

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

Apostle of Church Union

MARGARET GIBBONS



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ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

(1882 - 1953)

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ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

This is the life story of Mar Ivanios (1882-1953) late re-united Catholic Archbishop of Trivandrum, S. India. The Christian world of the West still associates his name with the vigorous re-union movement which stirred the Syro-Jacobite Church of Malabar during the thirties of the present century. Not so well known perhaps is the fact that it was the Syrian Archbishop's early contacts with the High Church Fathers and Sisters of the Oxford Mission in Calcutta which forged the first links of the chain that bound him finally to the Chair of Peter.

Mar Ivanios, it is true, did not initiate the re-union movement in Malabar. Bishop Alexander Choolaparambil in 1921 was successful in obtaining from Rome the admission of re-uniting groups of married clergy to the diocese of Kottayam, as also the retention of their much-prized West Syrian or Antiochene rite.

What Mar Ivanios did was to canalise a mass movement towards re-union amongst his co-religionists, a movement that has ever since progressed at an average of about 6,000 re-united every year.

The genius of Mar Ivanios visualised and finally brought about the erection of a new Province for the re-united Jacobites of Malabar, conserving to them the right to be governed by Bishops of their own community and securing to them the retention "in perpetuity" of the West Syrian liturgy to which they had become attached. Mar Ivanios brought a new province to the Catholic Church of South India and restored an ancient Rite to the Catholic Altars of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar.

November, 1960

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My grateful acknowledgements are due to Most Rev. Benedict Mar Gregorios, Archbishop of Trivandrum, for the countless ways in which during my stay in India His Grace facilitated my collection of materials for this brief sketch of Mar Ivanios, leader of the re-union movement in Malabar.

To His Lordship Right Rev. Zacharias Mar Athanasios, Bishop of Tiruvalla, I tender my deep appreciation of the kindly encouragement he never failed to extend to my efforts on the occasions of my passing visits to his diocese.

I have also to thank His Grace Rev. Dr. Joseph Parecattil, Syrian Archbishop of Ernakulam, and Rt. Rev. Jerome Fernandez, Latin Bishop of Quilon, for their courtesy in placing at my disposal valuable letters and documents from diocesan archives.

To the Bethany Fathers and Sisters I am likewise deeply indebted, as well as to the diocesan Clergy of the Archdiocese, from the Rev. Chancellor to those young Seminarians who were always ready to deliver letters and messages at my request.

Nor can I forget the generosity of Miss Marion Ittyipe, B. A., B. Sc., who, notwithstanding the exacting nature of her College Lectureship, passed many of her evenings in translating for my benefit passages from Malayalam.

Finally, I thank the brother and sister of Mar Ivanios who received me hospitably in their family home at Mavelikara.

I have done my best to re-tell anecdotes and reminiscences just as they were related to me, but for any defects or omissions in the various recitals I crave the pardon usually accorded to an invalid. Yes, a long sojourn in hospital is responsible for the eleventh-hour appearance of these pages, as well as for the small compass within which so illustrious a life has had to be restricted.

Especial thanks are due to Mr. Frank Duff who first suggested the writing of this biography.

If the text should interest the thoughtful reader in the problem—and the glory—of re-union, it will have served its present purpose.

Margaret Gibbons.

Netterville,

Dowth,

Drogheda.

Immaculate Conception.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

I am happy to learn that the 'Bethany Publications' are re-publishing the book on the life of late Archbishop Mar Ivanios written by Margaret Gibbons. The first edition published in 1962 is the fascinating story of a great soul in search of truth, written well by an extraordinary woman endowed with great qualities of mind and heart. The copies of the book are no more available for distribution. On the request of many it was decided to publish the second edition of the book. It is noteworthy that the second edition of the book carries with it a brief note on Margaret Gibbons, written by Rev. Fr. C. M. George, who had the good fortune to get acquainted with her personally. We are immensely pleased to acknowledge our indebtedness to His Excellency Mr. Philip McDonagh, the present Irish Ambassador to India, who has graciously encouraged the Bethany Publications to publish this second edition of the book even with financial assistance, as an expression of his love and esteem for his beloved aunt, Margaret Gibbons.

I hope and pray that this book on the life of Mar Ivanios may assist hundreds of thousands of our people to lead their life remaining honest to God in His presence during their pilgrimage on earth destined to their eternal Glory.

Trivandrum

20.09.2001.

Most Rev. Cyril Mar Baselios

Malankara Catholic Metropolitan Archbishop

About the Author :

MARGARET GIBBONS

Biographer of Mar Ivanios

FR. C. M. GEORGE

The first biography of Archbishop Mar Ivanios in Malayalam was written by Father Thomas Inchakkalody in two volumes between 1957 and 1971. Five years after his first volume was published, an Irishwoman, Miss Margaret Gibbons, brought out the first and only life, in English, of the Archbishop, in Dublin, Ireland. Acclaimed as a remarkable portrait of a remarkable man, Gibbons's book introduced the illustrious prelate from India to the English-speaking world.

Miss Gibbons, urged by Mr. Frank Duff, founder of the Legion of Mary, travelled to India in her seventies for first-hand sources for her book; so its contents, derived from materials supplied by those amongst whom Mar Ivanios lived, may be confidently received as authoritative. She pays grateful acknowledgements to the Archbishops of Trivandrum and Ernakulam and the Bishops of Quilon and Thiruvalla for their courtesy in placing at her disposal valuable letters and documents from diocesan archives. She also acknowledges her deep debt to the Bethany Fathers and Sisters as well as the diocesan clergy of the Archdiocese of Trivandrum. She has retold anecdotes and reminiscences as they were related to her, but for any defects or omissions she craves pardon usually accorded to an invalid.

An excellent review of Miss Gibbons's work appeared in the reputed journal STUDIES (Dublin, spring 1964). The reviewer Francis Finegan observes: "The authoress does not limit herself to just a faithful chronology of the Archbishop's life.....it is also a penetrating character study of a deeply human but spiritual personality. The book never lags in interest." He, however, points out that "there is really only one fault to find with Miss Gibbons's book...it is all too short." He concludes with the hope that "future biographers of Mar Ivanios...and there should be more than one...will cite Miss Gibbons's book as a primary source."

I had the privilege of getting acquainted with Margaret Gibbons during her last years while I was a research student at University College, Dublin (1967-69). The occasion for the acquaintance was an article she published in the Dublin daily 'Irish Independent' about how she met the Maharaja of Travancore. I phoned the newspaper office and got her address. Since then we used to meet at regular intervals until her death, at the age of 85, on 11th January 1969. I attended her funeral at Fore, Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath.

I had gone to the publishers, M/s. Clonmore & Reynolds, bought up all the remaining copies of her book and personally presented them to President De Valera of Ireland, President Hogan of University College, Dublin and the delegates to the Mission Study Week held at St. Columban's College, Navan, in September 1968, including the distinguished theologian, Fr. Adrian Hastings and other dignitaries. President De Valera remembered Mar Ivanios's visit to the International Eucharistic Congress of 1932, while the others expressed appreciation of the book.

Margaret had entrusted to me a number of photographs of the Archbishop which, on my return from Dublin, I placed at the disposal of Fr. Inchakkalody for inclusion in his second volume. She had also confided her desire to have her book re-published—a dream which the members of her family now wish to turn into reality. With this object in view, her grand-nephew, H.E. Philip McDonagh, Ambassador of Ireland in India, met me on his recent visit to Kerala.

I feel that, of all the biographies of Mar Ivanios, Miss Gibbons's is the most reliable, especially in her account of the central re-union event of September 20, 1930 at the Bishop's House, Quilon, and the train of events that followed it the next day. (P. 89). It is indeed a felt need at the present time to bring out an error-free life of Mar Ivanios in English for the benefit of a wider readership in the context of the cause of his beatification having been taken up by Rome.

It has been said that biography is spirituality and that each life story has embedded in it a sacred history. This statement is as much true about Margaret Gibbons as about Mar Ivanios. I recently chanced to read her personal memoirs written around the time I had met her. Titled 'the Changing Scene', her writings are a veritable historical record of the transition of Irish rural life from the 19th to the 20th century.

She was born in Tyrrelspass, in Co. Westmeath on the 17th July 1884 (two years after Mar Ivanios), the sixth of a family of seven children, of devout Catholic parents. Her father was a police constable who settled down in Fore after her birth; her mother also had average education and was well-bred. From them Margarat inherited the love of learning and steadfastness in matters of Faith which characterise her writings. After teacher's training in Belfast, she worked as a teacher from 1911 onwards.

Ambassador McDonagh recalls that his "aunt never owned a house or a car. Her gift of imagination, which brought her to India (outside the framework of any church institution) did not bring worldly success." I remember visiting her while she was lodged in a mobile trucker-house in one of the public parks in Dublin, which, like the house of her granny Lee, had only one room with a wooden frame for bed and a tiny window but "Granny secured ventilation during the day by the simple expedient of leaving the door wide open whilst she was in."

That was Margaret Gibbons, the immortal biographer of Mar Ivanios, Archbishop of Trivandrum. May her soul rest in peace!

November 2001

CONTENTS

Introductory

1. The Mallitti-Panikers of Mavelikara
2. Young Years
3. Vocation
4. Monks of Bethany
5. Bethany Sisterhood Founded
6. First Bethany Asram
7. Early Days on Perunad
8. 1923
9. Planning for Re-union
10. The Tide Turns
11. Perunad Forsaken
12. The Sacred Pallium
13. Giant Strides
14. Light and Shade
15. Difficult Years
16. The Antiochene Rite (A)
17. The Antiochene Rite (B)
18. Full Circle
19. Towards Evening
20. Journey's End
21. The Obsequies
22. Re-union in Tiruvalla
23. Expansion

Appendix 1—Assumption of Our Lady

Appendix II—My Re-union

INTRODUCTORY

Origin of the Syro-Jacobite Church of Malabar (a)

The Syrian Church of Malabar is the indigenous Christian Church of India. It goes right back to the days of St. Thomas the Apostle. Until a few years ago that statement might be challenged in spite of the persistent tradition. To-day however the Thomist legend is sustained by the authority of His Eminence Cardinal Tisserant under Historical Appreciations of the origin of the Syrian Church¹. His Eminence says—

“Summing up the present results of historical scholarship on the origin of Christianity in South India, particularly in Malabar, we may say this: There was a very ancient civilization started by St. Thomas the Apostle and mainly in South India.” The Syrian Church is so called because its liturgy was cradled in Syriac and developed through the medium uninterrupted for fifteen centuries, i.e. until the coming of the Portuguese.

The St. Thomas Christians.

The first converts² of St. Thomas were from the flourishing Jewish colonies established in and around Muziris—the present Cranganore. At that period the coasts and ports of Malabar were congested with shipping that bore the pepper and spices, the silks and pearls of the South to the rich countries of the Mediterranean. Traders and merchants too with their motley crowd of associates—sales-managers, attendants, servants and slaves, listened also to the Gospel message announced by the Saint in Aramaic the home tongue of Christ and his Apostles, a dialect easily understood throughout the commercial world of the era. Before the Saint's martyrdom some high-caste Brahmins and their families had accepted the Gospel likewise.

Even at present in India, a striking emphasis is laid on the connection with Jewish converts of the first Christian century. It is found in the use of the word Nazrani which it still applied to Christians of the southern peninsula. The same is written in modern legal documents³.

May I break the historical sequence here to quote from *The Travellers' Guide to Kerala*, 1957 (p.17)—

“*Kuravilangad*: Fourteen miles from Kottayam will bring the tourist

INTRODUCTORY

to Kuravilangad a small picturesque little place cosily nestling in the shadow of the hills on the east, with rich green fields all around. A Catholic stronghold for ages, its church reputedly built in the early half of the 4th century is the oldest in Asia dedicated to St. Mary. Legend has it that there was an apparition of the blessed Virgin and that the perennial stream behind the church gushed forth from the hills on that day of the Holy Visitation. The annual three-day feast and fair is a colourful pageantry in January/February, attracting thousands from all parts of Kerala."

I have quoted the above as a suggested argument for the date of the first Armenian colony to arrive in Malabar. Historians do not question the fact of the Syrian colony, but only the exactness of the date ascribed to it namely A. D. 345. *The Travellers' Guide* seems to bear out this tradition in the particular paragraph cited above.

The colony was under the leadership of one Thomas of Cana, a rich merchant who had often before traded in South India and doubtless was personally known to the rule of the country previous to the immigration. About 400 persons made up of 72 families with their Bishop, Mar Joseph, and a number of priests and deacons arrived, and being well received by the king, settled in Malabar. The king granted them all the privileges of Hindu nobles.

Socially there ensued a cleavage between these Syrian settlers—Suddists and Nordists respectively—but in faith and worship they remained one.

Another great and historically dated wave of Christian colonisation poured over South India in the year A. D. 825. This date can be recorded with confidence, because such an era of prosperity did this influx of merchant princes from Persia usher in that the Malayalam calendar still in use derives from it. If one wishes to shift from the Malayalam to the Christian reckoning one must add on 825 years.

Because of their culture, their wealth and their accomplished military following the ruler of Venad in the southern peninsula welcomed them to his dominions and granted them social equality with his Hindu peers.

The cultural and commercial advantages which followed from both

immigrations were considerable. The Edessa contingent had brought the Syriac language and literature with them—that is, the literary Syriac of the cultivated classes. This literature soon spread amongst succeeding generations in Malabar. St. Ephrem born in Edessa 363, whom in 1920 Pope Benedict raised to the rank of Doctor of the Universal Church, introduced hymnody into the Syriac liturgy—much to the delight of St. Augustine, “These hymns,” says Mr. Archibald King⁴, “are the glory of the Syrian Church, and provide a striking commentary on the faith and practice of the Eastern Church during the 4th century.”

Ephrem sang of Mary Immaculate: “Thou and Thy mother O Lord are the only one who under every aspect are entirely beautiful, since in Thee there is no stain, nor any blemish in Thy mother.” There are other hymns in praise of holy Virginity.

The Babylonian influx enriched Malabar by their commercial exchanges on a vast scale. They purchased pepper, ginger, cardamom, tortoiseshell, pearls and spice. They sold in turn carpets, jewels, gold silks and perfumes. The foreign colonists also taught such occupations as navigation and foreign trade, banking, arts and crafts, and lace-making “for in all these affairs, the Mesopotamians were experts”.

These latter colonists may have brought the cult of St. George with them for churches and shrines were dedicated to the slayer of dragons from the twelfth century onwards. The Baptismal name George or its Eastern form Gevarghese is most frequently met with amongst members of the Syrian Church all over South India. Mar Ivanios though baptised Zacharias was called George or Gevarghese from infancy.

Origin of the Syro-Jacobite Church of Malabar (b)⁶

CAME 1500: Vasco da Gama had brought the population of Malabar to the notice of the Portuguese Government. Along sailed the Royal Fleet under Albuquerque, Portugal’s greatest coloniser. He exterminated the Arab traders, and established the grim fort of Cochin to safeguard the pepper trade. In 1510 he seized Goa and made it the Capital of a colonial empire to be. Soon the King of Portugal had the key to all worldly and ecclesiastical power in India. Even after trade, monopoly had been disrupted Portugal maintained its ancient chartered rights of patronage.

INTRODUCTORY

“Far into the 18th century” (says Plattner) “the heads of the Jesuit Order in Rome carefully cherished the legal claims of Portugal via Lisbon.”

At first the Syrian Church was not adversely affected by the fact of the Royal monopolies. Franciscan and Dominican missionaries had come with the Fleet. “The religious of these Orders,” says a recent writer⁷, “respected the integrity of the Chaldean rite with its distinguishing features.” The Franciscans in particular had a high opinion of the inhabitants of the Serra. Here is Frey Vincent’s tribute to the Syrian community of the first Portuguese Period:—

“The faith seems to perfect their natural qualities. Though divided in social matters into two chief groups—Suddists and Nordists—they are one in matters of faith.... Though they are always well-armed murders are unknown amongst them. On going into Church they leave their guns or spears in the porch outside. Testaments are not made in writing but by word of mouth. They are scrupulously observed. Their fasts are many and severe. The Bishop among them is like a Prince. Like Nairs and noblemen they may ride on elephants. Their women are very modest...” Such was the Syrian community, before the mishandling of Goa or the clash of opposing jurisdictions had sundered its unity.

The fact that for hundreds of years the Syrians had been ruled by a succession of Bishops from Mesopotamia laid it open to a suspicion—perhaps to a charge of Nestorianism: “It was from the Chaldean Church that they received their ways of worship.” says Cardinal Tisserant; “these are mainly known as Chaldean, East Syrian or Nestorian—though the last is a misnomer.”

Rev. Dr. Placid explains the Portuguese horror of the word Nestorian in the 16th century by the general conviction in the West that Selucia had lost Catholic communion when she fell into Nestorianism. Dr. Placid implies that if the Portuguese had studied the question they would have found some ancient documents in which those Chaldeans who enjoyed communion were simply called Nestorian “for the term indicated nationality and language rather than communion when used to designate East Syrians.”⁸

Whatever the previous position may have been it is a simple matter of historical fact that the Mesopotamian Church was definitively re-united

with Rome during the year 1552—half a century after the advent of the Portuguese to India. In that year the Selucian Patriarch Mar Simon Sulaka went to Rome, knelt at the feet of Julius III, and declared his sincere desire for re-union. He remained in Rome for several weeks under instruction then made his profession of Faith before the Pope, was consecrated and went back with full jurisdiction over the places his predecessors had been ruling.

One of these places was Malabar. The venerable Mar Jacob, whom St. Francis Xavier appreciated, had died two years previously (1550) and his devoted subjects were crying out for Bishops from Babylon as had been the time-honoured custom. Mar Simon was making arrangements to visit his Indian province when he was murdered—or martyred—(1555).

The Pope then sent to the Syrians, Mar, Joseph, a Syriac poet and author, brother of the reconciled Mar Simon Sulaka, but Goa imprisoned him—he had not entered India via Lisbon. After two years he managed to reach his diocese but there he came up against the Goanese jurisdiction, he refused to ordain students who had not been taught Syriac. The flutter that followed such assertiveness resulted in a charge of heresy and Mar Joseph was shipped off to the Inquisition in Lisbon. He was acquitted, but the tedious journey to and from as well as the long-drawn-out ordeal of the Inquisition covered years during which another Mesopotamian Bishop Mar Abraham managed to reach Cranganore without reference to Goa. He was no sooner peacefully installed in the South than Mar Joseph whom all believed to be dead, turned up to claim his See. Rome then halved the diocese giving independent jurisdiction to each Bishop. But Goa had the last word. Persecution flared up once more and Mar Joseph was deported to Lisbon again and thence to Rome. “But,” says Cardinal Tisserant, “the Roman judges felt obliged to give way before the piety of Mar Joseph, and to recognise his orthodoxy.” He was pronounced innocent. Nevertheless the cup of his bitterness had reached the measure of its overflow and he died soon after his acquittal.

Mar Abraham was in his turn imprisoned. He escaped and fled to the mountains where, by the way, he found whole colonies of Syrian laity who had taken refuge beyond the reach of the Portuguese when the latter tried to force them to change their rite. Here, lest the reader should be feeling indignant we interpose an advocate:—

INTRODUCTORY

“The Syrian Christians seemed to the Portuguese to be holding errors in the faith, divergences in ritual, even following a strage unorthodox liturgy.” says Father Hambye. “The new-comers were scandalised: they wanted unity in the Kingdom of God.”

And Rev. Dr. Placid warns us not to judge the past the standards of the present. The death of Mar Abraham in 1597 ended the line of Mesopotamian Bishops in Malabar.

At the Synod of Diamper 1599, under their Archdeacon George, the Syrians accepted the Latin rite and seemed quite content to have done so. Subsequently they even asked that a Jesuit might be appointed to the vacant Archbishopric. Three Jesuits—Father Roz, Father Stephen de Britto, and Father Garcia filled that office in turn. Father Garcia’s appointment dated from 1641.

Unfortunately after the passing of Archdeacon George his nephew Thomas de Campo claimed the right of succession. Assuming episcopal powers and appealing to national sentiment Thomas spread the spirit of discontent and revolt through the Syrian ranks, lay and clerical. The climax was reached in 1653 when one Ahatalla claiming to be a Bishop sent directly by the Pope to the Syrians “to comfort them” was taken prisoner by the Portuguese and was being carried off by the fleet to Goa. Ahatalla however managed to get a letter through to Archdeacon Thomas telling him of his plight and suggesting a rescue.

Like wildfire went the exciting news and before the fleet could reach Cochin 16,000⁹ angry and armed men had assembled at Matancherry, a stone’s throw from the ramparts, and demanded their Bishop. The captain of the fort, says McKenzie, closed the gates and manned the walls for battle. The ships weighed anchor in the bay. Night fell, but with the morning came a rumour too easily credible to those disappointed ones. Ahatalla, so ran the rumour, had been thrown overboard and drowned¹⁰. The fleet was by this time miles away to the northwards. The foreigners had triumphed once again.

Infuriated by the treatment they had received, their sense of justice outraged, their feelings trampled upon, their minds bewildered and their resentments raised to white heat by an inward glance at old wrongs still unrighted, they took alas! that fatal step for which still the angels weep:

They rushed to the great stone Cross of Mattancherry and swore a fearful oath never again to have a Poulist (Jesuit) rule over them.

Their quarrel it will be seen was not with Rome but with Goa. Nevertheless by slow and sure degrees it degenerated into schism and dissidence.

The Syrians who remained faithful—a minority at that epoch— were given a Syrian Bishop—Alexander Parampill cousin of the troublesome Thomas. To him they flocked with clannish loyalty: he and also the Latin Carmelities succeeded in bringing back considerable numbers to orthodox observance, the *Carmelities' clientèle* embracing of course the Latin Rite.

Meanwhile what of Thomas? Thomas knew he was no Bishop, and he knew too that his followers were aware of this and would never accord to him the obedience and respect that he craved until he should be validly consecrated. He did succeed in bringing over from Antioch a Jacobite Prelate named Gregory. That was in 1665; but Gregory ignored his request for consecration. Father Ferrolì says that Gregory refused to ordain him, though he conferred Holy Orders on some of his deacons. Portuguese political power in India had declined at this period. The Dutch were in the lead, and Gregory promised the Dutch governor that he would make all Syrian priests marry. He had no use for a celibate clergy. Gregory left behind him a list of heresies to which however Father Hambye tells us, the people never adverted. They kept the old Catholic beliefs and customs and passed them on the next generation. Yet the Jacobite presentation of the Procession of the Holy Ghost found its way into their creed and was a source of anxiety for some time to Mar Ivanios in connection with re-union proposals.

For more than one hundred years the descendants of the swearers at Coonan Cross went wandering in a spiritual desert. It was not until 1772 that two Bishops sent by the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch consecrated Mar Thomas VI who took the title Mar Dionysius I in the Church of Niranum, near Tiruvalla, Kerala State. Thomas VI was then leader of 50,000 souls.

Thus was formed the Jacobite Church of Malabar. A century later into this dissident Church George Paniker¹¹ (Mar Ivanios) was born.

INTRODUCTORY

NOTES

1. See *Eastern Christianity in India*, by His Eminence Cardinal Tisserant. Translated by Father Hombye, S. J. (Preface).
2. I take the above paragraph largely from (a) certain Articles written by the late K. E. Job, an authority on all matters relative to the history of the St. Thomas Christians, and (b) from addresses read to His Eminence Cardinal Tisserant, Dean of the Sacred College, when he visited Malabar during November 1953.
3. Mar Ivanios' father directed for some time a military academy; the total on Roll is given as "150 Nairs, and 64 Nazranis."
4. King's *Rites of Eastern Christendom*, Vol. I, pp. 78-80
5. Job's *Historical Survey*. (Appendix 6. Placid & Job's *The Syrian Church of Malabar*.)
6. Authors for this chapter mainly: *Christianity in India* by Cardinal Tisserant; Margaret Yeo's *Life of St. Francis Xavier*; *The Jesuits go East* by Felix Alfred Plattner; *The Jesuits in Malabar*, Father Ferroli, S. J. and *The Syrian Church of Malabar*, Rev. Dr. Placid, T. O. C. D.
7. V. G. George in *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, Autumn 1955.
8. There is only one Nestorian Church in Malabar—the Nestorian Church at Trichur; it resulted from a schism among the Catholic Syrians in 1874.
9. The figure 16,000 is from the account given by Fr. Azavedos, who was Provincial of the Jesuit Fathers in Malabar in 1678.
10. I have seen in the little Jacobite Church of Mavelikera a quaint woodcut depicting the drowning of Ahatalla by officers of the Portuguese Fleet. It is about 12" x 8" and is affixed to the front of the lectern.
11. In all Mar Ivanios' correspondence, once only have we found his house-name spelled by himself. The form is identical with that used by Father Ferroli in the name of Mathew PANIKKAR, the Commander-in-chief: "My brother, Mathai Panikkar," the Archbishop says. We decided to retain the usual spelling.—(Author's Note.)

