Pupils	518	Dispensaries	30
Elementary Schools	292	Treatments	445,593
Boys	6,964	Maternity Hospital, Vunapope. Babies born per year	924
Girls	6,397	Mother and Child welfare	6
Teachers	648	Children Treated	92,861
Village Higher Schools	60	Leprosarium	1
Boys	871	Dentistry	1
Girls	538	X-Ray	1
Teachers	31	Laboratory	1
Teacher Training Colleges	3	Central Dispensary	1
Boys	460	Nurses' Training Centre	2
Girls	20	T.B. Hospital	1
Teachers	17	Beds	400

APPENDIX III

General Activities

Saw Mill	Rice Mill
Carpentry Shop	Steam Laundry
Joinery Shop	Architect and Designer
Wheelwright Shop	Tailor
Blacksmith Shop	Shoemaker
Engineering Shop	Hairdresser
Auto Repair Shop	Watchmaker
Boat Building Shop	Film Operator
Boat Repair Shop	Photographer
Printing Shop	Church Vestment Manufacture
Book Binding Shop	Church Linen Manufacture
Power Plant	Artistic Painting
Light Plant	Water Plant

Oil Press	String Band
Statue Repair	Plantations
Bakery	Coconut
Altar Bread Bakery	Cocoa
Music	Native Food
Composers:	Transport
European and Native Art	Ships and Launches
Musicians	Jeeps and Landrovers
Playwrights	Cars
Choir	Trucks
Electric Organ	Bulldozers and Graders
Brass Band	Tractors and Cranes

APPENDIX IV

Vicariate Apostolic of Rabaul

Statistics 1958-1959 (after the division of Rabaul)

Main Stations	42	Teachers (European)	33
Secondary Stations	350	" (Nat.)	319
I. Religious Personnel		" (Certif.)	263
Vicar Apostolic	1	Boys	6,360
Priests	55	Girls	6,056
Brothers, M.S.C.	37	Colleges	5
Christian Brothers	8	Teachers (male)	4
Marist Brothers	3	" (female)	8
Sisters, F.N.D. du S.C.	42	Boys	95
Sisters, M.S.C.	54	Girls	192
Sisters, O.S.C.	2	Catechists' Schools	4
Sisters, N.M.I. (Nat.)	62	Teachers (European)	9
II. Lay Personnel		" (Nat.)	11
Medic. Dr.	3	Boys	535
Catechists (male)	136	Technical Schools	3
" (female)	12	Boys	14
III. Population:		Girls	20
Catholics	64,633	VII. Spiritual Works	
Communicants	41,760	Spiritual Exercises	16
Catechumens	2,210	Baptisms:	
Adherents	8,359	Adults in danger of death	112
Protestants	24,776	Adults	368
Pagans	12,650	Children of Catholics	2739
IV. Churches		Children of Pagans in	
With SS.	51	danger of death	46
Without SS.	304	Children of Pagans	741
Chapels, semi-public	8	Communions:	
V. Various Works		Easter	36,024
Hospitals	31	Of devotion	1,170,337
Beds	793	First C.	1,394
Dispensaries	24	Confirmations:	1,081
Treatments	995,391	Extreme Unctions	330
Mother and Child Welfare	8	Marriages:	
Children Treated	20,078	Between Catholics	477
Maternity Homes	9	" Cath. and Pag.	51
Deliveries	1373	Mixed	5
Typographia:		Deaths:	
Talaigu	3000	Adults	546
Katolik Nius	2400	Less than 7 years	425
VI. Schools			
Elementary	234		

HE OUT-BARGAINED HIS CAPTORS

By OSMAR WHITE

(Noted Australian War Correspondent)

There's a tale told in the islands—where there are connoisseurs of tales—that a few weeks after the Japanese invaded New Britain and Rabaul fell after token resistance by Australian troops, the Roman Catholic Vicar-Apostolic, Bishop Scharmach, presented the enemy Commander-in-Chief with a bill for damages done to mission property by the invading forces.

Nearly four years later, when Hiroshima and Nagasaki were still smoking, a delegation from Jap Headquarters came along to His Lordship, howling and hissing, and offered to settle the account.

The Bishop took the view that they were offering settlement in money, supplies and equipment that were by now the property of the Australian Government, and said so.

This time the Japanese were even more enraged than they were the first time—but on neither occasion did they have the nerve to do anything about it.

The stocky, cold-eyed missionary priest—Church statesman, graduate politician, gifted business executive, scholar and zealot of the faith—simply outfaced the Emperor's little men; beat them down with an appearance of sublime self-confidence, an arrogance that not even the most fanatical follower of the bushido code could match.

Meet Bishop Scharmach on his own ground, the great Vunapope mission headquarters, near Rabaul, and you can well believe that this story of nerve and personality is in no way apocryphal.

Here is exactly the sort of man—suave in his goatee beard, benign with polished spectacles, immovable in dignity behind the episcopal purple bib and heavy gold cross—who could get away with just such an exploit.

But it would be foolish to make the mistake of thinking that the Bishop's qualities are mainly presence and the courage of his faith.

It is true that he decided to stay on in New Britain during the Japanese occupation and ordered all his clergy to do likewise, that by sheer force of personality he forced the enemy to accord mission personnel the status of protected persons.

His record of personal bravery and consistency of behaviour might well be envied by the type of professional soldier who is jealous of his "gongs."

Yet, in the long run, Bishop Scharmach's greatest distinction is his building of a vast missionary organisation centred on Vunapope—and his re-building of it when it had been totally destroyed by war.

