

CHINESE CATHOLICS.

REV. ATHANSIO GOETTE, O.S.F., arrived lately in San Francisco, to recruit his health, after a sojourn of eight years in China. In an interview with a reporter of the San Francisco *Monitor*, he said: "I was ordained in the Franciscan Order, in St. Louis, Mo., in 1881, and shortly afterwards started for China. I went to the northern part of the empire, to a place called Kanlin, where the residence of Bishop Pagnucci is situated. After staying there one month, I began for the first time to study the language of the people I was to labour among. This city is the capital of the province, and has 800,000 inhabitants. There we have two churches, a college, and a school of about 80 Chinese boys. We also have an orphan asylum with about 1500 Chinese children. Father Hugo, who is also a Franciscan, and a fine Irish priest, is teacher of theology and philosophy in the college there. I was sent from there to a mission named Tschou-tsehun, and have been labouring in that vicinity ever since. There are about 3500 Christians there, a great many of them being old converts. The Catholic religion is spreading rapidly in China, and much greater would be its progress were we supplied with means. The missionary's income is 9dols. a month, and out of it he must pay a servant and all other expenses. During the last few years thousands of converts have been received into the Church. The Chinese in the interior are easier to convert than those living in the larger cities. In the cities they are more immoral, and will not give up their vices.

"Opium," continued the father, "is the curse of China. Men, women and children use it. The Emperor does not allow it to be cultivated, but this is a law more honoured in the breach than in the observance. No Christian, of course, uses or raises the flower. It seems to have a worse effect upon the females who use it than upon the males. The women when in want of opium will do almost anything and commit any crime to obtain it."

Speaking about the treatment of the missionaries, Father Goette said: "As a rule they are not harshly treated, and none of them have received bodily injury in our province during my time. About nine years ago, though, while preaching the gospel in a small town in the province of Shensi, Father Casper Fuchs was stoned by the populace. He was knocked insensible and thrown into a river, after his clothes were taken from him; but instead of drowning the water revived the priest and he was able to reach the shore and to walk to his mission in his naked condition. Soon afterward Father Fuchs, whose health was injured on account of the treatment he received, left China and came to San Francisco, and after a short stay in this city went to his native land, Austria, where he is now. The Emperor caused all those who were engaged in the attack on the missionary to be gaoled, and some were exiled forever. This punishment put a stop, in a great measure, to any further cruel treatment to the priests. The students of China, that is the educated class, are greatly opposed to foreigners, and will insult and ill-treat them when the opportunity offers.

"The Chinese are a long lived race, men and women of 80 or 90 years of age being no rarity.

"When converted the Chinese make strong Christians. They may leave the Church, few do, but they will, you may depend, die in it. They will travel any number of miles and endure every hardship to receive the sacraments. They will not, if it is in their power, die without them.

"Nearly all the persons in the interior are farmers. A person will labour for you for a whole year for 12dols., and on this they support a family of four or five people. But you must remember that things are very cheap there, and 1 cent would purchase more in China than one dollar would here. The families are very affectionate and seldom separate. You will see large families of eight or ten persons, some of the children quite old, who have never been absent from home a single day.

"Outside of Catholicism no other religion is recognised to any great extent. Beautiful and magnificent temples that were erected by the Buddhists, Taoists, and Confucius, are going to wreck and ruin. There are very few Protestant missionaries in the interior. They confine their work to the large cities."

In answer to a question if the language was difficult to learn, the missionary said:

"It is very difficult. The characters are so strange, and the pronunciation something terrible to comprehend. Every province has its own dialect, and in some of the large provinces there are several different dialects spoken.

All the foreigners in China wear the native dress, one and all. The natives do not like the European style of dress, and if we were to clothe ourselves in the habiliments of our countrymen, women and children would follow us shouting and throwing stones. It is not generally known, but it is nevertheless true, that this dress now worn by the Chinese is not the original costume in China. This is the Mongolian dress and was introduced into the country by the family of the now reigning Emperor, some 350 years ago. At that time the Chinese rebelled against the new costume and vowed they would not adopt it, but an edict from the Emperor announcing that all persons found arrayed in any style other than the one he ordered should be decapitated, soon made the present costume a universal one. It was only then that the one was adopted and the head shaved."

The reporter then asked if the natives married young, to which the reverend Father replied: "Yes, it is the custom for the men to marry at the age of 16 or 17, and the women at 13 and 15 years of age. The marriage among the unconverted heathens is quite comical in comparison to our ceremony. The male child is never allowed to pick out his bride. When the parents think it is time for a boy to marry they look around for a suitable maiden. Having found her, they ask the girl if she would have any objections to marrying their son. If she answers in the affirmative the parents thank her, give a sum of money to her parents and then return home. The next day they send four men with a sedan chair to the house of their prospective daughter-in-law and she is carried to the bridegroom's house.