Chapter one

THE MALLITTI - PANIKERS OF MAVELIKERA

THERE are many Paniker families in India but only one amongst all these is distinguished by a hyphen, namely, the Mallitti - Panikers of Mavelikera, Kerala State.

The New Leader, Madras, commenting on the death of Mar Ivanios (15/7/53) explains this singularity: "Born 72 years ago in the ancient Mallitti-Paniker family of Mavelikera, the late Dr. Mar Ivanios created a sensation by his re-union with the Catholic Church in 1930. Bhaskara Ravi Varma, one of the later rulers of the Perumal line of Kings of Kerala, had bestowed that title on the family and had given it lands rent free in recognition of services rendered..."

This is borne out by a tradition handed down in the Mavelikera family to the present day. They tell how the king of Kerala had one day taken out a hunting party when suddenly a wild buffalo broke cover and furiously charged the king who was slightly ahead of the others. The wretched bodyguard fled precipitately, not so the militant officer who led them. With one swift and skilful movement he flung his spear, fatally impaling the raging beast which fell to the ground where a sword-thrust finished it.

Embracing the warrior¹ affectionately the king spoke just one word "Mallitti" as to a friend and equal.

The connection with Bhaskara Ravi Varma seems too obvious to admit of doubt.

The story of Maveli's Kerala or Kingdom on the coasts of Malabar has become a folk-tale which links of fabled king with the Hindu feast of

THE MALLITTI-PANIKERS OF MAVELIKERA

Onam when for four days during the month of Chingam (mid August-mid September) the whole Hindu population goes *en fête* to celebrate their annual holiday. Maveli is said to return during the rejoicements of Onam to visit his faithful Keralese.

The reign of Maveli is lost in dim pre-historic cycles but the reign of Solomon is fixed. Guide-books and some Eastern scholars, amongst them Mar Ivanios, identify the village of Puvar on the coast, with the Biblical Ophir to which the ships of King Solomon sailed about 1000 B. C. "After the Phoenicians," Mar Ivanios told an interested audience in America (1948), "came the Jews in the reign of Solomon... bringing back gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks from Kerala." He wound up his address by stating emphatically that the gold for Solomon's Temple was obtained from Mavelikera. Antiquarians are certainly aware of the fact that gold coins found in a small hill near Kottayam only ten miles from the sea are attributed to the eighth century before the Christian era.

When we come to the first half of the eighteenth century we are back to the connection of the Royal Varmas with the militant Panikers once more. The tale teems with human interest. Those were the years when Marthanda Varma was fighting ruthlessly to retrieve the dynastic greatness of his forebears whose once-extensive dominions had been to a large extent wrested from them by the ever-growing power of Brahmin nobles to the North. The youthful Varma in 1746 attacked these princes, at first with varying success; but finally with a decided victory.

Once flying from a temporary defeat he found shelter with the Mallitti-Panikers of Mavelikera, and gave them in token of his sense of obligation a heavy circlet of gold which the family treasured until 1920 when Mar Ivanios, then Abun of Bethany, had it melted down and sold for the benefit of his needy orphans. It was during this campaign of 1746 that Mathai Paniker, commander-in chief of the Northern armies, went over to the Varma side with a goodly following². This reinforcement enabled Marthanda Varma to defeat the Dutch at Colachel and so prevent the junction of their troops with those of the Brahmin combine³. That battle was destined to decide favourably the Varma campaign since it brought to Marthanda's notice the military tactician, Captain de Lannoy, a Belgian Catholic: he was one of the prisoners taken in the fighting around Colachel. On De Lannoy's marble tomb under a roofless chapel

within the precincts of the great fort of Udayagiri⁴ which he had caused to be built, may be read cut deep in Latin phrases, how by force of arms and terror he had carved out the Kingdom of Travancore.

Captain do Lannoy became friendly with the Mallitti-Panikers and taught them the art of forging the then most modern steel weapons of war. That was how Sri Thoma Paniker, father of Mar Ivanios, came in his youth to be running a military academy in Mavelikera: he had inherited the arsenal, the ruins of which might be seen until recently within the family compound. What caused him to dismiss his 150 Nairs and his 64 Nazranis, is difficult now to say; but that he himself was an accomplished swordsman is shown by the testimony of his ninety-year-old cousin whom we interviewed during 1957. The gracious old gentleman wonderfully active for his age, most kindly arrayed himself in robe and turban and with the assistance of his son demonstrated the marvels of sword-play performed on festive occasions by the young Master of the military academy in Mavelikera.

When Sri Thoma Paniker decided to close down his academy he became a successful grower of cocoa-nuts. "Did we ever see anyone has such of knack of making money as Sri Paniker?"—was the frequent comment of his neighbours. His peppers and his paddy fields abounded, but labour was cheap then. Slavery was an institution in India down to the middle of the nineteenth century when representatives of the Church Missionary Society (1848) caused laws to be passed making slavery illegal⁵ in S. India. Nevertheless the father of Mar Ivanios owned 100 slaves with their families, but perhaps in his day they were regarded only as bondsmen. Sri Thoma was tight-fisted but rigorously just and his workers were often heard to boast of their luck in having such an upright master.

Anna Paniker, the mother of Mar Ivanios, was tiny, though her sons and daughters all grew tall and hefty. She was the only child of a tutor who taught Tamil, history and mathematics. She is described as an omnivorous reader and an authority on traditional chant. "These people," says Father Gille, S. J., writing in 1924, "have chronograms, songs and dances dating from the fourth century and handed down from father to son, not only as history but as intellectual accomplishments." Anna gave with both hands to the poor, though often like St. Elizabeth of Hungary

THE MALLITTI-PANIKERS OF MAVELIKERA

without the knowledge of her husband. Educated by her father she was familiar with the history of her Syrian ancestors, and therefore of the vicissitudes of the Syrian Church. In forming the mind of her precocious little George she stressed the unity that had existed in matters of faith and worship before the tragic break that had begun with the swearing at Coonan Cross. "Before that," she told him, "the Syrians all belonged to the one Church—the ancient mother church that was ruled from Rome."

It was thus though all unperceived, that the list towards re-union had been set: the tilt had been given to the main mast, as Divine Providence no doubt had ordained. Yet across what strange and stormy seas did the vessel captained by that little boy from Mavelikera plough its way before it anchored at last in the lee of the Rock of Peter.

The Mavelikera household reckoned another member, Father Zacharias, the elder brother of Sri Thoma. He was a Jacobite priest who ministered in Parumala some five or six miles off. Though he possessed a simple domicile in Parumala where the majority of his parishioners were Untouchables, he had always a room set apart for him in Mavelikera. That his celibacy was by deliberate choice and from religious motives is clear from a ruling promulgated by Antioch in the early eighteenth century to the effect that an aspirant for the priesthood especially one intending to be a parish priest must marry or else show cause sufficient for a Patriarchal dispensation from the obligation.

The ruling is reminiscent of Gregory's promise to the Governor of Cochin in 1665—that he would do away with the celibacy of the clergy. But the British Resident, Colonel J. Munro (1819), took practical steps to attain the same object: he offered Rs. 500/- and additional grants in aid to priests married⁷. Elderly and gentle and spiritual, Father Zacharias was not one of these nor of their successors.

Anna Paniker loved her Reverend brother-in-law for his many virtues, and holding him up as an example to her little eight-year-old son she would admonish him: "priests ought not to marry." It was this priest-uncle who held up to George the ideal of the monastic life: "The most important thing that lay in my heart even as a child," said Mar Ivanios on the occasion of his consecration as Jacobite Bishop in 1925, "was to raise myself to the stature of a saint in the religious life of a monastery."

NOTES

1. Paniker signifies warrior.
2. The nephew of Mar Ivanios it was who pointed out to me the blood relationship of this Mathai Paniker with the family of Mavelikera. He also supplied the data concerning the arsenal.
3. See The Jesuits in Malabar, Farroli; Vol. 2, under 18th Century Wars in S. India.
4. The fort of Udayagiri encloses 86 acres and is still intact. Marthanda Varma usually quartered his troops in this fort. His palace is in Close proximity.
And by the way, animal lovers may like to hear that just outside the sacred precincts which surround the grave of Captain de Lannoy, two pathetic little mounds are to be seen, showing where his steed and his dog respectively were buried. When the "Valiant Captain" realised that he could not recover, he caused his horse and his dog to be destroyed, knowing how they would pine away in the keeping of a new master.
5. They also opened their schools to the children of slaves thus no doubt setting the seeds of the social revolution which raised the status of the Untouchables. Fisher tells us the Gandhi's fast merely touched off a movement that had begun in the ranks of the Untouchables themselves.
6. From *Christianity At Home*, p. 41.
7. See *Christianity At Home*, p.46: by Father Gille, S. J. Father Gille toured Malabar during 1924.

Chapter Two

YOUNG YEARS

SRI PANIKER's house was only a few hundred yards away from the 1,013-year-old Jacobite Church of Mavelikera, still in use but structurally altered within, since its Catholic days of three hundred years ago. It was the Mallitti-Panikers who kept the key, and so George could possess himself of it at all hours. He often did so and would steal away to pray in solitude. His aged cousin above mentioned instructed his priest son to point out the flat stone on which the boy knelt so frequently to pray¹.

We are glad to discover that this was no pale-faced dreamer, no emotional misfit hiding himself away from virile companions of his own age. Not at all: he was a sturdy lad who led at games. That was his school record in Mavelikera.

Mar Dionysius Joseph Pulikottil, a great Jacobite Bishop (d.1910), met him there, and the meeting influenced the whole course not alone of George's future life, but of the lives of many besides. Mar Joseph is described as "a man zealous for the uplift of the Syrian Church." Even though engaged in tedious litigation to recover properties and trusteeships from illegal custody he found time to build the pretty little church in Trivandrum for the solace of Jacobites who might be detained over the week-ends in that Hindu city, on passing affairs of business as often happened. He established 100 Malayalam parish schools. He bought a printing press and at his own expense published leaflets, prayer books and liturgical literature for the use of his Jacobite flock. He also raised a Seminary in Parumala for the better education of candidates for the priesthood. His co-operation with the Carmelite Fathers of Mannanam

Monastery, Kottayam, will be met with in a later Chapter. The M. D. (Mar Dionysius)² Seminary in Kottayam which he directed is one of the leading Secondary Schools in Kerala State.

Mar Joseph was engaged on an official visitation in the church of Mavelikera. Business dragged on, darkness fell, the sudden unrelieved darkness of the tropics. A certain priest who should have attended still absented himself. This naturally annoyed the Bishop. He appealed to the congregation: would some man go and bring back the defaulter? It was important. Details are missing but from the way the parishioners hung back it was clear that the situation was a delicate one. There was no response. Then up to the Bishop's chair went young George Paniker: "I will go, Your Excellency," he said. The Bishop looked on the open frank countenance, the noble brow, the luminous eyes³.

"And who are you?" he smiled.

The boy gave his name then walked out confidently into the Stygian darkness. Before an hour he was back accompanied by the shame-faced Achen. How or by what arguments he had persuaded him to come we shall never know, but the neighbours felt that Sri Paniker's elder son would always accomplish his purposes.

The affair did not end there: it resulted in two most important consequences, the one distant, the other immediate. The Bishop delighted by the courage and self-confidence displayed by this unusual lad began to speculate—"And what think you shall this child be?" Mar Joseph made up his mind to take a personal interest in George Paniker, and in due time to recommend him for the priesthood⁴. The immediate outcome supplies us with an episode that gives us a further insight into the strength of this boy's character. Hearing from some of the congregation that George was attending the C. M. S. (Church Mission Society) school in the neighbourhood the Bishop⁵ made up his mind to have that stopped, so he sought Sri Paniker next morning and asked him to withdraw his son from the influence of missionaries who had already drawn away thousands from the ancient faith⁶.

The proud parent argued that the boy was making rapid headway in his classes.

"He is drinking knowledge from poisoned fountains," Mar Joseph

explained. "Take him away from that environment."

His father agreed to send him to the Government school under the patronage of the resident prince close by. Therefore on the following morning behold George ready to set out for the one-mile walk to the C.M.S. school as usual. His father stopped him at the threshold:

"Ask the headmaster for a duly-signed transfer form to-day" he said, "I must send you to another school."

The father's will was not to be questioned: the child trudged on. Arrived in the school-room he walked right up to the master's desk and put the request just as his father had worded it. The master met it with an abrupt refusal. The staff consulted, shook their heads. Impossible! the cleverest boy in the school—no, they could not part with him. They would see his father about it.

Realising their determination George drew on his own resources to set up an efficacious opposition. He walked out and sat on the ground near the entrance door. Hours passed. Midday arrived. He would not move. He did not speak. He just sat on. Pupils passed in and out. He vouchsafed no reply to their remarks, took no notice of their merriment. He just sat dumbly on. As the closing hour approached the headmaster came out and asked him why he was behaving so strangely. To him he did reply: he said he would not leave the premises until he had been given that signed form.

As the teachers dared not go to their homes leaving a young pupil on the premises without due supervision the headmaster was obliged to give him the signed document.

Beaten by the force of that silent dogged will, the staff of the C.M.S. school were not likely to forget George Paniker.

In the Government school his talents shone as before. The resident prince, great uncle to the little maid who was to become queenmother of Travancore, seems to have singled George out for especial notice. His brother, Mr. Mathai Paniker, tells how the prince took "His Grace" to the palace and talked to him, often at great length, giving him books and discoursing to him about the contents of the palace library.

It was probably from this source that George Paniker drew some of the qualities that distinguished him in later life. A Catholic magazine

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

recording his death in 1953 speaks of him as “a man endowed with rare and sterling qualities both of mind and heart. His Grace was at home in the halls of learning as well as in the courts of princes.”

It was true: he was quite at home with royalty, and with a serene consciousness of equality he presented himself to the heads of states be they kings or presidents wherever he went. His Western critics called this “pushfulness” but he was no vulgar social climber. In his home country he could and very often did call on his own sovereign, the Raja Prumukh—Sri Rama Varma—without the formality of a previously arranged appointment.

The first message of condolence to reach Mar Gregorios was from His Highness:—

“...His death is not only a loss to the Archdiocese...but it is also a loss, an individual loss to the members of our family and to myself. During many years past he has been a close friend of ours and we came to know him intimately...”

Intimate knowledge is not gained during formal interviews. He was assuredly on visiting terms with the royal family of Travancore.

Mar Ivanios' wide and far-seeing vision; the vastness with which he planned, above all his deep-rooted veneration for lawfully-constituted authority may well be owing to his close association with the members of a noble house during his formative years in Mavelikera.

NOTES

1. In the East public prayer is offered standing. For private prayer they kneel.
2. Mar Dioysius II who functioned under the Residency of Colonel Munro, 1810-19. This is the Bishop who is believed by some to have married. Mar Ivanios in one of his letters denies this, and Father Gille declares that Bishop Dionysius (II) carried on single and celibate to the end. A married Bishop is unknown in the Jacobite Church.
3. Even as early as his village school days the power conveyed by those eyes was felt and talked of. “No liar among his classmates,” it is said, “could meet his compelling eyes and persist in a false assertion.”
4. The above and all other anecdotes relating to George Paniker's school days were

YOUNG YEARS

related to me by Mr. V. A. Varghese who was in High School with him in 1899 and who visited him on the day of his own re-union in 1941. Mr. Varghese is nephew of the Metropolitan who succeeded Mar Joseph Pulikottil in 1910.

5. Parumala Mar Gregorios (new addition)
6. The Marthomite sect broke away from the main Jacobite body during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. They keep the externals of the Antiochene Rite but reject Transubstantiation and other doctrines denied by the Reformers of the sixteenth century.
7. The family still say "His Grace" even speaking of Mar Ivanios' childhood.

Chapter Three

VOCATION

THE day at length arrived when Mar Joseph Pulikottil claimed George Paniker for the priesthood. George asks nothing better. He thirsts for the service of God's altar. His mother and his uncle are equally happy but his father offers objections. A military career?—yes he would pay anything to start his son as a military officer, like so many of his paternal ancestors. But a priest! He could see neither honour nor glory in the priesthood. No, he would not consent. Anna prayed, the uncle pleaded. At length Sri Paniker gives the requisite consent but he will not agree to pay the seminarian's expenses—much to the mortification of his wife and brother for the whole world knew that Sri Thoma was a man of substance.

The Bishop and the Jacobite community therefore adopted George, as was the custom then in cases like his. In January 1898¹ at the age of fifteen years and three months, the future Mar Ivanios enters on his High School studies in the M. D. Seminary, Kottayam.

On his sixteenth birthday, 20th September, 1898², Feast of Our Lady's Nativity, but in the Julian calender, he received minor orders and he on that occasion formulated an extraordinary vow which may have been inspired by his Metropolitan Mar Joseph:

"I vow to dedicate my life to the spiritual uplift of the community that gave me birth. This I hope to accomplish by means of the education and sanctification of its clergy."

George Paniker was seventeen when little eleven-year-old V. A. Varghese, nephew of the Malpan (afterwards Metropolitan Mar Dionysius Gevarghese Vattaseril) went to school in the M. D. Seminary, Kottayam. Now in his retirement he has good stories to tell of those bygone schooldays.

Here is one:

Notwithstanding that comprehensive vow which he had formulated only the previous year, we find our young cleric capable of playing a mischievous joke on the newcomer. The boarder boys lived in what nowadays would be called the High School hostel. There as in class, George Paniker was the acknowledged leader. The school was proud of him: he was captain of the football team and the holder of a gold medal for declamation won in 1899.

“Young George had a playful sense of humour and I was soon made the innocent victim of it” says Mr. Varghese. He then went on to tell how the party from the hostel were going to bathe after class the very first evening of his own enrolment. The river was quite close but on the way they passed a rock “not much of a rock indeed,” said the narrator, “just a clump of stone.”

At this rock George Paniker paused impressively “new boys are supposed to kiss this rock on first passing it” he declared. The youngster looked at it with distaste and walked on. The others shook their heads ominously, but presently they came to a smooth flat rock on which a circle was engraved: “now this,” said George, “you dare not disregard without very serious consequences.” His party stood around so solemnly silent that half-convinced the youngster prostrated and piously kissed the centre of the carved circle, upon which there ensued a whoop of merriment and he realised that he had been fooled. Soon he himself was laughing with the others and they became fast friends.

When schools re-opened in January George Paniker went to the old seminary—otherwise called the Syrian Seminary, Kottayam, where he was to study for the priesthood. In the old seminary he meets again his Malpan of the M.D., Father Gevarghese Vattaseril, prospective successor to the ageing Metropolitan Mar Joseph Dionysius Pulikottil. Malpan Gevarghese seen now with new eyes this glorious youth who has come to live under the same roof with him. He is well acquainted with Mar Joseph’s expectations for the boy’s future in the Syrian Church³. He notes the promise of his eager mind, of his brilliant brain, of his religious temperament. He is given the diaconate and the form of his name is changed to Gevarghese. His Malpan hopes for great things from him for the spiritual welfare of the Jacobite Community. Alas! in the hour of the

fulfillment of these very hopes a great gulf separated the two. They could not bridge it, so they turned away from one another in their latter day—Mar Ivanios in the spiritual joy of his re-union, Mar Dionysius in bitterness and pain.

Already the young deacon's vow was driving him: he could not wait. On fire with longing to raise the educational standards of the clergy he begins with himself. He applied himself to a variety of subjects and found time for extra-curricular studies by cutting down on sleep. His device for keeping awake gives us a glimpse of the severity he imposed upon himself. As the night light, an oil lamp was hung up close to the ceiling, Gevarghese used to draw a high stool under it, and standing on that rather precariously would study by the hour. Did sleep surprise him the threatened loss of balance would jerk him instantly awake. His powers of concentration too were remarkable—astonishing in fact. Once he studied right through a monsoon thunder-storm that had sent his school mates into hiding from the leaping lightning. He had heard no thunder, had seen no lightning. Once the Malpan entered his room and spoke his name four times. The student did not move, he remained hunched over his books, hands tightly pressed against his ears. He had to be gently shaken before he was aware of the other's presence.

He utilised every free moment in the old seminary to organise a missionary circle amongst the deacons resident there. Some were older than he but all fell under the spell of his enthusiasm. He took up with his companions the study of apologetics and Christian doctrine. He prepared with them sermons, instructions, discourses on the liturgy and commentaries on scriptural passages. So convincing were his words, so impressive his oratory that men years his senior listened attentively. He would lead them evening after evening to a lonely rock⁴ and there address them on some doctrinal subject—his address being invariably followed by a prostration on the rock, a kissing of the cold stone and the Sign of the Cross. At first there was some amusement, but before long all joined reverently in the penitential exercise. Above all he implored his followers to steep themselves in the study of the Sacrament of Penance and when ordained try to infuse new life into the observance of Sacramental Confession amongst the laity.

“The spiritual apathy into which the Jacobite Community had fallen,

VOCATION

was always a source of great anguish to me,” he said on several occasions after his re-union, as he looked back on those early days.

His reform circle gave him every assistance during the school terms, even meeting groups of laity for instruction by arrangement. But when the long holidays came, the missionary society practically dissolved itself, each member going to the coolness of the hills or to a comfortable domestic environment. But Gevarghese Paniker not yet eighteen remained behind in the old seminary sacrificing the joys of home and the welcome of loving parents who lived only 30 miles away, that he might continue alone the instruction of the Jacobite laity. Soon they flocked to him in crowds or collected at vantage points which he would reach at a given time. The love of Christ urged him; the desire of their spiritual uplift sustained him. In hunger and thirst and sweat, rough-sandalled with blistered feet, across miles of burning soil he hastened to his eager listeners. For them he composed an examen of conscience which was much used in pre-union days.

* * * * *

During his four years⁵ in the Christian College, Madras, we find him still concerned for his Jacobite brethren. Now he is opposing the corrective of truth in history to the misrepresentations of the text books then in use. History in its varied ramifications had absorbed him from his high-school days. He seems to have adopted—or had he indeed anticipated—Belloc’s opinion of official British history? “Protestant History,” says Hilaire Belloc (*Characters of the Reformation* : p.116), “and therefore our official history such as it is taught in the English universities and has spread throughout English literature in text books and fiction, gave a thoroughly wrong perspective of every essential matter in the English Reformation.”

So in Madras Deacon Gevarghese gathers young Jacobites about him—most of them taking purely secular courses. He tells them of his purpose and asks them to arrange for this private study-circle prudently. A convenient underground is fixed and once again Deacon Paniker is the centre of an eager circle. We do not know what authors he used but we may be sure he employed them effectively.

* * * * *

Back in the M. D. Seminary (dec. 1906) with all the blushing honours of an M. A. thick upon him he receives a wonderful welcome. Mar Joseph blesses him, His Malpan rejoices with him. The Syrian laity delight to call him their M. A. deacon—so proud are they that this coveted degree has been bestowed upon one of their own race and religion. Mr. Mamam Mappillay the head master is an old friend, and first of the pupils to greet him is our little eleven-year-old, V. A., Varghese (Varttasseril)—now Seventeen—the Malpan's nephew who is about to enter on his university course.

The deacon is longing for ordination, but the ruling of Antioch⁶ requiring the aspirant to marry or else show cause sufficient for formal dispensation by the Patriarch, from the obligation, still held. Deacon P. T. Gevarghese had no desire at all to undertake the duties of a parish-priest and no inclination whatever to marry. His mothers words, "Priests ought not to marry." had taken root in his child's heart. Nevertheless he could not be ordained until the patriarch's will was known.

Whilst affairs were hanging fire like this, the thirst for instructing others was again upon him. He obtained the consent of his Metropolitan, Mar Joseph Pulikottil, then association with him two worthy and experienced priests the three gave a mission that lasted the best part of the year 1907, and was spread over the seven eparchies. Eager crowds attending it proclaimed its success. The preaching was concerned largely with Gospel themes and their practical application. There was also a daily demonstration of the liturgy and a detailed explanation of the significance of its ritual, besides instructions on its doctrinal content. Apathy fled, and faith and worship revived wherever the missionaries had passed.

The sermons were all in Malayalam of course, since only students and schoolmen could converse in English, but a writer speaking reminiscently after the death of Mar Ivanios described the character of his discourses: "The Malayalam address came down on our heads like tongues of fire, the mien, the gesture, the torrential eloquence in chaste and pure Malayalam—the picture stands out in my memory after the lapse of two decades."⁷

There is an interesting anecdote in connection with one of those early sermons. A platform out of doors had been erected for the preacher.

VOCATION

People crowded about it, men climbed earthen fences, youths hung from branches of trees they miss a word.

The small boy of this anecdote himself told the story⁸ shortly before his death. He had gone in good time and found standing-room near the platform. The crowd grew tense as the hour for the preacher's coming approached. Punctual to the moment he arrives, makes the Sign of the Cross and begins: "Be not as the ox and the mule that have no understanding." He then showed how rational man should have a goal in life and should strive manfully to reach it, from which point it was easy to lead his listeners to consider the Christian goal—salvation. He pointed out impressively the duty that lay on each one so to direct his life in thought, word and deed that he might attain to Heaven, that he might win salvation.

The boy went home in thoughtful mood. Salvation? He must secure his soul's salvation. We shall meet that boy again during the course of this little work.

* * * * *

January 1908 saw Deacon Paniker ordained⁹. He immediately entered on his duties as principal of the M. D. Seminary, Kottayam.

NOTES

1. The Academic year ran from January to December in India at that period.
2. The confusion between the Julian and Gregorian calendars caused T. Inchackalody (*Archbishop Mar Ivanios* Vol. I, P.4) to assign September 8 (the feast of our Lady's Nativity according to the Gregorian calendar) as the date of birth. Cf also Mother Salga, *Punarikathinte Aadyanalukalil*, P. 177 (new addition)
3. Meaning the Jacobite-Syrian Church.
4. Known as Reform Rock.
5. For the two years of his residence in the old Seminary Deacon Gevarghese attended daily at the C. M. S. College, Kottayam. (Statement of an aged gentleman who was a classfellow of his in that establishment.)
6. See Chapter II, *The Mallitti Panikers of Mavelikera*, P. 6
7. Thomas Srinavasam in *The King's Rally*, August 1953.
8. Died 1959.
9. The date of ordination is variously given by biographers. T. Inchackalody (op. cit, p. 177) repeating the confusion with Gregorian calendar assigns August 15, while Mother Salga rightly gives August 28 according to the Julian calendar (op. cit. P. 179) (new addition)

Chapter Four

MONKS OF BETHANY

FATHER Paniker had scarcely been admitted to priesthood when he was called upon to exercise the sacred ministry under pathetic circumstances. His Reverend uncle is dying of small-pox in the house of his cousin Mr. Thariathu Paniker of Parampil. He had fallen a victim to his charity in nursing the most wretched of his parishioners.

His nephew in Kottayam hears the distressing news, and without a thought of danger to himself, urged only by a great desire to render spiritual aid¹, this Priest of the Sacraments—as already he had come to be called—snatches up the Holy Oils, jumps on his bicycle and speeds to Parampil nearly forty miles off.

The road is unsurfaced: it breaks and ruts under the wheels; the afternoon sun is like a burning fire. The cyclist is not conscious of it, the tempest in his mind doth from his body “drive all feeling else.” Will he be in time? Will he be in time?

It was nine o'clock when he arrived. He entered the sick room. Father Zacharias though quite evidently dying, is not yet *in extremis*. The young priest hears his confession and administers Extreme Unction. Then in prayer and in attendance upon his helpless relative he impatiently awaits the dawn.

As the first rays of the sun lighten the East he celebrates the Qurbana² and brings Viaticum to the passing soul. How tenderly must those glazing eyes have rested on this devoted nephew, who had rushed against such odds in the face of contagion itself to bring to him the last Sacraments...He had watched this child advance in years and in piety. He had always felt that God had set him aside to accomplish some special spiritual work...And

here beside his dying couch that nephew bows his head for a last blessing...Father Gevarghese closes the dead eyes, folds the dead hands and performs all the other offices proper to the occasion. After the final farewells he cycled back to his duties in the M. D. Seminary.

The possession of a bicycle was as envied by students of those days as might be a car today. When the M. A. Achen went cycling, all eyes followed him. He knew this and because he had become fastidious in matters of dress, he would have none but Madras tailors to cut his clerical outfits. So, in graceful and immaculate garments he loved to scorch along the broad roads around the township knowing that all heads turned to look admiringly at him as he passed. One day he put on speed just to show off: something went wrong. Right over the edge of the track he dashed and fell into a muddy stream below. Laughter still shakes the voice of the venerable Father who recalled this incident.

Simple piety nevertheless can co-exist with youthful vanity. He taught the boys one charming night-prayer that he had learned from his mother. It was in Malayalam. At each corner of the mat or couch a little whisper was to be directed to Our Lady, St. Michael, St. John and the Holy Angels respectively.

The use of the cane was common to all boys' educational institutes at the period, and to our inquiries under this head we received contradictory replies. Mr. V. A. Varghese speaking from first hand knowledge says that in the class-room the principal was feared by the lazy and one must add the slow-minded, but caning or thrashing was not his way. There was one never-to-be-forgotten instance of severity but that was done by the counsel of the school inspector. It seems that a senior boy had treated a junior with cruelty, "brutality" was the alternative word used. The Reverend principal hearing of it, asked guidance from the visiting inspector. The inspector prescribed a public caning, so the whole school staff and all their pupils were assembled in the auditorium. The culprit was led to the stage or platform above and thrashed so severely that it is said he fainted under the ordeal. No: Father Paniker did not inflict the caning: he had requested some lay assistant to do the needful.

It is good to be able to tell that this boy of best social standing, followed his principal with faithful affection ever after. He is still living.³

Amongst that crowd of students under the direction of the M. A.

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

Achen was one quiet unassuming youth, a day-pupil from Olessha near Kottayam. His baptismal name was Jacob. His father was dead, and he, though now the head of the family, firmly refused to follow any other call in life but that to the priesthood. His mother was dismayed; but Father Paniker cycled out to Olessha and pleaded with her not to oppose her son's vocation. Had he some dim prophetic fore-knowledge that this boy would one day be associated with himself in those spiritual ideals that were to draw both of them steadily but surely during more mature years into Catholic re-union? Jacob of Olessha was none other than the future Mar Theophilos, Bishop of Tiruvalla, and suffragan to Mar Ivanios before and after creation of the Catholic Archdiocese of Trivandrum.

A third boy who must be mentioned is the little fellow who fell into the well⁴. It was recreation hour. Somebody's surveillance having momentarily slackened he went to the well, picked up the rope pail, and next minute the boy and the bucket went over the edge. Some ran for the Achen, some ran towards the well. The boy by a sort of miracle had not touched the water; he was seated on a rough projection a few feet above the surface. Father Paniker sprinted towards the scene of the accident calling to the excited lads first to pray and then to shout. The prayer was silent but the concerted yell they uttered might have razed the walls of Jericho. Townspeople came hurrying; a man on a passing vehicle, quick to grasp the situation, appeared with an immense length of strong rope. Some teacher brought a large watervessel, the sort that holds gallons. The man, the teacher and the students all reached the well together. Father Paniker made a sign for silence and caution: if they startled the lad he might jolt forward and be drowned. Soon the driver's rope was tied around the neck of the great water pot and let down carefully. From above the Rev. principal made encouraging signs to the terrified child below indicating that he was to step in. The instinct of self-preservation made him seize the rope frantically. Would he have the sense to put even one foot into the vessel? He would: he did. Many willing hands pulled him up to safety. A doctor was on the scene who packed him off to bed. He was soon pronounced out of danger: "no ill effects," the doctor said, and the town settled down once again to its everyday hum-drum business.

* * * *

Sometime during 1909 Father Gevarghese Vattasseril left for Mardin

to seek consecration as Bishop Metropolitan from the hands of Mar Abdulla the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. Father Paniker was thus left in sole charge at Kottayam. It seems to have been during these months (or perhaps it was later) that he held a students' convention in the M. D. Seminary. This conference caught on and became an annual affair.

The Syrian Carmelites too had their students' re-unions and generously the Rev. Jacobite principal of the M. D. Seminary would consent when asked to address the gathering. On one of these occasions he paused thoughtfully before replying to one of the Carmelites' speeches and surprised his listeners by saying: "I envy the Catholic Church her universality. It is only in the Catholic Church that the Scriptural text is fulfilled: 'From the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof, there is offered to My Name a clean Oblation'." Yet at this time he had no thought of re-uniting, for after he had sung the praises of St. Francis Xavier's missions in India one day he ended by saying "I am sorry I cannot pray to Xavier because I am not a Catholic."

Mar Joseph Pulikottil died and Mar Dionysius Vatassaril returned from Mardin with Metropolitan jurisdiction.

* * * * *

It was in 1912 that Father Paniker first made the acquaintance of the High Church Fathers and Sisters of the Oxford Mission, Calcutta. It happened that a Christian Union convention was being held in the Baptist College, Serampore. The Rev. principal of the M. D. seminary attended it in the capacity of companion secretary to his Metropolitan, Mar Dionysius.

The meeting failed to bring about the hoped for union and Father Paniker returned to his post in Kottayam. Another year however and he is back in Serampore with a triple professorship. He filled the chair of Syriac, Church History and Political Economy in the Serampore University College for fully six years. During all these years it was Mother Edith of the Oxford Mission who moulded his spiritual character and who led him swiftly to the fulfilment of his early aspiration, namely, life in a monastic circle or which his soul had longed, as mentioned above, even from his eighth year.

An account of the circumstances that led to Father Paniker's

acceptance of the professorship in Serampore is given by Rev. V. T. Thomas, for some time a deacon under the professor's wardenship; but who re-united years before him—

“Whilst Mar Ivanios was principal of the M. D. Seminary, Kottayam he was very much preoccupied with the Litigation that was going on between the two parties in the Jacobite Church⁵. He had to go around, meet many people, procure witnesses and attend to so many matters that he had neither rest nor peace. The relief so ardently longed for by him came with his appointment to the Baptist College, Serampore...”

But he did not close immediately with the offer made to him in Serampore. Two grave considerations held him back. He feared he would be false to the terms of his vow in going so far away from his co-religionists, and he feared to offend his Metropolitan whom he loved and revered. So he spent a year in “anguished prayer” he tells us. At length he saw a way by which he might reconcile a professorship in Serampore with the express words of his dedication: he would choose a circle of young men destined for the priesthood and take them with him to the College, paying or part-paying their expenses. In the way he hoped to advance their education and under God he might find means to contribute towards their sanctification also. He waited too for the formal consent of Mar Dionysius before resigning his principalship in Kottayam.

Mother Edith of the Oxford Mission, Barisol, proved the paramount influence in bringing about the implementation of his vow. Those congregations of men and women which Mother Edith was instrumental in founding, cherish yet the memory of her extraordinary asceticism.⁶ In a letter to one of the Bethany Sisters dated July 1957, she gives her age as 95 and recalls, though somewhat vaguely, certain aspects of pre-union days then half-a-century gone.

In the world of her youth Mother Edith had all that could make life desirable. She had wealth, beauty and brains; she could claim the unique distinction of having been the first woman to be admitted to a degree by the university of Oxford. Greek was not Greek to Mother Edith but a familiar language in which, moved by her yearnings towards spiritual perfection, she read and studied the Fathers of the Church. For the benefit of her Sisterhood she translated St. Basil.

Professor Paniker too was familiar with Greek. He had specialised

MONKS OF BETHANY

in Eastern languages in the Christian College, Madras, and was later appointed to the Board of Examiners in Oriental Studies at that university. The English nun and the Syrian priest therefore discovered and enjoyed a community of interest in the writings of St. Basil the Great, especially in those tracts which proclaimed him a Master of the Religious Life. "I had often wished to found a Monastery," explains Mar Ivanios after his consecration, "but I did not know how to go about it."

Now he knows, and as with him to will was to act he repaired straightway to the College where he called a meeting of the young clerics who had followed him from Kottayam. As the majority of these young men were seeking a more perfect way they agreed to place themselves under his spiritual direction. He therefore housed them in a separate hostel and formed them into a monastic circle where in addition to academic subjects they made fervent study of the religious life adapting the Rule of St. Basil with whatever modifications circumstances demanded. During their meditations on the Life of Our Lord, they loved to dwell upon his visits to Bethany—that abode of peace where He found faith and loyalty and surcease from the harassments of his enemies. Although later on their Father drew up for their observance synthesis of the Rules of St. Basil, St. Anthony of the Desert⁷ and St. Francis of Assisi, they came finally to be known as The Monks of Bethany

NOTES

1. In that backward district sixty years ago small pox was held in as great horror as a plague: even priests were reluctant to attend the dying under the circumstances. Someone immune by reason of recovery from the disease would alone venture.
2. Malayalam term for Sacrificial Offering=Holy Mass.
3. That is why his name is not given here.
4. The well in India, are incredibly deep: down, down, down lies the cool dark water. The top is protected by a raised circle, concrete to-day, formerly earthen.
5. Dealt with in some detail in the next Chapter.
6. Mother Edith was still living when the present writer left India in 1958. Her surname was not revealed. Her surname is Lamgridge (Mother Sulga, op.cit., p. 181) (new addition).
7. It may interest Western laity to know that the Institute of the monks of St. Anthony of the Desert still survives in the Eastern Churches, Catholic and Dissident alike. They are still solitaries—living apart, never in community. In fact a Bishop cannot be consecrated in the East until he has first been received into the Anthonian Order. Such bishops-elect are called Rembans.

Chapter Five

BETHANY SISTERHOOD FOUNDED

THE reference by Father V. T. Thomas to the “two parties in the Jacobite Church” needs to be made clear:

A succession of lawsuits had arisen out of a disastrous division dating from 1910, which rent the Jacobite ranks in Malabar, during that year. The story is no longer topical because the two parties effected a satisfactory union in 1958, but a brief account of the deplorable business becomes necessary here, if we are to appraise properly the part it played in leading Mar Ivanios to re-union.

From 1906 there were two prelates in Mesopotamia, each claiming to be the valid Patriarch of Antioch. One, Abdulmessiah had been arbitrarily deposed by the Turkish Sultan who appointed the other, Abdullah, in his stead. In 1910 Abdullah came to India looking for the original of a document by which he could claim certain revenues from his subjects in Malabar. The majority of the Bishops—5 out of 7—refused to produce the document and denied Abdullah’s right to the revenues he demanded. The Metropolitan Mar Dionysius Vattasseril voted with the majority and Abdullah retaliated by attempting a solemn excommunication.

However, the Reverend principal of the M. D. seminary cleverly prevented that. The morning for the public humiliation of the Metropolitan was fixed; but a day or two before that Father Paniker had called the leaders of the Metran party around him and instructed them how to proceed at the appropriate moment. He knew that Mar Dionysius’ followers were two to one of the Patriarch’s. The day dawned, excitement ran high; the church was packed to overflowing. The Patriarch with his usual attendants

appeared in his rich robes of office, intoned a preliminary prayer; then opened his impressive looking documents and began to read.

Immediately from a thousand throats there burst the cry of "Kyrie Eleison! Kyrie Eleison!" Abdullah made signs for silence but the loud chorus continued. The Patriarch's sympathisers in the congregation perceiving the trick, man-handled the obstructers. Undaunted whilst using knee and elbow to good effect on their opposers they kept up their full-throated cry of mercy to the Lord—"Kyrie Eleison! Kyrie Eleison!"

Abdullah was beaten: he had to withdraw. Then although he and the Metropolitan lived under the same roof, that of the Old Seminary, or Syrian Seminary, Kottayam, he sent the sealed document in a registered letter to Mar Dionysius.

Post haste from Mardin came expresses from Abdulmessiah annulling the acts and censures of Abdullah and stating that the Abdulmessiah had never resigned his Patriarchal authority which still remained operative in his decrees and decisions.

Immediately the five faithful Bishops sent one hundred golden crowns to Abdulmessiah requesting his presence amongst them¹.

He came, whereupon the issue was knit between the two parties. Amongst the laity it was like Chalcedon all over again, each party regarding the others as heretical and schismatic. Each party also claimed the right to allocate and otherwise to administer church funds and properties which were of considerable value in the aggregate and which ordinarily would have been placed at the disposal of Mar Dionysius the Metropolitan. So they locked church doors against one another, engaged in frequent fisticuffs and at least one sad case of fatal violence took place.

It would seem as though Father Paniker never doubted that Abdulmessiah was the rightful Patriarch. Before Abdulmessiah's return homewards in 1912 the young priest persuaded him to establish a Catholicate² and to consecrate three additional Bishops in Malabar.

Abdulla also returned to Mardin after a two-years' stay in Kottayam, having set the seeds of contention and litigation that continued in a see-saw of appeals and counter-appeals right down to the settlement of 1957-1958, as mentioned above.

It was from the preoccupations with these lawsuits that Father

Gevarghese escaped when he took up his professorship in Serampore. One of his confrères in the College was Mr. T. H. Robinson who edited a Syriac Grammar that is now (1957) in its third edition and can be had in the Oxford book-shops. In his Author's note Mr. Robinson says:-

"My acknowledgements to those who have directly associated in the preparation of this volume. Foremost among these stands my colleague the Rev. Father P. T. Gevarghese Paniker M. A. who has read the whole work in detail with me, made innumerable suggestions of value and helped me to understand to oriental view of Syriac grammar as no one else has done. His frequent contributions from the work of Bar Hebraeus have been a feature of our study together and had it not been for his modesty I would have included his name with mine on the title-page."

Meantime—or rather all the time—the Rev. professor continued to guide his Basilians in the hostel. The Rule of the Great Silence was of all others the most rigidly observed by the community. This is well illustrated by the incident of the hungry jackal—a cowardly, thieving creature it seems, so perhaps quite undeserving of our sympathy after all:

Deep sleep had descended on the hostel but the student whose couch was next to the pantry found himself awakened by an unusual sound. Carefully listening he decided that an alien beast of some sort had got into the store-room. He poked his neighbour in the ribs and pointed agitatedly towards the seat of the disturbance, then both proceeding warily on tip-toe discovered a very angry jackal now leaping wildly about and failing, in his excitement, to get out where he seemed to have got in.

The two ran to find weapons, pausing to rouse the others and to point vigorously—but all in dumb show—towards a heap of heavy branches near at hand, indicating that the newly awakened must arm themselves speedily to cope with the threatened danger.

Thinking that nothing less than a raid by bandits must be going on, the whole monastery (as we may call it) grabbed bludgeons of various sizes and looked around for the enemy. Guided by the frantic leaping of the unfortunate jackal they converged upon his prison and soon despatched him. Yet throughout the whole episode every lip was sealed and not a word was spoken. They had kept the Great Silence unbrokenly. For that they were heartily commended by their spiritual father when at the mid-

day recreation they told him of it.

Convent life for girls was unheard of in the Jacobite Church of that day. The Metropolitan, Mar Dionysius Vattaseril, had frowned down Mar Ivanios' proposals under that head whilst the latter was still Rev. principal of the M. D. seminary, Kottayam. Now he is professor in Serampore and far removed from the Metropolitan's jurisdiction. Sisters, nieces and cousins of the young monastics hearing of the blessed way of life which was being followed by their relatives sighed for a similar opportunity for themselves. They appealed to their M. A. Achen. He must not fail them. What would Mother Edith suggest?

For answer Mother Edith threw open the doors of her educational establishments to receive them. To Barisol then they came in twos and threes, eleven all told. Only one was of mature age: she became their first Reverend Mother. The youngest to be received in Barisol, youngest and tiniest, for she *was* tiny even for eleven years, is now Mother General of all the Bethany Convents scattered over the Archdiocese and the suffragan Diocese of Trivandrum.

Two of these pioneer girls were went by their people to the Oxford Sisters' boarding school in Calcutta. There in record time they achieved the B. A. degree. One became a nun and followed Mar Ivanios into re-union: the other did not re-unite. She holds at present a responsible post in the new India of today.

There was no suggestion of proselytism in the benefits which Mother Edith secured for her pious protégées. They were to be trained in the practices and principles of the religious life so that they might one day introduce the coventual system amongst the Malabar Jacobites. Mother Edith placed them under the care and guidance of two of her community, namely Sisters Helen and Dorian. When in 1919 Mar Ivanios had bought a suitable house in Tiruvalla for his aspirants and set them up there, Mother Edith with selfless goodness agreed to send these same sisters to foster the infant congregation. They remained until 1926 when Mar Ivanios began direct communication with Rome to explore the possibilities of re-union.

* * * * *

In 1922 sister Dorian³ figures in an incident that well might have had a tragic ending. It was after Mar Ivanios had removed his Basilians from Serampore to the remote neighbourhood of Perunad, as will be related in another chapter.

The Tiruvalla community, some half dozen at this time, used to come from their convent many miles away and reside in the guesthouse at Perunad during seasons of Retreat or of especial piety, attending the Father's lectures and exhortations and making the religious exercises under his direction.

On one occasion Sister Dorian wandered off alone for she loved solitude. She was seen going jungle-wards but the others thought nothing of the circumstance until darkness fell and she had not returned. Alarmed, Sister Helen was obliged to tell the Abun.

He immediately assembled the whole community and organised a rescue party. Taking knives, torch flames, old bells, tin cans—anything that could cause a clatter—they stumbled and panted on in the direction indicated, swinging their lights in wide arcs as they went and clashing their discordant instruments.

Mar Ivanios astride a trusty white mule and grasping torch and Vethukathi⁴ might have been another St. George setting out to deliver a damsel from the jaws of a dragon.

Meanwhile poor Sister Dorian was overwhelmed by a realisation of the dangers that beset her. She had fallen asleep and on awaking had found herself surrounded by complete darkness. Her peril from snakes and early prowlers was very real. She realised this with terrible clarity, and noble-hearted Christian that she was, she knelt down prayed and waited, accepting life or death as it might please God to ordain.

Rescuers would certainly come but would they reach her on time? She did not guess that even then they were on the edge of the jungle shouting and sweating and swinging their flares in a frantic effort to locate her. The sister neither heard nor saw them: not one of them had come within range.

Oh! what was that? The crackling of a dry twig under the foot of some heavy beast that was advancing towards her. She gave herself up

BETHANY SISTERHOOD FOUNDED

for lost. Then a loud call and a waving torch. It was Mar Ivanios on his mule.

With a glad cry Sister Dorian stumbled towards him.

NOTES

1. Father Hambye assures us that Abdulmessiah died in communion with Rome. *See Eastern Churches Quarterly* (p. 120), Autumn 195
2. The Catholicos is a prelate who lives in the midst of his flock, and governs with the help of a Synod of local Bishops. He is supposed to be the link between the Bishops and the distant Patriarch.
3. This beloved Sister passed away during 1957.
4. An Indian weapon, half scythe half scimitar and capable of dealing great destruction.

Chapter Six

FIRST BETHANY ASRAM¹

FROM the lecture rooms of Serampore to the jungles of Perunad was a startling change, we agree. To the founder of the Monks of Bethany however the transition seemed natural and indeed inevitable, if he were to follow worthily the monastic pattern with which he had by now become familiar.

During the long vacations he had visited Tagore's international institute and also Gandhi's Asrams, but he could not find in either the spiritual atmosphere that breathed in the way of life followed by those religious communities on which his own was modelled.

Early in 1917 he had asked his never-failing friend, Mr. E. J. John, a leading advocate, to select a site suitable for an Asram where his Basilians might pursue the interior life of union with God undisturbed by worldly cares and distractions. Mr. John who owned various properties offered him a choice of sites.