He then beholds for the first time the person who is to be his partner for life. She enters the room which had been previously arranged for the marriage feast. Along the walls are pictures of the ancestry of the groom, going back hundreds of years. Before each of these pictures the bride bows and offers them fruit and flowers. When she concludes that she is married. The family then sits down to the marriage feast. There are, you know, no priests or ministers among the pagan Chinese, but the laws are very strict with those who break their marriage vow. If a husband thinks his spouse has not been true to him he is free to cut off her head as well as to decapitate the man he suspects.

Another strange habit of the natives is that they are nearly all clean shaven, but no man is allowed to wear a beard until he is 40 years of age or until both his parents are dead.

China, as you no doubt are aware, does not like France, and as the foreign missionaries are under the protection of France, they think the missionaries come there only for political purposes. During the war in 1886 between France and China, the Chinese set a day when they were to murder all the Catholic priests. The day came, but at the last moment the Empress, who was reigning, as her son was too young, ordered that "no harm be done the missionaries." "It was, indeed," said the missionary, reflecting, "a narrow escape."

When asked if the empire favoured emigration, the father said: "No, it does not. The people there have a kind of motto which reads thus, 'No good Chinaman will leave this land.' It is, as a rule, only the lower class that emigrate, and in many instances fear of punishment compels them to do so. In the interior of China there are no foreigners save Catholic priests. I was there eight years and saw only one other white man. Travelling in China is very poor. It is mostly done on horseback, or by means of a chair carried by servants. The race is greatly opposed to any advancement, and it was only a few months ago that a railroad was successfully built. On former occasions when the attempt to construct a line was made the natives assaulted the workmen and tore up the rails. They are afraid that any improvement will do away with manual labour, and greatly fear anything mechanical." Speaking of Bishop Elect Antonucci, Father Goette said: "When Bishop Antonucci left California it was his intention to come direct to my bishop, Bishop Pagnucci, and be consecrated, but something interfered and he went direct to his appointment. In November next eight of the bishops of northern China will assemble and then Bishop Antonucci will be consecrated. The Chinese have no Sundays or holidays save New Year's day, which will occur on the 20th inst., being regulated by the moon. Sometimes they have thirteen months in the year.

"Yes, I am very sorry to say," replied the Father in reply to a question if the natives destroyed their female infants, "that they do. Soon after their birth they throw them into the graveyard, or, if a Catholic missionary's house is near they leave them at his doorstep. Every family has its own graveyard adjoining their residence. When the infant is left in the graveyard it is generally devoured by wild animals. In regard to the population of China, it is impossible to tell the exact figure, but I would place it between 300,000,000 and 400,000,000, and of these about 1,000,000 are Catholic converts. There are about 1,500 priests there, half their number being foreigners, and others natives. The Protestant preachers and their families number about 400. The religious orders represented in China are the Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans and Redemptorists. The Franciscans have ten Bishops there. Only a few secular priests are in China.

Father Goette has two brothers in the same order and mission that he is. He will spend the winter in San Francisco, and then return to the scene of his labours by way of Europe.

ANGLICAN CHURCH ITEMS.

(From Truth.)

It was but the other day that loud and persistent complaints were being made in a Church paper that our Bishops were at best but very imperfectly acquainted with the etiquette of the mitre and crozier, and now they are being angrily assured in the same journal that they do not know even how to dress. Not only is their full canonical costume described as "a hideously ugly garb, which has no symbolical or ecclesiastical character whatever," but the wholly undistinctive character of their ordinary walking attire is also made the subject of ribald remark. "A returned empty," we are informed (for this is how the *Church Times* alludes to an ex-colonial bishop), "wears the same dress in the street as the Primate of all England"! And it is suggested that, as a cure for this terrible state of affairs, our home prelates should in future exchange their black aprons for violet. But this sartorial innovation would not go far enough. If "ex-colonials" are to be distinguished from the heads of English dioceses, it would be still more necessary, I think, to clearly mark the difference between those real working bishops who honestly do their duty, and those bishop *fainçants* who are content to enjoy the fat emoluments of the high office whose functions they are unwilling or unable to perform.

Lord Grimthorpe had a discussion the other day with "one of the more sensible of the bishops," respecting the proposed office for the reception of penitents, in which he expressed himself with characteristic thoroughness: "Do you know, my lord, that you would be liable to prosecution if you went through this humbug?" "No, that I do not," was the reply, whereupon Lord Grimthorpe enlightened the dismayed prelate by pointing out that, under the Act of Uniformity, anyone reading such an office in church would be liable to suspension for the first offence, deprivation for the second, and imprisonment for life for the third. I fancy that we are not likely to hear any more about this fantastical nonsense from Convocation.

A rich Catholic manufacturer in Canada, M. Chanteloup, who died lately, left a million sterling to be divided among his employees and servants, whom he makes his heirs.