"I shall of course choose the site most remote," he replied.

In truth he had so chosen, for Perunad, a mountainous hill near Ranni, central Travancore, was virgin forest fifty years ago. The story of Perunad is as romantic as that of any foundation of the middle ages. From Dwarf Mountain² looking West the eye follows a sweeping descent that is bounded by the curve of a broad river in the distance. Looking East the piled-up Ghats rush towering to the sky. In between at the turn of the century, great jungle gorges went dipping down to the valley floor in depths too dark to fathom.

Then was heard in those wildernesses the mating call of the fierce Indian tiger, the trumpeting of tusker elephants, the snorting of wild boars and the snarl of angry leopards. Wolves and bears were often seen and herds of wild pigs wandered about night and day in close proximity to the Bethany compound.

That was in 1919, after the first cane and wattle structures had been raised in Perunad. But from 1917, whilst he continued to lecture in Serampore, the professor's lively imagination had added to the grounds already purchased and had peopled them with benevolent institutions to which his burning zeal was urging him.

He wrote a series of letters to a gentleman, a sort of agent and factor, who then resided on the Perunad Estate, requesting him from time to time to buy various parcels of land around the original area. "You must buy the school and its property." He mentions a reasonable figure³. "Fill in the deed in your own name but you must have a clear title to the land."

This with variations and a promise to recoup the cash expended was the character of each request. Again, "we must purchase all the property for the glory of God, to provide—

(1) A Hospital for the poor, (2) Orphanages for children who have no parents, (3) A Mission training House, (4) Schools, (5) Religious Houses by the riverside—a bathing ghat for each...we must get the site at once, do not delay...if you borrow I am ready to pay: the merciful Lord will grant us all: let us pray unceasingly with steadfast faith..." The Lord did indeed grant to him as the swift years passed, church, school, orphanage, guest-house and Asram, but the hospital never got further than a make-do dispensary, and the Religious Houses and Training Centre he had planned by the cool river, never materialised; nor did the home for the aged.

Yet we have to note that this latter object of Christian benevolence, on which he was ready to pour out his heart in the season of his first fervour, remained with him—a haunting and unsatisfied desire—to the end. On his death-bed forty years later he expressed very poignant regrets that he had not provided a refuge for the unwanted old.

The Mission Training House may have been personally counselled by Mother Edith. She possessed the true missionary spirit which makes

light of fatigue and inconvenience when a chance arises for evangelisation. She had often heard the Rev. professor deplore the “apathy” of the Jacobite laity. Her quick sympathies aroused, she consents to make the journey to Perunad and instruct the women of Ranni.

From Serampore 30/7/18... “Mother Edith has consented...she will reach the place Wednesday, 18th September. Where should she get off the train? Kottarakara? Avenceswaram? Punalur? There must be a bullock wagon and a vehicle to carry luggage. Is it possible to have a covered cart with springs? If not you must send one from Ranni. The sisters will not preach in a public place, nor in churches. They will instruct the women in a private house...They say prayers seven times a day. The people of Ranni should undertake the responsibility of taking the Mother from the station to Ranni, or after the Mission from Ranni to the station. I am not sure of my reaching there, so the priest must see to it.

“You must arrange one two-storey building for their stay. The kitchen must be separate so that soot does not reach their dwelling. The place must be large enough for many women to come together...I shall pay their fare to Perunad...After the mission they must stay in the Guest-house, Bethany.”

Here the writer gives minute and detailed instruction for ensuring proper sanitation in the Guest-house.

Another letter:

“On September 21, 1918 the sisters will reach the station. You must find a clever steady butler who will be faithful to them until they return.

“All must join and do all that is needed for the sisters. Make the house ready, then get food necessities from Aleppey. There must be two ‘bandies’⁴ at the station of Punalur, and a cart to carry luggage. The expert butler must go to Punalur to prepare the supper...An iron-bar bandy will go more smoothly. As the journey is over 35 miles they would sleep in the bandies (one for each). You must respect them and make them cheerful. Not only do they teach our girls, but we expect much from them in the future also...

Mother Edith and her companion duly reached the two storey house prepared for them. When the spiritual week had ended they went for a

few days to the Guest-house at the foot of Dwarf Mountain—the expert butler accompanying them remaining in attendance until he finally saw them off on their return journey to Barisol.

Arrived back Mother Edith realised that Professor Paniker's health was breaking down. That was not to be wondered at: he had to prepare his lectures, he was helping Mr. Robinson with the Syriac Grammar as above stated, he had begun to compile a Syriac Dictionary. Add to all that the exhausting demands made on him by his observance of the Antiochene Rite, of the interior life, of the religious Rule and the spiritual direction of his monastics. The Syrian fasts, as described by Frey Vincent as "many and severe," were and are still kept rigidly by this conservative people. His Basilians kept them as a matter of course, but to himself he reserved the harsh penance of the discipline. Only his most trusted deacon—one who re-united and became a Bishop years later—was aware of the secret.

Then there were his visits to the sick of the Calcutta slums. Taking that same deacon with him he used to go at frequent intervals to the crowded dwellings of the wretched and the unfortunate, where babies suffering from malnutrition were to be found. He would wash the smelly little bodies, bathe them in oil and give them back soothed and refreshed to their poor mothers. Moreover in his ruthless efforts after self-conquest he would force himself to kiss the scrofulous eruptions that disfigured the burning skin of those pitiful little ones before he applied the salves he had brought with him. He must have given material help there also for he mentions in one of his letters to the agent in Perunad how "children too" were an expense to him. "Our girls" was his way of speaking of the Jacobite group in Mother Edith's care, therefore the "children" must have been the sick babies whom he tended.

But he was asking too much even of his robust constitution: he fainted one morning whilst exhorting his listeners to persevere in the pursuit of Christian perfection. On recovering he refused to absent himself from class, but a few weeks later he collapsed whilst out walking. The governors very kindly insisted on his taking a six months' holiday with pay. He went home to his mother in Mavelikara. At the end of the prescribed period, in December 1919, he resigned his professorship in the University College, Serampore, but he continued to be elected to the Senate right up to 1930.

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

“We must purchase all the property,” he had said in 1918, and as in some fairy-tale the expression of his will brought the genii who accomplished it. Mr. John made him a gift of 100 acres. A Mr. Hamilton of Serampore loaned him Rs. 7000/-. His father contributed Rs. 2000/- and a band of labourers who cleared the ground and helped to build the first cane structures that were to be utilised towards the grand purpose the professor had in view.

Assisting, directing and superintending all these preparations was the well-loved deacon Alexis now the Jacobite Bishop, Mar Theodosios. In all about 400 acres of forest were included in the Bethany estate. When sixty acres had been cleared the Basilians entered their new home which almost crowned the summit of Dwarf Mountain.

It was on the Feast of Our Lady's Assumption, 1919, that ten fervent young men entered the premises assigned to them and prostrating after the Jacobite fashion prepared to keep faithfully their newly revised Rule hoping its observance would lead them to the heights of holiness. It led them like the monks of Caldey into the fold of Peter.

NOTES

1. Indian term signifying community.
2. Mundanmala (new addition)
3. The letters were all in Malayalam but they were carefully translated for me by the Rev. Mother Basim, S. I. C. (Sister of the Imitation of Christ).
4. Easier sort of bullock-wagon, covered.

Chapter Seven

EARLY DAYS ON PERUNAD

TOWARDS the year's end (1919) their now convalescent Abun came to live with them. They were strict vegetarians and in addition denied themselves tea and coffee drinking only thick sour buttermilk with their daily rice. They arose at midnight to chant the Divine Office.

One of the first innovations introduced by the Abun was the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament for adoration. This was a great consolation to the devout brethren. Oratory and library were raised quite apart from the domestic quarters. An orphanage too was provided and at a suitable distance the farmyard sheds were placed.

Orphans were being daily brought to the Asram and how could those good men turn them away? They received them trusting in God. Aged and ageing Bethany Fathers with whom I talked gave me so many striking anecdotes all significant of the Divine care over them in those early days that it is hard to choose one for re-telling. Perhaps the story of the food-basket would be fitting.

One forenoon the Procurator had to announce that there was not a morsel of food in the house. The usual supplies had failed to appear and the markets of Ranni were days and nights away. 12 o'clock was approaching—not a hope of anything to serve. The Abun was informed: no rice, no plantains, not tapioca-nothing.

“Good!” he carried heartily, “now let us go and pray.” He went directly to the oratory.

Meanwhile the orphans were told—no prospect of dinner. Healthy little fellows, their faces clouded at the news, but when it was explained that no dinner meant no labour in the forest, no work at all, they brightened

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

up again. Nevertheless when 12 o'clock came and their little empty tummies clamoured for food, they began to cry.

Just then the guest brother heard the sound he most dreaded to hear—the rope bell outside the compound being rung. A guest! and not even a drink of sour buttermilk to offer him after the tough climb. Slowly he went towards the lodge. Lo! there were two men who bore between them a huge basket of flat cakes, rice and plantains.

The orphans laughed again and the Abun returned from the oratory.

* * * * *

In Penunad the Abun was like a father surrounded by his children. His return to the monastery after a period of absence was the signal for general recreation. They crowded about him as he told them of his experiences during his begging excursions, for he had undertaken the task of soliciting alms from door to door, reaching out a begging bowl like any Hindu mendicant. But as house and house were widely separated in that part of Tranvancore his relatives presented him with a strong white mule, a great boon in a mountainous district. Astride his mule he could traverse long distances and make the needs of his monks and orphans known to a very wide circle. The charity of his Hindu patrons equalled that of the Christians; and there was one kindly offering on which he could always count from his co-religionists—a quantity of rice. It is part of Jacobite piety to set aside a handful of rice each day before cooking the principal meal. When the quantity had increased appreciably it was given to the poor or to the monks of Bethany.

The procurator possibly made arrangements for the collection and delivery of this rice, but the Abun took only money or gold in his begging-bowl. One of the first houses in which he solicited alms was his own father's house in Mavelikara. As most well-to-do families in south India keep a supply of gold ornaments, the Paniker household parted with some of theirs including the heavy gold circlet given to their eighteenth century forebears by Marthanda Varma as before mentioned. From Perunad the Abun used to journey to Tiruvalla where he had bought a little house (it was always called the Little House) within easy distance of the convent where his Jacobite novices were being trained. Here he was called "Father" by the community. When Father called to the convent there was always

the same expression of joy as in the monastery. There followed the daily Qurbona (holy sacrifice) and a long instruction on the proper observance of their holy Rule.

Also their Father would inform them of the dates fixed for the next Retreat or season of prayer at Perunad, so that they might make due preparation for a sojourn in the guest house at the foot of Dwarf Mountain.

George Paniker has had a series of names! P. T. Gevarghese, The M.A. Achen, father P. T. Gevarghese the professor, and now the Abun or Father of Bethany. Under that title the people held him in awe, Jacobites and Marthomites alike¹. Once he quelled a violent sectarian agitation in Tiruvalla by simply walking down the street in his saffron robes, not speaking until he reached a front room of the High School. From a window on the first floor he addressed the crowd below declaring his intention of fasting night and day until they ceased their brawling.

There was a hurried conference on the street and presently envoys from each of the opposition parties tramped up the stairs promising a lasting peace. To their honour be it said, they kept their word until they heard of his re-union: but of that by-and-by.

In Perunad his will was law and listeners hung upon his words during his spiritual discourses. At the weekly Chapter of Faults the most severe physical penance given by him was the Jacobite prostration a number of times in succession. That was severe to be sure. The Jacobite way of prostration is most painful. It consists of falling flat from the standing position. Anyone who has tried it repeatedly will know how exhausting it can be.

His right hand in all his administrative designs was Jacob of Olessa who had gone with him from Kottayam to Serampore. He is now ordained and the Master of Novices. In his counsels to Father Jacob the Abun asks only that the Novice-Master shall satisfy himself that the novice does seek God in his daily life: "Deliberate vexations of a fictitious and unjustifiable character calculated to exasperate the aspirant are not God's methods and should be avoided;"—a translation no doubt from some passage of St. Basil's. The gentle Father Master was hardly capable of employing such methods. His success may be gauged by the heroism of so many who in August 1930 left all things to follow their conscientious convictions. They were of his training.

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

“Manual labour,” writes one of the Fathers, “played a great role in the lives of the monks of Bethany. They cleared the forest, tilled the soil, raised beautiful gardens and orchards and had even to keep watch at night from tree-tops against the wild animals. Cooking, washing, cleaning, sweeping, practically all domestic duties were performed by the priests and brothers of the Order.” Foremost amongst them in any and all of the above was their Abun—the once fastidious M. A. Achen of the M. D. Seminary who must needs have his garments tailored in Madras, but an Achen transformed now into a humble monk who is foremost in the farmyard shovelling up manure, not caring for the stains: he will wash them out; he has learned all that. When in 1930 his nephew from Tiruvalla was boycotted by the Dobhis (Laundrymen) because of his having reunited, Mar Ivanios wrote to him offering to come and help: “You know I had plenty of practice in laundering and barbering when I was in Bethany.” His nephew declined the offer.

It is not so stated but since the Abun joined in all the activities demanded by the new conditions in Perunad he must have taken his turn with the night watches also. These were necessary because of the ravages of wild beasts on green and growing things as well as on young saplings that had been planted in the clearing. Earthen ramparts were quite ineffectual. It would have taken a de Lannoy wall² to keep out the herds of pigs, boars, and elephants that ate the succulent shoots planted with such hope and patience.

Here is the actual experience of one of the Fathers as told by himself. It was at the period when their shooting at night was beginning to have some effect and their unwelcome callers were growing scarce. That was why he was all alone in his tree watch. It was a dark windless sultry night. He had with him the usual fire-arms. Hours passed, and as no unusual sound had disturbed the quiet of the sleeping garden the weary Father decided to go indoors.

He descended noiselessly and very cautiously for he had no desire to attract the attention of any beast that might be loitering within earshot.

He had actually reached ground level when the snorting grunt of a boar only a few yards away gave him pause. The Father was well aware that a single boar face to face with man is much more dangerous than a whole herd of pigs and boars together when if one is startled all panic and

EARLY DAYS ON PERUNAD

run. How near was the fierce animal, and in what direction? The slightest movement could bring those terrible tusks ripping into his flesh—and he could see nothing.

With an inward prayer he brought the gun soundlessly to his shoulder and fired blindly. Then he tensed, awaiting the worst. The shot had gone home. The dead beast, not having uttered even a deathsqueal, went hurtling down the precipice.

Another animal story was that of a leopard that leaped at a cow's throat as the small herd were being driven in from the grazing patch. The leopard seized the throat and whilst still holding on by its teeth it swung itself over the gentle creature's neck and dealt it a stunning blow with its right forepaw. Before the cow had time to fall the humans were beside it. The leopard fled and the poor cow when her trembling had somewhat ceased was able to stagger to the farmyard. Eventually the wound in her throat healed and she seemed to have forgotten her misadventure.

From the speech delivered by Rev. N. A. Thomas, Principal of Mar Ivanios College at the unveiling of a portrait of Mar Ivanios in 1955, we learn that "he befriended the animals of the forest." No doubt he was emulating the examples of St. Francis and St. Jerome in this respect. Perhaps that was why providence protected him and his when one day a tusker elephant in the dangerous frenzy of "Must" (with which Elephant Bill has made us all familiar) came charging and trumpeting in broad daylight straight towards the Bethany compound. The orphans stood paralysed with fear, and were quite unable to obey the order to move. There was no time to dash indoors for fire-arms. They could only pray. In full forward flight the terrifying beast suddenly wheeled and crashed into the forest.

* * * * *

"As the heart is to the body" said Mar Ivanios, "so is a religious congregation in the midst of the laity." He was soon to prove the truth of this. We give the illustration from the pen of a young Bethany Father.

"The austere humble life of the monks first attracted the people of the neighbouring villages. Their prayers and their fasts drew the spiritually starved laity to the sanctities of this abode. The fame of the new congregation spread quickly. Soon people were flocking to Perunad in

thousands to steep themselves in the deep spirituality they found there. During Lent temporary sheds had to be erected each year to accommodate the tens of thousands gathered there to here the retreats and to take part in the exquisitely performed liturgical services...But all who desired could not possible attend, so the Abun with full knowledge of the Synod erected within a few years no less than thirty Bethany churches. At these churches or mission stations the Abun and the ordained members of the O. I. C.⁴ as well as some Brothers and Catechists assisted in turn. Bethany at this time too ran an orphanage, owned a printing press and a flourishing Retreat house. Many of these stations extended beyond the very confines of the Malabar Coast.”

* * * * *

During the first years of Bethany, the Abun suffered much from rheumatism. The popular remedy was painful, yet out Abun often tried the prescription. It consisted in rolling coarse ropes tightly around the affected limb. When commiserated with by any of the brethren their Father would simply laugh and say that was his way of doing penance.

Oil baths however were recommended by the doctors. Therefore it happened that we find the patient taking the oil-cure in the Coronation Pharmacy, Kottayam. This is where we meet once more our thoughtful little boy who many years before had listened to the sermon on Salvation from the lips of Deacon Paniker during the Gospel missions of 1907. He is now finishing his pre-university course of the C.M.S. College close by.

Into the pharmacy he and a classfellow wandered one day intending to make some trifling purchase. The invalid upstairs heard the youthful voices below and called up the two students. They came shyly, for the Abun of Bethany was a famous man.

No sooner had they entered his room than the sick man began discoursing on the blessedness of the religious life and on the Master's invitation to follow him and be perfect.

The young men's hearts were burning within them as he spoke. During the third visit which they eagerly paid him, he turned to our grown-up and said with irresistible charm:

“My son! Come to me,” and the young man forthwith without finishing his College course, without even waiting to ask the consent of

EARLY DAYS ON PERUNAD

his parents, hurried to present himself in Bethany⁵. The other followed in a year or two as the Father had foretold.

Of the tens of thousands who crowded the slopes of Dwarf Mountain Father Gabriel O. I. C. has already told. Indeed of Mar Ivanios it might be said at the period: Behold the whole world has gone after him! The monastery was besieged by aspirants clamouring for admittance. Young men in their homes, at desks in the Civil Service, on their coca-nut plantations, or in the market places of Travancore heard of this wonderful life of prayer and service that was being pursued under the Abun of Bethany, and leaving all things else they hurried to Perunad, most without even informing their parents. Naturally the parents hurried after them so that agitated scenes were often witnessed in the Monastery precincts. Yet for all their good will not one of these precipitate souls persevered. They were not called to such a life, but their short experience of it must have proved of lasting benefit.

All that, we must add, and most of the material achievements listed above, were subsequent to the year 1923. "I never used my begging bowl after 1923," said Mar Ivanios reminiscently, subsequent to his reunion. It was in 1923 that an intensive study of the early canons brought to him an overwhelming conviction of the Divinity of the Catholic Church.

NOTES

1. The Marthomites are the Jacobites who seceded from the main body about the last quarter of the nineteenth century. They are also known as the Reformed Church. In 1926, in his first communication with Rome, Mar Ivanios gave their number then as 150,000.
2. De Lannoy built the famous lines that defend the Northern boundary of Travancore. They run from West to East—and consist of a ditch 16 feet broad and 20 feet deep with a thick bamboo hedge in it, a flight parapet and a good rampart and bastions on rising grounds, almost flanking each other. From one extreme of the lines to the other they are only assailable by regular approaches from the North.—(Official description)
3. Rev. Fr. Gabriel, O. I. C. *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, Autumn 1955.
4. O. I. C. = Order of the Imitation of Christ, the official designation of the Bethany Fathers.
5. This student became Rev. Fr. Job, O. I. C. and held many honourable offices in the Congregation until his death in 1959.

Chapter Eight

1923

IN the courts the 1923 decision had gone against the Metropolitan and another appeal was pending. The situation was such¹ that after many legal conferences and consultations on both sides, it became evident that the appellants must produce proof of the invalidity of Abdulla's claim to the Patriarchal office. By this time both pretenders were dead—Abdulla 1913, Abdulmessiah two years later. The term "Jacobite" seems to have been dropped at this stage by the way, and the Orthodox Syrian designation substituted, though Mar Ivanios always spoke and wrote of his co-religionists as Jacobites.

After the excommunication of Mar Dionysius Vattasseril by Abdulla, a rival Metropolitan, Paulose Mar Athanasius was set up by him. Which of these two Bishops was to be regarded as the rightful custodian of the Trust funds? That was the question which the courts must decide.

The contention of invalidity could only be upheld by a reference to canon law. This sent the legal pundits to the study of the church's canons.

It was then that Mar Dionysius Vattasseril asked the Abun of Bethany to clarify for the judges the canonical position. He came willingly from the peace of Perunad and began with characteristic thoroughness to make a profound study of the ancient canons. Who better fitted linguistically than he for this particular task? In Greek, or Hebrew, or Syriac might be found records of church affairs during the early centuries. He pored over the Originals. He consulted Dr. Adrian Fortescue. He read up once more his Bar Hebraeus and other canonists.

His exhaustive researches left him with an overwhelming conviction of papal supremacy. Back beyond the disputations of Chalcedon and the

agitations of preceding heresies he had heard and recognised above the din the voice of Peter. Pride and prejudice might defy it and multiply their dissidences but all who followed that voice made one visible flock, one and undivided whether by time or distance or nation or race or language.

Ah! there it was at last—unity!—Unity centred in one supreme authority—the Papacy. In that revealing flash of vivid apprehension, the divine plan of the universal church fell into focus: Peter's successor was none other than the Vicar of Christ Himself! Therefore not a primacy of honour merely, as the Eastern churches were prepared to grant, but a supremacy of jurisdiction was the inalienable right of the Bishop of Rome. All the Abun's faculties surrendered to the concept. From that moment re-union became for him the ideal that inspired and motivated all his actions.

* * * * *

It is interesting to note that the Abun of Bethany was not the only one who became convinced of the truth of catholic claims from a study of the early canons.

The late Mr. K. E. Job, historian and well-known author, gave us permission a short time before his death in 1957 to quote from some type-sheets of his under this head:-

"Three distinguished men were convinced of the truth of catholic claims as a direct consequence of their connection with the Trust lawsuits: Foremost among the lay-leaders of the re-union stand Mr. A. Philipose M. A., B. L., etc. Now a retired Judge of Travancore State he had been legal adviser to the late Metropolitan Mar Dionysius (Vattasseril) who had withstood the claims of his Antiochene Patriarch Mar Abdullah Ignatius Satuf. The prolonged litigation between the Jacobite Patriarch and the Malabar Metropolitan brought to light several canons and documents of the early church which served to open the eyes of laymen on both sides. Mr. Philipose had to sever his connection with litigation when he was recruited to the Bench, but the deep impression produced upon him by the evidence remained...he became in time convinced of the unique claims of the catholic church and of the futility of seeking sanctification and spiritual solace elsewhere."²

Mr. Job continues:-

“When Mr. Philipose severed his connection with the Jacobite civil litigation two other Jacobite leaders began to argue the case with great legal acumen. They were Rao Sahib P. K. Varghese on the Metropolitan side and Advocate P. A Abraham on the side of the patriarch. They were great lawyers and great party leaders arguing on opposite sides, and each of them studied the canonical evidence of their church with a view to finding support for his own party contentions. Strange to say, the same evidence converted both lawyers and made them staunch believers in the one holy, catholic, apostolic church of Rome.”

* * * * *

After that memorable day in 1923 the Father of Bethany lost all interest in the outcome to the Trust lawsuits. He returned to the Asram with a new perception of his true vocation. The path to Rome lay clearly before him and he saw himself like another Moses leading hosts of his wandering people back to the Promised Land.

“In all my correspondence with Rome,” he writes to his friend and former colleague, Mr. Maman Mapillay, “I aimed only at the re-union of the whole Metran party.”

Materially during the early years on Perunad things had proved disappointing. The depredations of jungle beats on rubber-tree plantings had much to do with the slowness of success, but there were other contributory causes. When he took over the property the Abun’s lively imagination had already seen the native forest yield productive returns after the monks should have cleared it by the labours of their hands. He saw the clearings tilled and fruit and flower gardens flourishing. In short he beheld the desert of Perunad to blossom like the rose.

In the end to be sure all that did come to pass but during the first three or four years paid hands had been freely employed to speed up the Father’s impatient plans. The results were not at all commensurate with the cash outlay. And there was the loan from Serampore to be repaid.

“Oh yes,” sighed one of the oldest Fathers now gone to his reward, “our Abun planned magnificently, by in the execution, details often went wrong.”

Then Abun³ was just then at the height of his popularity: he was the

hope and the glory of the Jacobite community. Generously they rallied to him when they learned of his difficulties. Many subscribed totals of Rs. 100/- each which went into a capital fund; others contributed smaller sums at regular intervals, and there was always the "handful of rice" from pious householders, for daily upkeep. Redundant workmen were dismissed and development of the property progressed. The future solvency of Bethany seemed assured.

Amongst the tens of thousands who crowded on to Dwarf Mountain was a group of the intelligentsia led by Judge Philipose⁴. They came to the Abun with their families, asking to be associated in some way with the good works of his monastic community.

Remembering the Dominican and Franciscan Third Orders for the laity of which he had read, the founder of the O.I.C (Order of the Imitation of Christ) arranged for the formation of a Third Order of Bethany. He there and then composed a small office or ritual for the admission of seculars as Tertiaries of Bethany. These regarded him as their religious superior. They flocked to the Asram church to be received. Soon they wore a distinctive badge, a saffron scarf, by which others recognised their membership and by which also they themselves were reminded of the pious promises they had made.

Was it from Mother Edith that the Abun had learned something of the West's courtesy and consideration towards women? He quickly dissociated himself from the Syrian custom of relegating the women of the congregation to whatever cramped and huddled space might remain at the back of the nave after the men had leisurely appropriated to themselves all the room they could comfortably claim. The Abun changed that: he appointed one side of the nave for the men, the other for the women. This so heartened and dignified the wives and mothers that they threw themselves earnestly into the study of doctrine and liturgy so that attendance at these classes rapidly increased; chant and hymnody improved, and little children were soon more eager than the grown-ups to be present at catechetical instruction.

It was not always sunshine in Bethany to be sure. Its Father, for all his benevolence, could lose his temper occasionally, though he invariably made immediate and ample amends, as for example that Good Friday

morning during the church ceremonies. Translations from Syriac into Malayalam were a perennial source of irritation to him, especially translations of prayers, scriptural passages, and phrases in the liturgy proper. These translations had been done by the Church Mission Society missionaries in the early nineteenth century. Mar Ivanios, a purist for accurate version, could never keep silent under their shortcomings.

On this particular morning the deacon was reading St. Paul where the English text would run: "He loved me and delivered himself for me;" but the significance of the Pauline assertion became weakened and obscured in the Malayalam rendering: "That is not the correct text" interposed the Abun brusquely.

"I have read what is here." retorted the deacon, indicating the Testament.

The Abun rushed over, snatched the volume out of the reader's hands and flung it to the other side of the sanctuary.

There followed a few minutes of uneasy silence; then the Father retrieving the book returned it with an ample apology. He then begged pardon from the congregation and the service proceeded without further incident.

"I must revise those poisonous translations," he kept resolving but death found him with that purpose unfulfilled. In his very last hours he could not conceal his intellectual impatience with them. One of the Bethany monks was actually engaged in reading the prayers for the dying—from the Malayalam prayerbook—when Mar Ivanios suddenly made a movement as if to rise. "Wretched grammar! wretched grammar!" he gasped. "Put it down."

From the solitudes of Perunad the Abun kept in touch with religious developments abroad. The re-union of Father Paul of Graymoor was known to him when it took place in 1909—the year after his own ordination⁵. It did not occur to him then to follow in Father Paul's footsteps: he was dedicated to the uplift of his Jacobite brethren and he had not yet seen his vision of the universal church unified from Rome.

"The movement of the Church Unity Octave sponsored by Father Paul was known to me at that time...I observed it in the monastery and in the convent of nuns which I founded in the dissident church without any

personal knowledge of or correspondence with Father Paul. A daily prayer for the re-union of Christendom was introduced by me in my religious communities. God answered these prayers and guided us all to seek communion with the Holy See..."

I may be added here that after his re-union and that of his two congregation, Father Paul and Mother Lurana Provided regular remittances which helped to tide over the economic difficulties of the newly reconciled.

* * * * *

His portrait in the Archbishop's House, Pattom, shows Mar Ivanios caressing a chubby little orphan. "A pose!" some cynic may suggest. No: here is an anecdote that will confound him.

It is the custom in the Syrian Church that no one, not even a near relative shall sit in the presence of a Bishop—for as in Frey Vincent's time the Bishop is treated as a king.

Now it happened one day in the later years of Mar Ivanios' life that some of the Fathers entering his parlour were shocked to see a layman sitting in a comfortable chair quite close to that of the Archbishop.

The senior Father looked his disapproval. Mar Ivanios smiled, for he knew that his visitor also had interpreted the Father's frown, and was about to defend himself.

"You are surprised that I sit in Abun's presence," said he "but you see when I was an orphan in Bethany I often sat in his lap."⁶

In 1924 the Abun of Bethany was honoured by an invitation to the enthronement of the little twelve-year-old Prince Rama Varma, in the Home Palace Trivandrum. He attended, of course, and we may be sure he was first or one of the first to felicitate His Highness the boy Rajah of Travancore. Prince Rama at twelve had become His Highness the future Maharajah who remained the faithful personal kindly friend of Mar Ivanios until the day of the Archbishop's death.

NOTES

1. Later when Mar Ivanios had read Mr. Donald Attwater's footnote 5 to page 12 of his *Dissident Eastern Churches*, he expressed his satisfaction.

Mr. Attwater's Note—"A Catholic has no often to disagree with Canon J. A

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

Douglas, one of the leaders of the anglo-Orthodox rapprochement, that it is a special pleasure to quote him with approval when he writes: 'As the story is told in our text-books, Christian disunion is presented as the evil fruit simply of theological perversity. That story needs to be re-written. Threatening to the vital truths of the Gospel as they undoubtedly were, heresies have rarely done more than provide battle flags for national and social quarrels. All the historic schisms that have endured have been far more the work of the politician and statesman than the theologian. No one can understand the Orthodox Church to-day without grasping that fact.' "

2. Judge Philipose re-united 1931
3. Syriac equivalent of Father.
4. A detailed list of Judge Philipose's academic successes from High school to University together with his forensic triumphs covers two foolscap papers of typing .
5. See his letter to Rev. David Gannon, S. A., the Biographer of Father Paul: 4 /10/ 1950.
6. The substitution of "Abun" for "His Grace" carries conviction here. In Bethany the boy would always have said "Abun".

Chapter Nine

PLANNING FOR RE-UNION

The Abun planned for re-union with characteristic thoroughness. When he flung away his begging bowl in 1923 the action was symbolic. Hitherto he had sought personal sanctification in the daily self-denial of monastic life. Now a new persuasion of his vocation influences him: "I feel that the Spirit of God is impelling me to give myself up this cause" (re-union). "It is only the uplifting power of a great ideal that can save any community. To show forth this ideal is, I believe, my vocation now." (Letter to his friend Mr. Maman Mapillay.)

So he began by gathering around him in the Little House of Tiruvalla discussion groups from amongst the leading laity. They followed what would be called today indoctrination courses. The sessions lasted for hours and were punctuated by refectations of boiled rice served on plantain leaves. One of those who attended was Mr. V.A Varghese (the boy of the M.D. Seminary 1899). It took him nearly twenty years to yield to his convictions: it was not until the 16th March, 1941, that he made his profession of Faith. Writing to him from Trivandrum the previous day, Archbishop Mar Ivanios recalls those meetings:

"The Holy Spirit that inspired us all during those solemn moments in Tiruvalla whilst we have occasion to talk among ourselves of the desirability and the glory of a re-united Christendom and of our own personal duty in the matter, has continued to guide you and me and now we find ourselves in the bosom of the Catholic Church where only one can have real peace and consolation."¹

Having guided controversy amongst lay leaders for some time, the

Abun turned his attention to the Bethany Community. He multiplied their library books especially in apologetics from Catholics and Anglican pens. These he also shared with his Tiruvalla intellectuals. We quote again from Mr. K. E. Job: "Mr. K. V. Chacko was deeply read in history, literature and philosophy.... He used to say of Bishop Gore's High Church writings, which he admired, that the bishop was very logical and convincing so long as he followed the catholic line of argument but woefully weak and illogical when he approached the question of authority in which he departed from catholic theology."

Mr. Chacko's name is included in a list of twenty-one university graduates all leading laymen who re-united soon after 1930.

Having given much thought and prayer to the matter the Abbot became convinced that to be able to sway the bishops and their congregations he too must have episcopal rank. Hence he let it be known that he was now prepared to accept the bishopric which before he had refused. The bishops of the Matran party accepted the proposal. He also suggested reviving the Catholicate which had lapsed on the death of the first Catholicos soon after the departure of Abdulmessiah in 1913. He then went quietly on adding to the number of Bethany churches and organising the services along Catholic lines. In this he was ably seconded by Father Jacob. The prospective Catholicos loved him and the Synod gave him a free hand.

The new year of 1925 dawned for him full of hope. He is 42, and save for occasional passing twinges of rheumatism he is in excellent health. The little Jacobite church of Tirumoola a few furlongs from his Convent of Tiruvalla is to be the scene of the ceremony preparatory to episcopal elevation: there he will be made a Remban, a Bishop-elect. Punctually the clerical contingent arrives—bishops, deacons and inferior clergy all quite familiar with their respective parts in the pious drama about to be enacted.

There is a small hitch: the Remban elect warns them beforehand that he will not anathematise—as provided for in the Jacobite ritual—the conveners of the Council of Chalcedon one of the names being that of Pope St. Leo. A hurried consultation follows: the officiating bishops agree to omit the offending passage and the rite proceeds smoothly to the end.

A few weeks later in the important church of Niranam, the Remban

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

of Tirumoola was consecrated by three bishops, before a crowded and delighted congregation. He took the name of Ivan because he had always had a tender devotion to "John the youngest and best beloved of Jesus and who loved Him to the end" he told his listeners. The new Catholicos had been inducted the previous day taking the title Baselios I. To him Mar Ivanios solemnly makes a vow of obedience, for Mar Baselios has made no secret of his disposition to re-unite.

In the afternoon a great concourse of persons belonging to both parties gathered to hear the new bishop. On that occasion he boldly and publicly urges re-union, in "that one Church, under one Shepherd." He reminds the two parties that before the unhappy break of Coonan Cross the Syrians were one in faith and worship under the authority of the Pope. He disclaims responsibility for the establishment of the Catholicate and says that as early as 1904, whilst he was still a student, tentative efforts were being made towards that end.

That discourse like the seed in the parable was to bring forth fruit in season.

The Synod elects him to membership, and before long we find him influencing if not dominating their Councils. In the Autumn of 1925 he was instructed to write to the Catholic Patriarch of Antioch at Beyrout, suggesting the possibility of effecting a re-union. The knowledge that the liturgy of the Catholic Patriarchate of Antioch was West Syrian may have decided his addressing the document to Beyrout.

Months went by in a discouraging if not a disconcerting silence, but that may be because of the Metropolitan Mar Dionysius of Kottayam. In 1924 he had gone to Mardin to try to be reconciled with the Jacobite Patriarch. He was unsuccessful, and on his way back had repulsed an offer from Beyrout to re-unite with the Antiochene Catholics.

The puzzling silence continuing, Mr. E.J. John the advocate, counselled direct correspondence with Rome, so Mar Ivanios on behalf of the Synod wrote to the Sacred Congregation, November, 1926, a memorandum with the caption: "What is wanted."

The want is specified under two main headings:

1. The entry of the Jacobite Church into the unity of the Catholic

PLANNING FOR RE-UNION

Church.

2. Conserving the jurisdiction of the uniting bishops with their own flocks. He specifies two conditions, namely (1) Reunion on the basis of recognition of the Jacobite rites and rituals, and (2) recognition of the validity of the Bishops' Orders and Consecration.

On page 3 of the memorandum he hastens to free his community from an anticipated charge of heresy, so long associated with the very word Jacobite in ecclesiastical history:

"They are not Eutychians," he declares, "for they believe in the full and perfect Divinity and the full and perfect Humanity of Our Lord united in the one person of the Son of God." Then he adds a revealing statement:

"If after Rome has done her part to enable re-union being effected, the Holy Synod were to refuse to enter into the unity of the Catholic Church *one at least of the bishops will make his submission to the Pope.*"

(*italics mine*).

During 1926 the Abun had sponsored re-union discussions though informally—in the Old Seminary, Kottayam. His theological arguments made a deep impression on two of the deacons, one a nephew of Mar Joseph Pulikottil whom we have so often met in these pages, the other a nephew of Mar Dionysius IV (Cheppad) who had successfully opposed the planned proselytism of the Protestant missionaries in 1838-40. Proof of their interest lies in the fact that both joined the re-union movement in the early thirties—though each of them was a Ramben or Bishop elect at the time².

Their Father next put up the possibility of re-union to the little band of Sisters in Tiruvalla and finding no dissentients he decided to dismiss tactfully the devoted Anglican nuns who during seven peaceful years had guided them. He wrote a long and touching letter to Mother Edith telling her of the step he is resolved to take and begging her not to become estranged from him on that account. He concludes: "This is not a separation, we shall be much closer for the future in the bond of His holy love."

As no acknowledgement of Memorandum I had reached the Synod before the New Year of 1927, Mar Ivanios wrote a personal letter to the secretary of the Sacred Congregation emphasising the points raised in

that communication.

Now this was the first time that the Roman office had heard of Mar Ivanios. The Cardinal Secretary quickly contacted Mr. Watts, the Dewan (Prime Minister) of Travancore, a Catholic, asking "Who is Mar Ivanios?"

Like the docile son of Holy Church which he undoubtedly was³, the obliging statesman stumbled and struggled up the steep slopes of Dwarf Mountain to learn the answer. Admitted to the Asram compound he found the Bishop Abun helping the Brothers with their work in the farmyard.

After a lengthy interview Mr. Watts sent in a favourable report. Thereupon a non-committal acknowledgement of the Memorandum was issued. It expressed a few pious sentiments but promised nothing.

Mar Ivanios however in spite of any misgivings that the might have felt, continued by means of the good offices of Father Ribeiro of Mavelikara to keep up diplomatic exchanges in secret with the zealous Bishop Benziger of Quilon and through his kindness again with the fortnight and discerning Apostolic Delegate in Bangalore, the late Edward Cardinal Mooney. He even managed to secure an occasional secret interview with both prelates. At this delicate stage of his negotiations he came and went by night, fearing the effect of premature knowledge of his purpose on certain unprepared congregations.

* * * * *

The unresponsiveness of Rome, its hesitancy to meet the advances of a Jacobite Bishop is easily understood. Anyone reading Mr. Archibald King's account of the re-union and subsequent relapse of prelates and groups in Mesopotamia during the nineteenth century can sympathise with the temporising of the Sacred Congregation. Take for example Abdulla⁴, the cause of all the agitation in Malabar: he had been a candidate for the Patriarchate in 1895, but the Sultan rejected him. Then he turned "Papist," says Mosul, and was appointed to the Catholic Bishopric of Homs which he ruled until the year 1906. But when he heard that the Sultan had deposed Abdulmessiah and that another Patriarch was to be elected he apostatised and came hurrying back to offer himself for the post. This time as may be seen he was successful.

In Malabar, too, there had been many abortive attempts at re-union during the previous century—one especially in the nineties which for a

PLANNING FOR RE-UNION

time gave promise of success.

Mr. Daragh, a rich merchant of Aleppy, the Jacobite Bisop Mar Joseph Pulikottil, and a Catholic priest Father Nidiri, planned to run an educational establishment at which Catholic and Jacobite youth should attend, the staff to consist of Jacobite priests and Syrian Carmelite Fathers from the Monastery of Mannanam, Kottayam.

A spacious plot was purchased on which stood a bungalow. This was added to and soon all was in readiness, Mr. Daragh providing the necessary initial finance. The school was called the Manorama School. The founders hoped by this system of co-education to break down sectarian prejudices and thus by degrees bring the two Syrian sections together once more.

Pupils crowded in: so did the Masters, —Orthodox Syrian priests and the Syrian Carmelites. There was no dearth of pupils, though there were criticisms: it was said that the teachers on each side were trying to impress their religious views on their pupils of the other side. Soon it was whispered that “the Pope did not like it.” he liked it less when it was found that the married Jacobite clergy had introduced their wives into the domestic quarters—and so the vowed celibates finding “peaceful co-existence impossible” under their circumstances retreated hastily—and left the spoils to the Jacobites. The purchase had been made in the *joint* names of Catholic and Jacobite. The Jacobites alone administer the property now.

A letter written to a Spanish Carmelite, Bishop Bernard of Jesus, 2nd June 1931 by Mar Ivanios not quite one year after his re-union, has an interesting comment on this school—

“Your Excellency,

“It has been extremely good of Your Excellency to have written to me as you did.

“From the year 1900 onwards I lived at Kottayam. During the long and most useful years that Your Excellency spent at Kottayam praying and labouring for the Glory of God and his Holy Church, I was a silent admirer. I remember also some of Your Excellency’s colleagues, and even in those remote times admired not only the zealous workers in the Lord’s Vineyard, but admired the vineyard also. And my admiration

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

grew into love, and Your Excellency now finds me in the Catholic Church, the youngest and humblest of the prelates in the communion of ...the Vicar of Christ upon earth...Mar Dionysius Joseph whom Your Excellency met in Travancore died in 1910, and was succeeded by Mar Dionysius Gevarghese who till then was principal of Mar Dionysius Seminary High School (the Manorama School) and professor of Syriac at the Old Seminary, Kottayam.

"I remember something of the correspondence and the consultations that took place in order to bring back the schismatics into the true Church.

"Mar Dionysius (Joseph) favoured it, but somehow it fell through..."

His next comment is striking—"There was one element in the negotiations which deserved the failure of the whole scheme: Re-union was proposed chiefly as a social move —something that would bring together the two sections of the Syrians—the Catholic and the Schismatic. Though we are no better than those great souls that thought, desired and prayed for re-union in the past, the good Lord has inspired in us the true motive, the purely religious ideal—the glory of God and the unity of Christendom under its chief Shepherd..."

So another re-union effort failed—at the end of the nineteenth century!

Such facts could not escape the deliberations of the Roman Congregation.

Bethany at this juncture was independent, not alone of those lay associations which controlled Jacobite Churches; it was also independent of the Metropolitan's jurisdiction, and all the far flung Bethany Churches established by the Bethany Fathers were ruled and guided from Perunad by their Abun who is now the Bishop of Bethany. Here then ready made is all the material for a separate autonomous ecclesiastical province which could be effected by making the Bishop of Bethany a Metropolitan with Father Jacob raised to the episcopate as his suffragan. What could not their joint authority accomplish towards re-union seeing that the congregations around those areas had already been formed on Catholic lines.

Two additional Bishops would also be desirable to deal with the increasing numbers of the faithful: the dioceses must be re-organised. Everything would then be made smooth for a mass re-union.

PLANNING FOR RE-UNION

The Catholicos and the Synod agreed with his proposals, as the sequel shows; but it is clear also from a letter written to Beyrout in November 1928. The Catholic Patriarch, by the way, had long broken his silence towards Malabar. He had supplied Mar Ivanios with books and manuscripts and also with the Vatican edition of the Antiochene liturgy.

The letter to Beyrout dated 28th November, 1928, states: "We have elected several candidates for the high priestly order and we are looking forward to consecrating them in the near future." Three weeks later (17/12/28) the friendly Catholicos unexpectedly breathed his last and life turned topsy turvy for Mar Ivanios.

NOTES

1. Mr. Varghese told the present writer in 1957 that it was Newman's *Development of Doctrine* which provided the last straw that broke the back of his resistance to re-union.
2. Rev. Remban Joseph Pulikottil died rather young—but Very Rev. Remban Philipose Chappad still lives in the Archbishop's House, Pattom—Trivandrum—and actively assists His Grace Mar Gregorious. He also directs and edits a magazine there.
3. His sister, Miss E. Watts, is still (1957) living in Trivandrum—a gracious and charming elderly lady, who for a time conducted lessons in the Palace school-room.
4. From a MS. account preserved in the Archives of the Archbishop's House, Trivandrum.

Chapter Ten

THE TIDE TURNS

IMMEDIATELY after the obsequies of Mar Baselios, the Synod proceeded to elect his successor, and thereafter to carry out the programme previously decreed: On February 15th, 1929 Mar Ivanios became the Metropolitan of Bethany and Father Jacob was raised to the episcopate taking the title Mar Theophilos, Bishop of Tiruvalla, suffragan to the Metropolitan.

Mar Ivanios had eagerly anticipated his new dignity because of all he hoped to accomplish thereby. The realisation was very different. At the summit of his ecclesiastical preferment the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune fall thick upon him: His Grace of Kottayam. Mar Dionysius Vattasseril, spurns him; the Synod ostracises him; the crowds who once acclaimed him on Dwarf Mountain, rejoicing if they might so much as manage to kiss the hem of his garment, now hoot and booh at sight of him. Children whom his hands had blessed, are encouraged by their parents to throw stones after him—not so as to hurt, but just to show their contempt. Worst of all in the cloisters of Bethany there is no longer peace, but strife and dissension. The Father whom as a deacon in Serampore, Mar Ivanios loved and trusted most is now trying to undermine the Abun's influence, shaking the Asram's confidence in his leadership and opposing the project of re-union by every means in his power.

Mar Ivanios had gone to the Old Seminary, Kottayam, hoping for a few weeks' rest from his anxieties, but an urgent message from the new Master of Novices, Father Job, begged him to return forthwith to the monastery to restore morale amongst the brethren.

THE TIDE TURNS

He came only find himself assailed by the full blast of Synodal hostility as well as exposed to a variety of vexations and petty persecutions such as he had never counted on. And all that time not an encouraging word from Rome—not a hint of welcome, nothing but a few generalities.

Then Msgr. Edward Mooney, knowing the sincerity and single mindedness of the Bishop of Bethany, most generously set out for Rome to bring to the Sacred Congregation a personal assurance of the Jacobite Bishop's integrity.

Writing to a friend in America June 9th, 1950, Mar Ivanios tells him: "My sufferings were greatest between the date of my announcing my intention of submitting to the Holy Father (and that at a time when I had no assurances of any kind from the Holy See about my reception) and the actual date of my reception. This period of four years was one of keenest suffering."

The four years were from 1926-1930.

To add to his embarrassments during those anxious days of 1929 one of the Asram Fathers literally ran away—at 3 o'clock in the morning but it was into re-union that he ran. Across high-ways and by-ways risking cobras and tigers he ran all the way to Quilon begging to be received into the Church. After the usual formalities which included a letter from his Abun, this was done.

We may state here that Mar Ivanios received this Father back to the congregation after corporate re-union had been effected. On His Grace's deathbed he took a tender farewell of this fugitive son of his. The Father could not speak of it without tears.

"Why did you not wait for the others?" we asked laughingly. He turned his burning Southern eyes upon us: "Attwater's books convinced me of the truth," he replied "and I dared not remain in dissidence one day longer."

The inimical acts of the Synod and the changed attitude of the laity were directly attributable to the bias displayed by His Grace of Kottayam. It must be stated here that whilst the Trust lawsuits were still proceeding, the Synod had agreed not to inform Mar Dionysius of their dispositions towards re-union nor of the document (Mem. I) in which these were expressed to the Sacred Congregation in Rome.¹

But the final judgement of the Courts pronounced in 1928 had confirmed the Metropolitan in the enjoyment of all the Trust funds until his death (which took place in 1934).

His position assured, his Bishops need not any longer remain silent. When Mar Ivanios told him what was afoot his first reaction was fear of the material consequences². "Union with Rome might mean losing our properties and residences" he said.

Mar Ivanios reminded him that death would deprive them of ownership in the end. "Why not part with these things now?" But Mar Dionysius could not face it. The ageing Metropolitan made one more affectionate appeal to the younger man: "Do not go any further with this in my life-time, I could not bear it."

The other pointed out that life was uncertain and that he himself might be called to eternity first.

That conversation marked the end of their mutual amity. No; friendship is an unsuitable word to use, of the sentiment that previously had bound them to each other. In the India of yesterday a pupil's sense of devotion and reverence towards his Guru³ was such that when parting from him he would prostrate and kiss his feet. "My beloved Master" only faintly expressed the feeling which Mar Ivanios from early youth had felt for his Malpan, his Metropolitan in whose cause he had risked life itself during the Patriarchal quarrels and agitations of 1910-12

Yet Mar Ivanios, faithful to his convictions, doggedly withstands him and accuses him of stirring up priests and laity against him: (Translation) Bethany 18/3/29.

"I have received Your Grace's letter.... I am not prepared to abandon my ideals.... It is due to what Your Grace has spoken about myself and the Bethany Fathers both in public and in private during the past few months that we have become victims of the people's contempt and hatred—hence we do not get even the handful of rice, as formerly.... Even if I must suffer I cannot give up the guidance of God."

During May 1929, writing to a friend: "Mar Theophilos and I are undergoing persecutions of various kinds, but it only serves to strengthen us in our conviction."

Mar Dionysius next tries to assert authority over Bethany and the

Bethany Churches. He is opposed by Mar Ivanios who declares Bethany and all its churches to be independent (under him their Metropolitan).

The breach between the two Metropolitans is widening. They met once again and it is clear that the interview was subsequent to the sundering of their happy relations.⁴

The meeting took place outside the compound of the Little House near Tiruvalla. Mar Dionysius arrived by car. Mar Ivanios stood awaiting him. Having talked animatedly for a time it was clear that Mar Dionysius was growing angry. He made one last appeal by speaking gesture. The reply was evidently a refusal. Mar Dionysius turned suddenly to his chauffeur: "Drive on," he called loudly, "we only waste time here."

His man started the ignition.

Mar Dionysius was about to put his foot on the running-board. Mar Ivanios tried to fling his arms about him but Mar Dionysius only shrugged and by a quick movement spurned the affectionate embrace. Settled down amid the cushions he may have said something bitter or scornful for as the car whirled ahead, the onlookers saw Mar Ivanios stumbling about on the roadway shaken by sobs, arms groping before him like a sightless man. His friends took him gently and led him to the Jacobite church nearby—the same where four years previously he had received the Remban's cowl. There he remained in prayer until his emotion had died down.

* * * * *

Let us here follow progressively the relations between the two Metropolitans after the re-union of Mar Ivanios until the death of Mar Dionysius 1934.

January 30, 1931 Mar Dionysius writes Mar Ivanios a brief note asking him to surrender the Managership of a number of Jacobite schools to which he had been appointed in 1924.

Mar Ivanios expressed willingness to relinquish the Managership in the case of certain schools. He offers to carry on correspondence until the matter can be adjusted.

The letter seems to have angered Mar Dionysius for in a disdainful reply he is coldly sarcastic and accuses Mar Ivanios of "Jesuitical craftiness"—of having acted on the principle that the end justifies the

means.⁵ He then orders Mar Ivanios to address him for the future only through his Advocate.

Once again indeed the two did meet, though one of them was unconscious of the faithful heart that beat so close to his. It was in 1934 when Mar Dionysius lay in the coma of death. Archbishop Mar Ivanios having miles through midnight darkness to the Old Seminary, Kottayam

Arrived there he went softly to the room of the dying, to the old familiar room redolent of youthful memories; that room where he had so often sought his beloved Malpan, begged his blessing, confessed his sins and parting, kissed His Grace's feet.

To-night estranged, he lies in the embrace of death watched only by his nephew V.A. Varghese not then a Catholic, seated on the floor. The nephew did not speak. Mar Ivanios threw himself on his knees beside the couch and remained thus for hours in silent prayer and unavailing tears for his friend whom he had lost unreconciled. Mar Dionysius had gone into the house of his eternity.

* * * *

On August 5th, 1929, there arrived from Rome an important document which Monsignor Mooney despatched without delay to Bethany. It expressed a cautious willingness to concede the main propositions enumerated in Memorandum I, excepting only that of the retention of the office of Catholicos: "The question of hierarchical government must follow Catholic lines." Mar Ivanios is grieved. He hoped as he tells us in various letters to bring in all the Metran party; therefore much would depend on the Catholicos. He withholds the document from his former confrères but they must have heard of it through Intelligence sources so they redoubled their efforts to get a grasp of the Bethany Church properties. To this end they propose to put them all under the control of a lay association. How can Mar Ivanios agree?:-

"Not democracy in Church Government but authority" he had cried out during the disedifying disturbances of the original Patriarchal split. "Not democracy, but authority," he repeats now, in resisting the surrender of Bethany to a lay association—the Jacobie Association. Experience and far-sightedness gave weight to his decision. Time has justified him, as we see from a little booklet written in Malayalam by Rev. Professor T.V.

THE TIDE TURNS

John, M.A., of Alwaye College who reunited (from the Patriarch's party) March 17th, 1957: "The Bishop who is supposed to be the head has nothing to say to the government of the parish. The Bishop can give orders only with the consent of the committee; the priests are only paid officers to say Mass."⁶

Mar Ivanios to a priest friend at this period: "I am subject to all sorts of difficulties and criticisms unjustly, without charity.... the senior Bishop continues his reproaches."

He also continued tenaciously his efforts to subvert the Bethany constitution; and His Grace Mar Dionysius seems to be denying that he promised to Mar Ivanios in 1925 that "Bethany should always be kept as an independent establishment."

The hierarchical divisions and oppositions too of the Malabar Jacobite⁷ Church had their repercussions in his own case. His logical mind was irritated by the inconsistencies of the situation. There was Mar Dionysius, who though still officially excommunicated, was recognised by the Courts, but not recognised by the Patriarch. And there was he, the Metropolitan of Bethany, with all the machinery for the erection of a separate Bethany Province at his disposal but lacking the official directive authority that could set it up. The departed Catholicos could have arranged for its independent status because he Mar Ivanios had taken a vow of obedience to him his immediate spiritual Superior who would have gone with him into re-union. He had not vowed obedience to the successor of Mar Basilios because of the latter's disposition to remain in dissidence.

Here was the old difficulty confronting him once more, the need of a supreme unifying authority in ecclesiastical government: "I feel the need of living under authority," he exclaims to the ever-faithful Advocate E. J. John asking him to arrange a meeting between himself, Mar Theophilos and the three leaders of the Jacobite (Orthodox Syrian) Church of Malabar, some time early in the new year of 1930.

Meantime the Delegate Apostolic reproaches him for having suppressed the reply from Rome: Bangalore, October 11th, 1929.

"My Lord,

... Having seriously pondered the points which you desire me to

bring to the attention of the Holy See, I feel that it is my duty to say to you with brotherly frankness, which should characterise our dealings, that I find myself in a most embarrassing position in being asked to do this without being able at the same time to assure the Holy See that its maturely-considered reply to the Memorandum of 1926 has been submitted to the consideration of all the Bishops on whose behalf the Memorandum was presented. This circumstance in itself would I fear hamper us appreciably in further correspondence with Rome on the subject.... I cannot bring myself to think that any Bishop whose heart is right on the supreme spiritual issues at stake will allow his decision to be determined by a consideration which does not touch the substance of the question involved..... In any case to defer consideration of that important document would prolong a period of possible harmful uncertainty and if I may say so, might well expose Your Lordship and myself to not unjustifiable criticism on the part of the Bishops from whom it is withheld....”

The reply:- “As soon as I read Your Excellency’s letter dated 11th October 1929.... I communicated confidentially the Papal statement of August 5th 1929 to the Bishops concerned.... I will communicate their answers in due course....”

Their final answer was a sharply-worded Interdict restraining the Bethany Bishops from building any future Bethany Churches or extending further mission stations, or engaging in any similar activity, under the usual sanctions.

That Interdict quickly followed the meeting arranged by Mr.E.J. John at Kundara, February 28th. At that meeting Mar Ivanios had made one last plea for re-union: “If we continue in this undecided state it will spell ruin for our hopes of spiritual growth.”

They address their comments through Mr. John, to whom Mar Ivanios responds.

“Your letter indicates that the real difference between their Lordships, the signatories to the letters of Interdict and the Bethany Bishops, is the question of re-union with the Catholic Church.”

The Senior Bishop had been threatening a lawsuit for some considerable time, and Mar Ivanios in humble and dutiful terms reminds him of what their Church has already suffered from lawsuits. He will not

drag these contentions into the public Courts, he says, The Synod saved him the trouble of urging further protests by informing him that the Jacobite Association had now been authorised to take legal action towards asserting control over the Bethany Churches.

The reply of Mar Ivanios to this announcement is worthy of him. Addressing the Senior Bishop directly he writes: (Translation)– “Your Excellency is both my father and my teacher. From the very beginning I have loved and served you faithfully with sincerity and charity. I do not wish to keep the Bethany property under me by conducting a lawsuit in which Your Excellency and myself would be the two parties. Therefore with full willingness I have given up the Bethany estate at Perunad and am going to live in a rented house at Venniculam,.... I have no intention of cheating anyone. I have used money from my own pocket to advance religious work.

“To carry on correspondence and find out if there is a possibility of joining the Roman Catholic Church without sacrificing our cardinal principles and faith, or our West Syrian rite is my duty now.... I shall write to Your Excellency later on.” The date translated reads: 19-8-30⁸

He did write later—a brief message for the Synod, evidently the same evening on which his longer letter had been sent– “We are leaving everything and are going away to live in a rented house. I request Your Lordship’s blessings and love.”

Yes, he and Mar Theophilos and eighteen members of the O.I.C. Congregation went out next day from Bethany Asram Perunad. They never entered its doors again.

The manner of their going will be related in another chapter.

NOTES

1. How hopelessly would the Metran’s suit have been compromised if the other side could say that he was engaged in correspondence with Rome!
2. The substance of above statements was given by Mar Ivanios himself to an Italian Journalist and was published in *Osservatore Romano*, March 1951.
3. Professor.

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

4. Two eye-witnesses at the interview gave me the account which I cannot omit from this chapter since it provides for the reader a small sample of the immense suffering endured by Mar Ivanios in the pursuance of his God-guided vocation.
5. A false principle erroneously attributed to Jesuits. Father Roh, S.J. in 1852 publicly offered 1,000 guineas to anyone who in the judgment of the Law faculty of Heidelberg University would prove that any Jesuit ever taught this doctrine or an equivalent. The money never was claimed.
6. Translation from original
7. Re-named The Orthodox Syrian Church after the initiation of the Trust Lawsuits.
8. The translation of dates from Malayalam is always a little confusing. The month usually presents no difficulty but the date of the month carries some uncertainty—it is said.

Chapter Eleven

PERUNAD FORSAKEN

On the morning of the 20th August, 1930, feast of the Transfiguration (Julian Calendar) a strange procession might be seen wending its way down the mountain slopes of Perunad. Metropolitan, suffragan, eighteen saffron-robed monks and a straggle of orphans at the rear, walk slowly, with bent heads. Their eyes are downcast. They are “forsaking”¹ Bethany, the home which had sheltered them for even faithful years.

“I thought it the most Christian thing to do” said Mar Ivanios. His community meekly following, must have thought so too. The orphans to be sure were not concerned with the ethics of the departure. They had been told a few days previously that two Fathers and three Brothers were remaining. “Will you come with us or would you rather stay here.” The choice was put up to each. Only two elected to be left behind. The others, about a dozen, followed the only father they had ever known.

Each man carries a small bundle; it contains one change of apparel and the material for one meal—not a very sustaining meal just some rice and pickles.

“Where are we going?” someone asked.

“God will provide.” was the confident reply.

Where were they going indeed? They were making history these earnest men. They were pioneers of a great mass re-union movement that has never since ceased to count its thousands annually.²

But the glory of his leadership was hidden from Mar Ivanios that day and for many a day under mists of pain. “Anguish” is his own word for it: “My feeling of anguish is much greater than yours” he assures

Mar Theophilos who is mildly voicing some anxieties and uncertainties during this period.

Indeed “anguish” might have properly designated the state of mind of each member of the Bethany Asram before the final resolve that resulted in their exodus. What they suffered in tearing up their roots for conscience sake, only those can measure who in like manner find themselves torn in two under the compulsion of some fateful decision.

Came night to the divided community. Even up to the last moment the Father who had so long opposed the policy of re-union tried to shake the others. He took them to his room and put what he considered some weighty arguments before them, but they remained unmoved—all except one. He was a young deacon and the refractory Father was a family friend.

The deacon was worried: where did duty lie? He had recourse to prayer. Mar Ivanios who loved this lamb of the flock best of all, prayed with him in the Chapel. Not a word was exchanged: they knelt far apart. Hours passed, Midnight struck. The young deacon arose from his prostration and approaching his Superior sobbed out his determination to go with him into re-union.

Joy filled the Abun’s heart at the glad words. Benoni he might have called this youngest son of his—Benoni the child of his pain, so greatly had he agonised over the uncertainty of bringing him forth to Holy Church.

Dawn finds the Asram still sleepless, so after the Qurbana by the Master of Novices the faithful band ventured out into the unknown. They wandered on and on, faces turned towards the River. Three boats awaited them. They got in, pushed out into the stream and reached Ranni about 4 p.m. having disposed of their rice and pickle ration at noon. At 6 o’clock they reached Vennikulam and a day-school of which Mar Ivanios was Manager. The Janitor who was also a Catechist, soon arrived. He hustled the neighbours and secured a quantity of rice. After a frugal supper all gladly sought rest on the bare floor—Bishops, brethren and orphans side by side.

Next morning a Jacobite gentleman. Mr. Kutty visited them and kindly invited them to his house. He left them the full use of it, he and his family moving temporarily to another domicile not far off. Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos then repaired to Tiruvalla. The others began the

construction of a new Asram in Venniculam—on a small property given by or perhaps only rented from a kindly Hindu gentleman.⁴

From Tiruvalla Mar Ivanios writes to his ever-loved Maman Mapillay: “I came away from the Bethany Hill in the pursuit of an ideal. The Asram came with me. I am confident that the good God will guide me step by step.... The cause of the regeneration and uplift of the community which gave birth to me has been my great motive—to win it to God. It was not any base motive that actuated me. I believe in the re-union of Christendom on the basis of historical Christianity. There cannot be re-union of this kind if Rome is left out—I feel that God is calling me to plunge into the ocean of his love. In all my correspondence with Rome I aimed only at the continuity of the Catholicate and the re-union of the whole Metran Party.”

A short time before leaving Perunad, Mar Ivanios called a meeting at which he gave over the Bethany properties to the custodianship of a Board of Trustees. “I want to do this thing honourably and above board,” he said. “I am not going to give Bethany to the Roman Church”—for rumour had been rife about his intention to do so. To pay the domestic debts that had accumulated as a result of the falling away of former contributions, he sold a portion of land, his own personal property. Therefore he left without a stain on his honour, though this did not prevent the most scandalous accusations being thrown at him in public and in private subsequent to his re-union.

The news about Bethany Asram had gone far and wide. Sympathisers and the merely curious hastened to Tiruvalla to call on Mar Ivanios. They found him a prey to a certain amount of natural anxiety concerning the course of events but full of confidence in his mission nevertheless. He never faltered in his conviction that he was following a divine call. No, the final word had not yet been spoken by Rome, but God would provide.

He had still an opportunity to recant, and thereby to recover Bethany and all that he had surrendered of property and place and power. Yes, He knew that but he must follow his ideal—the regeneration and uplift of the community that gave him birth. He must graft that community again onto the Vine from which it had been torn so long ago.

“By the Malankara re-union,” he said elsewhere, “at least one ravaged

limb shall be restored to the tree that Christ has planted.”

At that period Mar Ivanios suffered actual want, for the people of Tiruvalla who had formerly been generous in their upkeep of the Jacobite Convent, now withdrew their support. Rice was scarce and curries were a luxury. But fasting did not worry him. He was inured to fasting; the Sisters sent from their scanty supplies, some portions of boiled rice a few times each day. They too were anxious, but no one weakened.

Where was Mar Theophilos? A young Franciscan Brother wished to see him. Not being able to follow clearly the directions given by Mar Ivanios, Brother Elias and his companion wandered along the street looking for the address. Some boys and youths seeing the Franciscan cincture began to booh and yaah after them. The Franciscan Superior asked them where did Mar Theophilos live? For answer they redoubled their jeering: “Ask the Pope!” they cried, “or go to Rome and they will tell you.”

A Hindu gentleman came out from his house and courtesously gave them the information they required.

Whilst he was still in the Little House a messenger from the Catholicos called. He seems to have been urging Mar Ivanios to give up his “scandalous” project. In this he met with no success, for when two liberal-minded Jacobite friends entered immediately after the visitor’s departure, they found the Bethany Bishop in tears who told them between his sobs: “I cannot abandon my ideal! I cannot abandon my ideal!”

* * * * *

Now it happened that the very morning⁵ which witnessed the departure from Bethany witnessed also in Bangalore the arrival of a document from Rome giving express authorisation for the reception into the Catholic Church of Mar Ivanios and of those who might wish to follow him into re-union. The Rev. Secretary in the Nunciature lost no time in translating the Latin document and posting it off to Mar Ivanios. Bishop Benziger was named to perform the ceremony, and though Quilon was fifty miles away, and letters and documents had still to be exchanged, all concerned felt that their long wait was ended.

Deacon John was ordained; Benoni still too young for Holy Orders, must pray and study awhile longer; Mar Theophilos forgot his former

PERUNAD FORSAKEN

anxieties, and a layman, a nephew of Mar Ivanios made the fifth in a group that was preparing in Tiruvalla for immediate re-union. The group was with full advertence so arranged as to be representative! It consisted of Metropolitan, Suffragan, priest, deacon and layman, sureties and guarantors, as it were, of the whole Jacobite body.

But the Synod intervenes with an angry letter: the Senior Bishop has been told that two Rembans from the Old Seminary, Kottayam, have gone to join the Bethany Asram in Venniculam.

The Synod threatens excommunication if these two Rembans are not expelled from the Venniculam Bethany and sent back to their proper Seminary without delay.

Mar Ivanios replies:

“I have never advised them to disobey you, but I am grieved that you ask me to expel them. They are nephews of two Jacobite Bishops. I humbly request that you write to them direct and summon them to you to settle the matter...”

They settled the matter by re-uniting, and the Synod knew them no more.

The departure from Perunad was regarded in Jacobite circles as the final act in the betrayal of the Malankara-Jacobite Church. A letter of Judge Philipose about this time—nearly a year before his own re-union—gives us some glimpses of the feelings aroused. The letter is to a Jacobite priest—

“Mar Ivanios did not begin this as a personal or private movement for himself. He corresponded (with Rome) on behalf of the whole Church, but the ignorance and prejudices of our people towards the Catholic Church, blinded them and they began to hoot and to abuse him.

“Mar Ivanios is not creating a new sect by re-uniting with the Catholic Church. In fact he is extending the Universal Church at the expense of a sect.... There must be one infallible Church which teaches true doctrine, and this must be a visible Church. The Church is the continuation of the Incarnation. The Incarnation was a visible phenomenon. The true Church must also be a visible Church for then only can it afford guidance to mankind.

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

“There is no Anglo-Catholic Church. There is the Church of England established by Law.... One Church means one faith. Can that be said to be true of the sect known as Anglo-Catholics—or for that matter of the Church of England? Parliament is the supreme authority of the Church of England in religious matters. It consists of atheists, agnostics and non-Christian.... The Anglican Bishops though practically unanimous were not able to revise the Prayer-book as the Parliament stood against them. One went home in tears from the Assembly....

“Ever since the validity of their Orders has been denied by the Pope they are moving heaven and earth to get their Orders recognised by the Eastern Churches at least.... The Anglican position is hopeless.... Almost every month some notable Anglo-Catholic joins the Catholic Church.... By recognising the Pope as the infallible and universal teacher, the Catholic Church is kept free from heresy and schism and unity is assured.”

At 4.30 a.m. on the morning of the 19th September, 1930 the five aspirants for re-union left Tiruvalla by car. They reached Quilon three hours later.

At Quilon Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos were received with all the honours accorded to Catholic Bishops. The party rested in prayer that day, Friday. The Bishops made it a day of Retreat. They all observed a strict fast.

At 4 p.m. on Saturday the Bishops of Kottayam and Changanacherry arrived and they with Bishop Benziger and the Bishop-elect of Kottar received the Jacobite Bishops' profession of faith. Later, Father John, Benoni (Deacon Seraphion) and Mr. Jacob were admitted to full communion with Catholic Life.

“What did it feel like to find yourself a Catholic?” we asked one of the three, quite recently.

“I experienced a great calm” he replied gravely, “a great calm after much mental struggle.”

Next morning Mar Ivanios offered his first Mass as a Catholic Bishop. It is his forty-eighth birthday and by the Julian Calendar the Feast of Our Lady's Nativity.

* * * * *

PERUNAD FORSAKEN

His little mother in Mavelikera kept his birthday also. He had been instructing his aged parents and they were prepared for the momentous step their son had taken.

That Sunday was a busy day for Mar Ivanios; he first received all in Venniculam Asram into Holy Church. It was then he hurried to Mavelikera to receive his parents and his foster-mother returning to Tiruvalla shortly before midnight. He admitted the Sisters to re-union on the Monday morning.

News of Mar Ivanios' submission to Pope Pius XI was flashed around the world "It created a sensation," the journalists said. Soon he was besieged by newspaper representatives, reporters, article-writers.

"What led you to the Church of Rome?" In some form or other that question was asked by one and all of his interrogators: Mar Ivanios' answer never varied:

"Rome is the centre of Divine authority and of Catholic unity. Something essential was missing in the Jacobite Church. What that something was I could not find out. I searched and looked for it everywhere. I asked the advice of our theologians and ecclesiastical authorities. I had many sleepless nights and prayed fervently to God for the necessary light. Then suddenly it became clear to me what that something was which we lacked. It was the Unity of the Church which according to the Divine Will is centralised in the Papacy of Rome."

NOTES

1. The word is used by Mar Ivanios in his letter to Mr. Maman Mapillay quoted below.
2. The numbers of the re-united continue to run steadily from 5,000 to 6,000 a year. The total to 1958 is 122,000. I have seen the figures. Add to this the Schools, Colleges, Asrams, Convents, Churches and Mission Stations that existed in both dioceses at his death and that go on increasing annually to date.
3. Mr. Kutty's wife is still living and received me hospitably when I called to interview her in 1957. His house name is Kanjirathumoottil
4. Varikkanmamala Narayana Vaidyan (New addition)
5. 20th August 1930 according to T. Inchackalody (*op. cit*, P. 433) (New Addition)

Chapter Twelve

THE SACRED PALLIUM

As soon as the re-union of Mar Ivanios became a *fait-accompli* the whole non-Catholic community around him were thrown into a state of excitement. Father Ribeiro of Mavelikera writes to the Bishop of Quilon: "Your Lordship will be interested to hear that there is a widespread commotion in this neighbourhood since the reception of Mar Ivanios. Protestants, Marthomites and Jacobites have joined hands to form a coalition.... It has however stirred up a sense of inquiry amongst many, and not a few have been here to clear doubts...."

A deputation hastened to Mosul to bring over to Malabar the Patriarch Moran Mar Ignatius Elias,¹ that he might add his personal influence and the prestige of his office to the anti-re-union league. He came in hurried response to that invitation, spent a strenuous few weeks in Travancore, but died from blood-pressure² (1931) before he had an opportunity of accomplishing anything towards his purpose. But Mar Ivanios had not been indifferent to his coming: on the 19th January, 1931, he addressed to this visiting Patriarch a letter of three printed pages. The main paragraphs we give below—

"There are two schisms which Your Beatitude can heal by a single act. The first of these is primarily concerned with your own people in Syria and Turkey. It is the great schism which took place in the East in the middle of the fifth century when the followers of Eutyches and Dioscorus disobeyed the Universal Church and repudiated the Pope and the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon. Though the Jacobites anathematised Eutyches later and in principle adopted the Chalcedonian definition of the

THE SACRED PALLIUM

Catholic faith, the schism has continued to this day....

“The second is that confined to the Christians of St. Thomas in Malabar. (Here is recounted the unhappy secession at Coonan Cross).... The schismatics later on accepted the supremacy of the Jacobite Patriarch and thus nominally became Jacobites....

“Your Beatitude is aware that I spent all my life for the service and spiritual amelioration of the Jacobite Church. Later the Holy Spirit most wonderfully taught me that true charity was impossible of attainment in a schismatic body and that those who resist the Will of God and obstinately continue in schism and heresy deserve eternal damnation.”

The Patriarch did not reply.

Many of those who once loved Mar Ivanios now “went away” and walked with him no more.

Writing to a friend soon after his reconciliation he says: “You can realise how deeply I feel for those who still remain outside the Catholic Church and are consequently deprived of the great blessing and spiritual consolation that is the birthright of the true Children of God. My anguish is all the greater in that some of those dear ones whom I love so much in Our Lord have turned out enemies not only of me but also of the True Church of Christ.”

Nevertheless 1931 brought him literally thousands of followers. The Spirit breathed upon the right of heart, dispelled their ignorance and triumphed over their prejudices. Thirty-six priests with from 50% to 80% of their congregations were re-united during that year. Other parishes kept petitioning to be received, and only the want of funds and material needs postponed the procedure of their re-union. Here are some excerpts from a quaint petition which he received during that year from the townland of Thevalakara. It represented a total of 700 Jacobite families (counting an average of five to a family 3,500 persons). The English is delightful.... “Immediately after Your Grace made your submission to the Lord Pope several of your humble petitioners desired to follow you into the Catholic Church but met with serious opposition from fanatical Jacobites and could not transform themselves into catholics on account of the absence of a place of worship in their village³....” They add too that 50 families of non-Christian have been instructed and are awaiting Baptism.

The Petition mentions fanatical Jacobites: so does Mar Ivanios: "The fanatical Jacobites give us endless trouble; yet the good Lord protects us."

Two examples of this must suffice here. They occurred in May, 1931. Certain persons, it is said, from whose social standing better might have been expected instigated the rougher element to malicious action.

They knew that Mar Ivanios was to attend a certain function on a certain day and moreover that he would arrive by car (his own car) along a particular road.

The mob had provided itself with the usual black flags and a goodly supply of small stones besides. Piling these at hand they ambushed just around a curve whence they intended to rush on the car as it approached, and stage a hold-up. They aimed to put the motor out of action; then to scoff and jeer at the predicament of this "Great Romanist" who had betrayed them.

Their ears not their eyes were being requisitioned. Mar Ivanios was noted for his punctuality: the expected moment arrives, so does the buzz of an oncoming car. The signal for attack is given. They snatch up their flags and a scrabble of stones and with loud yells hurl themselves upon the car. The chauffeur to avoid them comes to a standstill.

A helmeted uniformed figure steps out unhindered—for the crowd has recognised him. He is the Assistant Superintendent of Police for the whole Protectorate⁴, an officer of exalted position, an official whom it was most undesirable to come up against. He demands explanations, the rowdies scatter in a grand disorder. Another car thunders up. Mar Ivanios greets his friend the A.S.P. Statements are laughingly exchanged. The A.S.P. just happened to be going that way at that particular time. Call it Providence or coincidence which you will. It is well attested.⁵

The other incident had a tragic ending.

Mar Ivanios had been asked to dinner in the Palace of Mavelikera. An angry crowd gathered around the main entrance to the demesne at the expected hour. The bitterness of local hostility may be gauged from the sinister nature of the "welcome" they had prepared for their once-loved Achen. They were rehearsing a mock funeral for him. One man made himself conspicuous by leading a group carrying an open coffin in which

THE SACRED PALLIUM

reposed a life-size effigy of Mar Ivanios.

“Mar Ivanios is dead! We must coffin and bury him” they groaned; and they dug a hole ready to receive the coffined image in the very presence of their victim—for they intended to surround him and hold him till the close of their realistic drama.

A swift runner sent secretly by Sri Thoma Paniker had intercepted the car at a safe distance. Warned in time Mar Ivanios ordered his driver to enter the palace grounds by some private way of which he was cognisant (he knew all the entrances from boyhood).

Time passed: the mob feeling that he had escaped them grew restive and ill-tempered. General recriminations were indulged in, and oh, horror! the very man who had originated the idea of the effigy was fatally stabbed during the fracas. He died within minutes.

Servants of the palace quickly conveyed the news to the Prince. His guest of honour was overwhelmed with grief. These were his people; he knew them all personally. With scarce an apology to his royal host Mar Ivanios rushed to the house of the widow—to *comfort her*.

The effect of all this ill-feeling on the sensitive little mother at home brought on a serious indisposition which alarmed her family and her doctor. But Mar Ivanios cannot be located; and that for a very good reason. His enemies foiled so often in their efforts to insult and humiliate him have filed a charge calculated to shake public confidence in him and so halt perhaps the general movement towards re-union.

They trumped up⁶ a charge of grave misallocation of funds, and though under British law Bishops might be excused from attending a civil suit no such exemption was permitted in the case of a criminal accusation.

Mar Ivanios learns that the summons to Court has been issued. He knows the law: that document must be handed to him personally. Once cited to Court he could not leave the country until the tedious processes of law had taken their course, and his engagements were all of the first importance. Already six of the leading universities of Europe had invited him to lecture in their halls. His Holiness Pope Pius XI had sent him a message of “welcome,” and the organisers of Dublin’s Eucharistic Congress had arranged with the Jesuit Fathers in Gardiner Street, to

provide for the full ceremonial of the West Syrian rite which he hoped to conduct there.

No: he would not have his plans overturned, nor give his enemies such a signal triumph.

“Victory or Death was the war-cry of his ancestors,” says one who knew his people. “They cared not to live defeated. The same spirit was in this their twentieth century descendant: he would not—could not—contemplate defeat.”

* * * *

The novices in the monastery of Vennikulam are awaiting the ceremony called Clothing. No one is hurrying because it is yet a full week to the date arranged.

The Asram is in darkness; all are asleep, it is past midnight. Mar Ivanios drives up and explains hurriedly to the Superior that he is on his way to Europe and is anxious to perform the ceremony of Clothing because his sojourn in the West may be protracted.

The Superior protested that the recently-dyed habits were still dripping wet.

Mar Ivanios is sympathetic but insistent. Bells were rung; the Fathers assembled, and the half-awake youths each after precise ritual of course received a sopping wet robe with as good a grace as might be. Fortunately the climate made a cool garment quite desirable.

The Archbishop was off again for Kottayam, then Ernakulam where he would find a boat for Bombay. All went well until he reached the outskirts of Kottayam where those on the look out for him might easily be expected. The car at the very edge of the town sputtered to a deadstop. Mar Ivanios dared not appear lest he be recognised. Rt. Rev. A. Choolaparambil’s house was not far off, would the driver take a message? The driver would and did. Whilst he was away Mar Ivanios lay as if asleep, his head covered by wraps and rugs. Fateful moments! A car slides to a halt; it is his driver in Bishop Choolaparambil’s car. Abandoning the other they pursue the long road to Ernakulam; the Qurbona and a hasty breakfast with his dear friend Archbishop Mar Augustine Kandathal—then safety in a boat that goes chugging northwards beyond reach of Travancore’s legal jurisdiction.

But Anna Paniker had died. The telegram was handed to him in Bombay.

Filled with grief for the mother who had gone without his presence or his blessings to solace her, he turned with a heavy heart to the steamer that was to bear him to his destination.

* * * *

Rome! The Vatican! The Major Domo announces Mar Ivanios. Pius XI greets him with words of welcome. Mar Ivanios, kneeling at his feet exclaims: "I come to Your Holiness as the prodigal returned to his father's house." "No, no, but as a most dear brother," the Pope replied. The date was May 11th, 1932.

On four successive days Mar Ivanios was admitted to private audience. It was during the fourth audience that he received a shock: the Pope greeted him kindly as usual, then looking quizzically at him said: "I've had a basketful of mail about you—all unfavourable!"

Mar Ivanios burst into tears: would his enemies not leave him in peace even here?

Seeing his emotion, His Holiness soothed him. "My son" he said, "you will find good news awaiting you on your return to India."

Soon afterwards Pius XI with his own hands conferred on Mar Ivanios the Sacred Pallium—despite those baskets of mail! By that conferring the re-united Metropolitan of Bethany became the Catholic Archbishop of Trivandrum—Trivandrum where his personal friend the Maharajah Rama Varma held his court, being named as the Archiepiscopal See.

Mar Ivniios did not realise perhaps that in asking for Trivandrum as his See he had failed in tact—or at least had shown a want of *savoir faire*. The Latin Carmelites had been labouring in the Southern Peninsula for hundreds of years, and the city of Trivandrum in 1932 paid eloquent tribute to the missionary success of their modern representatives, in the imposing church, monastery, convents and High Schools—not to mention hospitals founded by them—which graced the city streets and environs.

The writer of Archbishop Benziger's Life under the title: *A Man of God* makes no secret at all of the holy Carmelite's displeasure when he came to know that Mar Ivanios had chosen Trivandrum as the seat of his

Archdiocese. The author tells us—

“Msgr. Benziger had already planned a new division of his diocese and had desired that Trivandrum should become the seat of the new diocese he had in mind.”

The saintly Bishop Benziger had retired at this stage, and was spending his declining years in St. Joseph’s Carmelite Monastery, Trivandrum. Naturally he was grieved—like the elder son in the parable when the father, taking *his* fidelity for granted, gives the best that his house can offer to the one who had wandered away.

The position was fraught with pain for both; for by the irony of fate it was Bishop Benziger who was appointed to preside nearly a year later at the ceremonial of the enthronement of Mar Ivanios as Archbishop of Trivandrum.

Obediently and serenely he performs the duties required of him; nevertheless Mar Ivanios’ rejoicements were a little damped by hearing Bishop Benziger give expression in the pulpit to the Carmelites’ disappointment. “In erecting this Archiepiscopal and Metropolitan See in Trivandrum” he said, “His Holiness seems to have been conscious that some elder children who were not consulted might feel tempted to complain of preference”

But we are anticipating: Mar Ivanios is still in Rome. The date of the Eucharistic Congress is drawing near, so taking leave of the Roman prelates, he hurries to Dublin.

During his stay in Dublin, Mar Ivanios was the guest of the Jesuit Fathers in Rathfarnham Castle. It was owing to the generous co-operation of these Fathers that the Syro-Malankarese Archbishop was enabled to offer publicly the solemn Qurbana in all its impressive ceremonial. They had provided beforehand the built-up screens and other paraphernalia which transformed the Latin sanctuary of their Gardiner St. Church into a place of Eastern worship for the occasion. They had also with the adaptability which distinguishes them, supplied a supporting choir throughout the long Antiochene Rite, so that members who formed part of the congregations that day and to whom we have spoken recently, still remember that Qurbana rather wistfully. “If only it did not take such time!” they sigh. But in the East time is not the slave-driver which the

West finds it. Mar Ivanios always looked back with especial appreciation of the liberal spirit shown by the Jesuit Community in Dublin, who arranged for a demonstration of that ancient Rite at a period when but little interest was being manifested in the West for the Rites of Eastern Christendom.

It was in Dublin he met Mr. G.K. Chesterton.

Below are extracts from Mr. Chesterton's own inimitable description of that meeting:

"....The dignified Indian gentleman who represented this triumph (re-union) in the Orient, had changed his neighbours by bringing them back to the Roman communion; but he had changed in nothing else. By the look of him he might have walked that moment out of any Hindu temple covered with bulbous imagery, or any Persian mosque scrawled with a fantastic script. He wore a sort of tall turban for a mitre: his keen and vigilant face looked browner behind his grey luxuriant beard; his vestments were of a cut and pattern new to all the Western world....

... I wondered if it were Prester John after all.

At that point Prester John disturbed my dream by suddenly coming up to me and saying in excellent English that he had read some articles of mine in a newspaper. I soon discovered that his conversion of the Jacobites had been a highly-intellectual and even modern process, a part of a quite lively contemporary controversy now going on all over the world, and in spite of his reading the newspapers—even my articles in the newspapers, he was exceedingly well-read. I felt a certain vague confusion, and I still feel that I never thanked this distinguished prelate adequately for his remarkable courtesy and kindness, but there is something disproportionate in finding one's own trivial trade, or tricks of the trade, amid the far-reaching revelation of such a trysting-place of all the tribes of men.

... But this priest from the land of sunrise... was so magnanimous as to ask me to be photographed with him on the steps of the Vice-regal lodge.... I had a vague idea that I might be acting as a sort of mascot... but as I bowed myself away from his only too gracious conversation I admit I had another disturbing thought. I remembered that in Asia the presence of a half-wit or lunatic is regarded as lucky, or a protection against the evil powers. And though I cannot suppose a Catholic bishop,

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

especially so intellectual a bishop, to be subject to superstitions, the doubt did recur to me afterwards from time to time."

NOTES

1. This Patriarch was also a lapsed Catholic (from his early years); the official account of his life may be read in the Archiepiscopal archives, Trivandrum.
2. Mr. V.A. Varghese remembers the medical evidence.
3. The Indian word which in English is translated "village" does not connote a mere cluster of homes as in the West. It may include miles of country occupied by good-class dwellings, but under local head men.
4. Travancore was then a British Protectorate.
5. We met in Trivandrum one day in October 1957, a white-haired police official of important rank, who remembers similar incidents of those days.
6. Proof of the trumped up nature of the charge is found in the fact that after Mar Ivanios' return from Europe six months later, neither charge nor summons was ever mentioned.
7. In 1937 the Carmelite Bishopric of Trivandrum was established.
The Bishopric is of the Latin Rite—the Archbishopric is that of the Syro-Malankaraese Rite.

Chapter Thirteen

GIANT STRIDES

It took eight years for the tide of bitter feeling in Mavelikara to have ebbed away.

This is apparent from a letter of Mar Ivanios to the Right Rev. Jerome Fernandez, Bishop of Quilon. The date is December 16th, 1938, a few days after the death of Sri Thoma Paniker of Mavelikara. Mar Ivanios thanked the Bishop for his kind message of condolence.

“For some months past my father was not keeping well. When I heard last week that his condition was becoming serious, I hastened to him and was with him to the last moment.... Though I am losing him at the God-blest age of 98 it is indeed a loss that can never be compensated.

As your Lordship may very well know in the many storms I have had to weather since my re-union with Holy Church it was my father who always stood by my side to strengthen and encourage me. And what a joy it was for me to have received my father and mother soon after my joining the Catholic Church.... All these are memories that evoke in me mixed feelings of joy and gratitude....”

He then tells of softened feelings amongst his neighbours. “There was a happy feature about his burial and other functions: for some time past the animosities and prejudices of the Jacobites and other schismatics have been dying out, and I was glad to note that prominent Jacobite priests and laymen came along to offer their last respects to my father, and their condolences to me. They cordially participated in the functions. This is something unprecedented and augurs well of the change of their attitude towards the Re-union Movement.”

* * *

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

Those eight years spent in efforts to consolidate his Archdiocese were characterised by alternations of joys and griefs, oppositions and triumphs, failures and successes. That was inevitable, but the gigantic efforts of Mar Ivanios to provide the material needs of the re-united and would-be re-united christianities within his jurisdiction, were hampered all through by the anti-Christian policy of those in power.

It happened that at that particular period Travancore was being run by a Hindu junta who, alarmed at the rapidly-increasing percentage of Christians in the State, passed rigid laws aimed at checking their further growth and influence in Travancore: harsh land laws were made retrospective so as to dispossess Christian families who had improved and extended them; Hindu missions were encouraged and inducements to renounce Christianity held out to those who had gone over; conditions for the provision of churches, schools and cemeteries for Christians were such as would make government's permission practically unobtainable.

Notwithstanding the discouraging position Mar Ivanios went ahead confidently.

* * * *

When he had come back from Europe in October, 1932 he found that the canons required his enthronement "in a church of his See," meaning a church permanently dedicated to public worship. He had no such church and even if the laws did not forbid it how could he erect such a building before the appointed date, March 12th, 1933—not quite six months away? Yet the canons must be observed if he were to be validly enthroned.

He prayed: his Bethany Fathers prayed: re-united flocks all over the country prayed. Time was passing, and even the Right Rev. Nuncio began to feel worried. Then one day the Pompadour Picture House put up Bills of Sale. it was closing down. Mar Ivanios promptly bought it. A nod from His Highness to the Secretariat concerned and the necessary permit was issued. An army of workmen were employed on the reconstruction, yet it was actually midnight on March 11th before the requisite transformation was completed and the new church blessed and adorned in preparation for the grand ceremonial which took place next day when a crowded congregation of Latins, Syrians and Hindu Ministers of State declared Mar Ivanios "worthy" of enthronement as Archbishop of

GIANT STRIDES

Trivandrum.

The Pompadour Picture House has long lost its identity in the blue and cream loveliness of the Archiepiscopal pro-Cathedral, where the reunited priest Rev. Fr. V.T. Thomas from whom we have sometimes quoted in these chapters, lives and presides.

His Grace had bought some semi-derelict lands at Pattom a suburb of Trivandrum city. Fast upon the acquisition came the Surveyors of Undeveloped Property to ask some awkward questions. He told them that the area he had acquired belonged to the Pope who was the actual owner and they would have to deal directly with Rome in case of objections to its proposed development. They went away somewhat puzzled and did not repeat their visit to Pattom.

Over against Pattom and almost matching with it extended the Chettiar property—170 acres. It too was quite undeveloped.

It is described by one who remembers it at that time¹ as a wilderness where the skeletons of unburied corpses lay in lonely caverns and where the dreaded cobra lurked in stony dens.

Mar Ivanios bought the Chettiar otherwise the Nalamchira wilderness and later still another 38 acres adjoining. But how to fend off the unwelcome interference of the Surveyors? He knows that possession is nine points of the law and proceeds to live on the estate: "The completing of the purchase of the Nalamchira property was for the purpose of putting up an Archbishop's House," he hastens to inform Government, "and also a College for the sanction of which I have already applied. I have now changed my residence to the Nalamchira property."

Let us hasten to inform the reader that the "residence" he spoke of was a one-roomed hut 20' x 12' situated just inside the main entrance to the estate skirting the public road. Sometimes he spent the night there also: he would make dispossession difficult. He would hold his property against all comers.

In the end His Highness confirmed him in his proprietorial rights, and the Surveyors menaced him no further.

* * * *

It will be remembered that in the early thirties the Jacobite Metropolitan Mar Dionysius Vattasseril had demanded the surrender of

his managership of a number of Jacobite lower schools to which he had been appointed in 1924. The Courts gave judgement in favour of Mar Ivanios; but where he could not hold the managership peaceably he surrendered it, and erected alternative premises nearby for all who cared to come, but for the most part he added and improved schools under his care. One High School he named after *Pope Pius XI*. That was in the parish of Kattanam where Fr. Samuel with most of his parishioners had re-united even whilst the persecution of the fanatics was at its height. Sometimes he bought the schools from owners who could no longer run them. In three such cases the Government department refused him the Managership. He did not mind. He used the buildings surreptitiously as churches and meeting places for the instruction of all interested in re-union. Nothing stopped, nothing discouraged him. He bought a disused factory in Puttencavu, Chengannoor, and raised a dainty artistic church within reach of it. To-day St. Anne's is one of the leading High Schools in Kerala State.

His expenses were enormous: every additional congregation reunited meant additional schools, churches, burial-grounds, also the maintenance of re-uniting priests and their families. The financial position was in itself a daily-recurring anxiety. He was obliged to apply again and again to the treasury of the Propagation of the Faith, since no haphazard total from voluntary contributions would have sufficed. Because of his frequent appeals to Rome for the requisite funds he was criticized adversely: "He made us ashamed" they said, "by his constant begging from the Pope."

But what was he to do? We have seen some of the petitions that reached him. Could he say to those asking souls: "I have no money, I cannot receive you," since his duty bound him to receive them? A man of vision he was planning too for the future. His schools of all grades, and the University College that he hoped to build, would constitute spheres of Catholic influence in years to come staffed as they should be by Syrian priests and Bethany Sisters.

The doubters shook their heads, but unheeding he pushed on with giant strides. "Yours is a gigantic task," a group of students said in one of their addresses when he visited them; "but it is plain that God has sent a giant to accomplish it."

GIANT STRIDES

There was one feature that distinguished the High Schools of Mar Ivanios from similar establishments which preceded his. Latourette² points it out:

“Hitherto,” he says, “the Roman Catholics had directed their higher education.... towards the preparation of priests and catechists....” Mar Ivanios would (and did) bring the blessings of higher education to all within reach of it, without distinction of caste or creed. It was this breadth of view which appealed to the Dewan, militant Hindu though he was, and caused him to give permits for High-schools to Mar Ivanios whilst so often refusing permits for churches. The cultural education of young India was one of his own ideals; he was chancellor of the University of Travancore. But Christian churches! That was different. “I will give permits to build houses” he told Mar Ivanios. “I will not give permits to build churches.”

“Then,” cried Mar Ivanios eagerly, “please give me permits to build houses for God.”

Often indeed it was to his own importunity that Mar Ivanios owed the success of his many applications. The present writer talked with a retired Government official who remembers the incident here related:—

Mar Ivanios had applied seven times consecutively for a certain permit, and each time had been refused. When the eighth application reached the Chief he turned with a gesture of exasperation to my informant.

“Oh, give him the permit! Give him the permit!” he cried. “There is no other way to deal with his persistence.”

Yet every step forward that he took was dogged by contentious enemies. Once they thought they were sure of victory. He had built a small church at Kallooppa on a plot of ground that had been given him in 1928, before his re-union.

Now the local lay association challenges his right to the property. He is cited to Court.

“Do not go,” begged his friends, “send an advocate to plead in your stead.”

“I will go” he declared, “and I will win; if this case goes against us, or goes by default, we shall not be able to hold any of our post-re-union

properties.”

He prepared his own defence which covered forty foolscap pages. He won “hands down” as the saying is, and so clever was his plea, so potent his arguments that every magistrate on the bench that day as well as advocates and others, asked for a copy of the defence. This was provided as soon as could be managed.

In those days Mar Ivanios had from four to six secretaries employed. He could dictate to three or four easily, and if interrupted by being called to the parlour could resume the thread of his discourse to each as though it had remained unbroken.

But he had no tolerance for any who might deceive him. He was easily flattered as might be expected from one whose experience of men had been for the most part cribbed, cabined and confined within the walls of a class-room or the cloisters of a monastery. Mar Ivanios never knew what it was to mix with an average crowd. During the early years of re-union he took men’s words and actions at their face value, but once undeceived he dropped the self-seekers and those whom he found untrustworthy, nor did he ever take them back to his good graces, nor ever resume social relations with them any more. He cut them off completely from contact with him ever after.³ His sympathies, however, were always with the under-dog and he opened the doors of his house generously to many a passing fugitive from real or imaginary oppression.

During the thirties Mar Theophilos too had worked wonders in the suffragan diocese—the work of chief interest being the erection of a house for a few Syrian Carmelites. When Mar Ivanios sent a group of his Bethany Fathers to help with mission stations, Mar Theophilos united them with his Carmelite religious so as to form one autonomous community. Frail and gentle that he was, the immense labour of organising a new diocese against difficulties of all sorts proved too much for him and in 1938 he had a serious breakdown, so serious indeed that he was unable to resume office.

This posed a problem for the Archbishop. A re-united or reconciled Bishop-in-Charge was indispensable for Tiruvalla, where Jacobites of good will had grown timid in view of the prejudices of their co-religionists. And just when he was needed, Providence provided the right man at the right moment in the person of Mar Severios. The story of the re-union of

GIANT STRIDES

Mar Severios is dramatic and will bear telling.

Mar Severios, when a deacon in Serampore, was the one chosen by Professor Paniker to inflict on him the penance of the discipline. This deacon did not join the Bethany Fathers. He took Holy Orders in the Jacobite Church. Years went by; honours and ecclesiastical dignities came his way. They made him Bishop of Niranam, the most important of their Sees. He however felt doubts of conscience and did not know what to do. An intolerant anti-re-union spirit animated his people.

...He dare not consult them. Flight was the only solution. Driven one evening to make a practical decision he did not retire, but spent the night-hours secretly packing. At dawn he started South. Some servants were on the alert. Why the sudden departure? they asked one another.

The disorder of his room betrayed him. An angry cluster of elders piled into a car and followed him. Some say that three cars followed him. He was racing towards Cape Comorin where he knew Mar Ivanios was staying. His car left the others far behind; it may be that their petrol-supply ran out. (There were few petrol stations established in rural districts then.) By the time he reached the Archbishop's bungalow his pursuers had given up the chase. Soon Mar Ivanios clasped him in a paternal embrace.

Yet for fear of police action he hurried his protégé to safety beyond the borders of Travancore territory.

In 1938 Mar Severios was appointed to Tiruvalla. He proved himself a fervent Catholic, a wise director and an enlightened and successful organiser of re-union activities. He died suddenly in 1955, not quite two years after the passing of Mar Ivanios.

From 1935 popular dislike had come to be concentrated on the Dewan, leader of those Hindu law-makers referred to above. He made no secret of his policy towards Christians.

It was in 1938⁴ during an interview with Mr. Sen, editor of the Hindustan Standard, Calcutta, that he said:

"I am a Hindu firmly entrenched in the Hindu faith; I believe in militant Hinduism. My mission in Travancore is to crush Christian influence and position in the State." Besides the other harsh measures already named with which he was associated he implemented his words

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

by arbitrarily closing a Bank supported by the Christian community, by suppressing Christian newspapers and finally by serving gagging notices on Christians who might be expected to give their views fearlessly at public meetings.

Yet it was precisely on this rising tide of the Dewan's active hostility to Christianity that Mar Ivanios startled Travancore by planning a brilliant reception in his honour! Locally they called it an At Home.

NOTES

1. Rev. N.A. Thomas, a former Principal of the Mar Ivanios College, on the occasion of the unveiling of the Archbishop's portrait, 1954
2. Kenneth Scott Latourette, Professor of Missions and Oriental History in Yale University, commenting on the Mar Ivanios High Schools in his *Expansion of Christianity in India* (under Travancore).
3. All the above-stated details and many others were told me by the typist-secretary whom he first employed and who remained in his service many years.
4. By some oversight my notes do not carry the *date of issue of the Standard* which published the interview; but during the schools' agitation of 1946 and subsequently in published Memoranda, in recorded speeches, in memorials to His Highness, the interview is named and quoted from. Anyone interested can easily look up the files of the *Hindustan Standard* for 1938: the task should not prove difficult.

Chapter Fourteen

LIGHT AND SHADE

Puzzled by this unpredictable action we asked the Bishop who during that year (1939) was Rev. Secretary to Mar Ivanios:

“Why did he take such an extraordinary step?” The Bishop answered without a moment’s hesitation: “His love of peace. He hoped by such a flattering function to bring about a better feeling between the parties.”

The 16th November, 1939 marked the Dewan’s sixtieth birthday—known as the *Shashtyabdapoorthi*. Amongst Hindus an incredible fuss is made of a man’s sixtieth birthday. On that day congratulations, gifts, honours and addresses pour in upon him.

Mar Ivanios had one particular address in mind—that from the St. Thomas Christians (for all branches of the Syrian Church had agreed to be represented). Knowing that the Hindu political advisers to the government had come to regard Christianity as a religion foreign to Indian soil, Mar Ivanios would have them realise that the indigenous Christian Church of India had for its remote ancestors Brahmin nobles of the same high caste as those who to-day afflicted them.

Knowing his motives the Bishops and Archbishops of Malabar generously assisted him. The function was not alone flattering; it was unique in its magnificence and shows us Mar Ivanios revelling in the Asiatic splendour he had created. We quote from the Souvenir Volume.

“The At Home given by His Grace Mar Ivanios was attended by the prelates, clergy and leading members of the community, high officials of the Government, members of the legislature and the élite of the whole State.

...The At Home was held in a spacious four-decked pavilion especially erected for the occasion on the crest of the hill within the premises of the Archbishop's House. Artistically designed in the shape of a Temple, the flag of the Royal House waved triumphantly from the top of the dome. Pictures of individual members of the Royal Family adorned the great hall at appropriate points. The pillars and sides were decorated with flowers and bunting, and floral chandeliers were suspended from the ceiling. The picture of His Holiness the Pope stood in a conspicuous position and a large picture of Our Lord planted on top of the big arch at the entrance stood in an attitude of benediction."

It had been raining up to noon that day and the roads were very muddy, but hundreds of labourers were rushed to the scene from the Home Palace. They brushed, swept, garnished and actually laid in place great sheets of zinc upon the surface, which enabled the sandalshod guests to arrive at the pavilion in spotless comfort. We take up the description again just to show what magnificence Mar Ivanios had planned. This time it seemed the details did not go wrong!

"The terraces of the hill were transformed overnight into a series of hanging gardens: crotons and flowers blossomed where but a few hours before there were only bald and arid slopes. The road from Pattom... to the pavilion, a distance of about a furlong, was lavishly decorated with tropical palms in their rich yield of green and yellow nuts, plantain trees with bunches of ripening fruits, and ferns of beautiful varieties. Banners and flags streamed in the air. Great arches welcoming and wishing long life to the guest of honour interspersed at short intervals the pathway strewn with white sand and fresh flowers. The whole route was resplendent with silver-fringed ceremonial silk umbrellas of various colours, the use of which is one of the traditional privileges conferred on Syrian Christians by the Maharajahs of the State in early times."

There follow here references to cheering crowds, fleets of motor cars, "welcomes" in Syriac and at length we see the chief guest conducted to the place of honour in the midst of the vast assembly. "About one thousand five hundred distinguished persons were present at the At Home."

The Queen Mother's father Prince M.R.R.T. Kerala Varma Koil was there from the Palace of Mavelikara.

Early in the proceedings the Prince laid the foundation stone of a

High School from which Mar Ivanios expected great things. In these hopes the Dewan was sincerely sympathetic, as we have shown. The toasts and speeches exchanged on that grand occasion exemplify the insincerity of much public speaking. They followed the usual pattern—flattery which deceived no one, was heavily laid on. Forgotten for the nonce was the self-confessed attitude of the Dewan towards his Christian citizens.

Mar Ivanios speaks of tolerance and compliments him on having visited the Pope. He is reminded that “without Divine authority every guarantee of conscience is at an end, and that when the moral law fails peoples, families. States and civilization itself must perish....”

Mar Ivanios sits down, and the St. Thomas Christians present their address. That address was engraved on a plate of gold and mounted on an ebony casket with embossed carvings in ivory of the Basilica of St. Peter’s, of the Vatican, and of several scenes commemorating the entry of the Untouchables into the Temple of Trivandrum. as well as of certain social reforms intimately associated with the Dewan.¹

The Dewan’s reply to the Christians’ address was a model of mendacious assertion. He began with the most delicate flattery of his host. He goes on and on. The oration is brilliant.

“... You have spoken of the tolerance exhibited in this State. The State will be injuring itself if it discriminates between religion and religion or between community and community; its function is to hold the balance even between all communities and all religions. It is with that duty that His Highness has been charging successive administrations. This administrator will be failing in that trust if he betrays that command....

How his Brahmin listeners must have grinned into their goblets, and how the Christians’ voices must have faltered whilst they tried to cry “Hear ! Hear!” to his bland declarations!...”

At length the two Principals bowed to each other and the great assembly followed them to the exit doors, the Hidnu section full of sardonic admiration no doubt for their doughty leader.

The poor were fed sumptuously; the attendants gathered up the fragments and night and silence reigned.

* * * *

Subsequent to the At Home the personal relations between Mar

Ivanios and the chief Minister of State became those of easy mutual friendship. Mar Ivanios never hesitated to apply to the Dewan whenever the laws militated too heavily against his still struggling mission. Sometimes he met with success, sometimes not, but always he was treated to fair and flattering words.

“There is only one man whom I fear in the whole of Travancore” the Dewan is reported to have said, “and that man is Mar Ivanios.”

Nevertheless his friends in high places failed to hold for him a 2-acre plot in the city of Trivandrum and that failure was a source of keen disappointment to Mar Ivanios. He had bought 2 acres and 5 cents of land at Bakery Junction, adjoining the University Campus as a site for the Cathedral he hoped to build there. Unhesitatingly he paid the price demanded—Rs. 64,000/- (more than £ 2,500 per acre). In Trivandrum city proper, land averaged Rs. 300/- per cent in those years.

Before any practical steps could be taken to give effect to his cherished design, he found his scheme obstructed by the objections of the Town Planning Commission. He spent four years and used reams of paper in correspondence, obstinately refusing to surrender that plot for any consideration. Sometimes the Dewan in a personal interview would hold out hopes only to withdraw them again in a following letter. The Town Planners were determined to have that site to develop and extend the University Buildings. Mar Ivanios pleads: “This Church question is one of my extreme necessities. I have already sent plans and estimates to the Delegate Apostolic, and on my representation Rome has moved a good way on.”

The Dewan replies: “You will realise that it would not only be most embarrassing but would give rise to serious comment if after having allowed you to complete the Cathedral or even to begin it, it became necessary to suspend or cancel those operations in pursuance of the Town Planning Scheme.”

Mar Ivanios then writes directly to the Secretary suggesting an alternative scheme: could not a University block be made possible by having to itself an area of 500 or 600 acres in the near suburbs? He then loses himself in a vision of academic institutes which he sees being transferred, added to and developed in more spacious surroundings. “My

suggestion if accepted , will add to the beauty of the Capital and to its extension also.”

The astonished Secretary responds: “Your suggestion to abandon all the Colleges and institutions now situated in the City and to create an entirely new University Campus is inexpedient and impracticable for several reasons.”

He gives the reasons which must of course be evident to the thoughtful reader, and once again the exclusion of his 2 acres is refused him, so also is an exchange within the city boundary which he had proposed. Though disappointed he never weakens; if he cannot retain the precious compound he will not resign its ownership unless he receives every rupee that he has paid for it:

August 15th, 1946

“Most Rev. Sir,”

“I wish to inform you that it is with a view to avoid further discussion and correspondence as to acquisition, values, and so forth and with a view to give up all the very difficult attempts to acquire lands, that the Government agrees to pay you Rs. 64,000/- being the full value of the land at the Bakery Junction as stipulated by yourself.

All responsibilities for acquisition exchanges, and all previous proposals and negotiations on this matter automatically drop on the Government’s accepting your own offer and agreeing to pay the full value demanded by you. Government are therefore unable to accede to your request for acquisition of further lands at Pattom.”

The Pattom property to-day is covered by spacious and dignified buildings: St. Mary’s Press, the Archbishop’s House, priests’ residences and Oratory, a crowded High School, a parish Church, and conspicuous in the foreground to the right of the artistic entrance, the nearly-completed Cathedral of the Archdiocese in the crypt of which he who designed it awaits his resurrection.

In his final years, broken in health and leaning on his nephew’s arm, he often made the little excursion from his residence to the crypt which he knew was to be his last resting-place.

Deeply moved, his voice breaking with sobs, he would apostrophise the crypt calling it the little house of his rest.

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

“Oh little house of my rest! May I sleep in you in peace! May I awake in you to joy everlasting...!” His College too was rising from its foundations; and long before he closed his eyes in death the one-time wilderness of Chettiar had been transformed into the Bethany Hills estate on which had grown with mushroom speed his Asram, his Convent, a Franciscan Orphanage, a residence for priests and crowning the green-clad slopes the College which was his dream come true. From his eternity he looks on it to-day with its 2,000 students, its learned staff, its additional wings and extensions, especially its recently established wing, namely, the Mar Theophilos Teachers’ Training College, which already accommodates hundreds at a session.

The Training College was inaugurated in 1957 by Most Rev. Benedict Mar Gregorios the immediate successor of Mar Ivanios, the once lonely little novice of the Bethany Asram, Nalamchira.² Mar Gregorios, then Father Benedict (M.A.), who was the first principal of Mar Ivanios College. His Archbishop had already marked him for the succession.

He often said with a sigh of contentment to his faithful nephew: “I should be thankful to the Almighty God who has given me nearly all I asked for—my College, my High Schools and Seminaries, my two Congregations of men and women—and *Mar Gregorios to succeed me.*”

NOTES

1. The skill of Indian artificers has to be seen before it can be believed
2. See next Chapter.

Chapter Fifteen

DIFFICULT YEARS

The early forties discovered Mar Ivanios at odds with certain Bishops of long-established Sees and at loggerheads with members of his own Bethany Congregation. He is also the victim of uncharitable rumours: it was whispered that he was “playing the two sides” in the Schools’ troubles of those years. There was much political unrest at that time, and the clash of opposing agitations in the Travancore Protectorate, arising out of the prospect of Britain’s withdrawal from India, which every political group perceived now to be inevitable. That half-decade was the most difficult in all Mar Ivanios’ post-reunion experience. He came out of it strong and tenacious of purpose as ever, but somewhat weakened in health and surly, though not sour of disposition.

In the pursuit of his missionary ideals, his headlong zeal carried him over the well-defined boundaries of other Sees—but here it must be remembered that the missionary territory appointed to the Archdiocese ran from the Pampa river in the north to Cape Comorin in the south, and though established specifically for those re-united, or to be re-united, from dissidence, nevertheless the conversion of non Christians was not ruled out by the Papal mandate.¹ That was why in all good faith Mar Ivanios had come to form what comprised little parishes of the Syro-Malankarese Rite here and there in the Southern Peninsula. Into these communities he with his innate scorn of limitations received all who came—many non-Christian enquirers constituting the potentials of other rites and jurisdictions. Thus confusion and overlapping of administration arose, and much annoyance resulted.

The Delegate Apostolic (1944) gently remonstrates with him: his letter in reply explains much, and exacts our sympathetic understanding:—

“Your Excellency,

... I may state that my position in the Jacobite Church before my re-union will be clearly understood from the following facts and circumstances. In the Jacobite Church, I had parishes under me in the diocesan territories of nearly all the Jacobite Bishops of Malabar.”

Here he names the dioceses and their Bishops.

“Even outside Malabar I exercised jurisdiction where the other Jacobite Bishops had no jurisdiction at all.... It may be noted that I had not sought permission from any of the Jacobite Suffragan Bishops for founding these parishes and churches in their territories and for appointing priests in charge of them—they only acquiesced in my act, as I had my authority from Mar Dionysius.... My jurisdiction in the Jacobite Church was co-extensive with the whole province of Malabar and even beyond.”

The letter to the Apostolic Delegate from which we have just quoted contains a reference to the Bethany Congregation:—

“I sent to Tiruvalla a few Brothers after my re-union and allowed Mar Theophilos to build up the Congregation in his diocese. But the members of the Congregation did not accept this arrangement.

...They still claim that their Congregation is one and undivided.

...I should be very thankful if Your Excellency could suggest what would best achieve their progress with the maintenance of my rights....”

His rights: heredity and environment had each powerfully contributed to make him an autocrat. His military forebears, his close association with the Varmas; the intellectual and moral dominance which from his youth had imposed itself on his companions, his Malpans, his brother-Bishops in Council, bearing down all opposition and bending others to his will—not to speak of the popular convention in the East that a Bishop is invested with Royal—i.e. with absolute—authority—had left this man of fifty and odd years a believer in his unrestricted right of control.

The very concept of authority which he held, proved at once his weakness and his strength—his strength in treating with those placed over him, his weakness in dealing with inferiors. To Pope and King, Mar Ivanios

was all that St. Paul would have him to be; but in his relations with his own religious subjects he had neither guide nor experience to teach him how to limit or delegate, nor how not to transcend his own authority, as will be seen presently.

The Nalamchira brethren were individually involved: their Fathers in Tiruvalla enjoyed a measure of autonomy; but the circle in the Nalamchira Asram were directly dependent on the Archbishop even for daily domestic expenses. As it was not always possible to get in touch with him when needs were urgent, they suffered considerably at times.

Worst still, they had no Constitutions. They begged him for Constitutions if they were to survive as a religious Congregation. In 1941 he did draw up a bulky manuscript that he called Constitution, but it was quite inadequate. The noviceship could not function, for how could young men make vows in a society that promised no future? The Archbishop remained obstinate; the Novices left, the lay-brothers left also at the expiration of their term of vows. One lonely choir-novice remained on in the Asram, only dimly understanding the position, but hoping that sooner or later he would be admitted to vows. When he calculated that any day now he might hear the good news, he was abruptly told to go home. He did not go home; he joined the Bethany Asram in Tiruvalla, and when the storms had blown over, Mar Ivanios affectionately recalled him to the Archdiocese. He is to-day Most Rev. Benedict Mar Gregorios, Archbishop of Trivandrum.

With the expulsion, as one may call it, of their one and only novice, the faithful Fathers appealed in the last resort to the Delegate Apostolic. When that letter came to light Mar Ivanios' indignation was raised to white heat. He thought they were defying his authority, and he made them feel the weight of his anger. One who had served him longest, he banished—temporarily of course—to the most remote and most inhospitable because the most poverty-stricken mission station in his territory. From others he became estranged. Even years afterwards he could not forget that letter.

"Think of all I did for them," he cried petulantly. "All I did for these ungrateful ones and see how they turned against me!" Nothing would ever make him perceive the justification for their action.

But as all's well that ends well, we must tell of how Msgr. Auguste

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

Lombardi was sent as official Visitor in 1946. He unified the two houses and drew up tentative Constitutions which in 1953 were endorsed by Rome, since when, we may add, the O.I.C. Congregation has more than quadrupled its membership and bids fair to keep up that rate of increase indefinitely. Economic considerations only retard a more rapid growth.

Mar Ivanios accepted the official Constitution with grace; authority had acted; it was enough. Now the Nalamchira Asram was autonomous and a shrewd and kindly superior directed the Community. The following anecdote is given in the words of this Father exactly as he told it to the author—

Though Mar Ivanios theoretically allowed a Superior his right to rule, he failed to apply that principle in practice. The Father hurried to the Archbishop's house one day to protest firmly against His Grace's action in granting to one of the community some small boon or other which he, the Prior, had seen cause to deny. The subject member had appealed to the Archbishop when he found his request refused by the Superior.

The interview was stormy. Mar Ivanios was belligerent, the Prior insistent. "I cannot govern" he pointed out, "if Your Grace interposes to grant what I see good reason to deny."

Mar Ivanios argued that as he was the Archbishop he was entirely within his rights in exercising his higher authority.

Both raised their voices in assertion and counter-assertion. Mar Ivanios still angry, flung himself into an inner room but both continued the discussion through the closed door—His Grace never ceasing to maintain the privilege of his over-ruling authority.

"I must go then," finally declared the Bethany Superior. "I have packed my bag: I must leave the Asram."

"And where will you go?" demanded his irate questioner.

"Wherever I go" declared the other stoutly, "I shall fare better than to stay, if inferior members are allowed to flout my authority."

He went out whilst the inner door was still closed. It took him perhaps three minutes to reach the main gate. Before he could turn left or right a breathless messenger caught up with him: "His Grace wishes to see you,

please come.”

Although not sure what his reception would be like, the Father went back obediently.

Mar Ivanios met him with gently kindness, agreed that his own view had been wrong. “Now go,” he said, “and tell that troublesome one that I withdraw the permission granted.”

But the wise Superior soon convinced His Grace that it was he, the Archbishop, who must write and point out the proper behaviour towards those in authority which must be observed if peace and concord were to prevail.

Mar Ivanios then gave the Father his Blessing, and their friendship remained firm from that hour.

* * * *

Reflecting on and weighing the evidence collected at first hand, one gets the impression that only his Syrian confrères completely fraternised with Mar Ivanios. To the others he remained something of the stranger within the gates. His position amongst them was unique; he had free-and-easy access to the Home Palace, and subsequent to the birthday reception he seemed to become too friendly with the enemy of Christian progress in Travancore. There were head-shakes over his frequent visits to the Dewan. “Is he with us?” they asked one another. “Is he playing a double game?”

For now the Dewan had a new scheme; he proposed a government monopoly of primary education throughout the State. Only schools directly managed by Government and staffed by Government appointees were to be recognised as proper to receive an education grant. He had his own anti-Christian booklets² ready to thrust into the children’s hands and his own yes-men ready to carry out his policy to the full. Moreover, attendance at these schools was to be made compulsory.

The proposal aroused the opposition of Christian leaders in the State and of the Catholic Bishops of all India. The Bishops met in Malabar. That was at the beginning of 1943.

“Mar Ivanios dominated all our Councils,” one who was there said to me.

“But you must have voted him to the chair?” I suggested.

"No," my informant replied, "he just walked in and—well, there it was!"

Between January 1943 and April 1947 Mar Ivanios was deep in the business of drafting, revising, or censoring the Memorials and Memoranda that made several hundreds of published pages later on—embodying the protests, grievances, statements and arguments that put the position for all Christians. "The very basis of our memorial to the Maharajah is that the Dewan is against Christians. I have sketched in red ink an amendment which puts the position for *all Christians*. I should be included. Otherwise it is better that the draft without the amendment be not submitted at all...."

Mar Ivanios hated the communal spirit.

Space forbids any detailed account but here is pretty much the pattern of events:

Mar Ivanios having been deputed to call on the Dewan and present the Bishop's apprehensions concerning the schools' proposals would bring to the Council a glowing account of what the Dewan was prepared to do "out of consideration for the unshakable convictions of Catholics."

A day or two later an official Press Communiqué completely at variance with the assurances given by Mar Ivanios would appear in the Government organ, to the bewilderment of the Bishops in conference.

Again Mar Ivanios kept telling the Council that the Dewan was willing to receive the three Archbishops in private Conference. A date at length was fixed but when the three Archbishops delegate kept the appointment, there was with the Dewan, the chief Secretary and the Director of Public Instruction. Only some unimportant points were permitted to be discussed and the deputation took leave under a sense of failure and frustration.

Again doubts and whispers—Is he with us? Is he playing double game? Yet may we suggest an explanation? Mar Ivanios, let us say, talked optimistically during those visits of present and future developments in primary education. His host would naturally be polite and non-committal with his personal guest—this one and only man in Travancore of whom he "was afraid." So Mar Ivanios would go away thinking that the Dewan had agreed to all his own wishful peaking. It was probably as simple as that—but it was not so interpreted.

DIFFICULT YEARS

Or did the Dewan deliberately mislead him? Once, in January, 1944, the Dewan publicly pronounced in the Assembly: "I want to make it perfectly clear that this State at all events does not propose to act under totalitarian principles... we do not want that this measure should undermine the strength of the managements or annihilate the schools," Yet he changed his declared policy completely when the moment came to push the measure through—a strong indication surely that it was he and not Mar Ivanios who was "playing the double game."

At length rumours amounting to charges reached the ears of the Apostolic Nuncio: Mar Ivanios is shocked. He refutes each one convincingly.

Rumour 12 hurts most:—

"I have not communicated any views without the participation of the other Prelates. The idea of my having given 'help to the other side' is most repugnant and repulsive to me—words fail me to make adequate protest against these rumours.... I trust that in the light of the facts stated above Your Excellency will not fail to see the malice and the hollowness of such charges...."

The Dewan, as a matter of fact, rushed the measure through the Legislature *overnight*. He withdrew grant and recognition from managements that refused to come in. Then not two hundred yards from the schools of the non-conforming managers he raised Government Schools.

The attendance officers got busy, and then the discomfited Minister found that he had made serious miscalculations. He had neither sufficient class-space nor sufficient teachers to deal with the troops of startled little children driven in to those unaccustomed halls of learning under threat of the policemen's lathi.... The resultant muddle and indiscipline in the Government Schools was indescribable, but it can easily be imagined. Before the community-aided voluntary schools had been operating independently for less than two years the Dewan approached the Delegate Apostolic with suggestions for a settlement. An interim arrangement was finally arrived at and published in the New Year of 1947. But by 1947, such posts as Dewanship had been relegated to the limbo of forgotten things.

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

The British were about to withdraw and Mar Ivanios, asked the Papal Nuncio to have him invited to the Marian Congress in Canada.

Before he left, they made a wonderful cope for him to his own design; its texture like cloth of gold, its lining was rich and vivid and scarlet and gold tissue fell from his Eastern head-dress. Whilst reporters in Canada followed him about in wonder, his ecclesiastical habiliments caught the eye of an Orthodox Greek who hastened to make his acquaintance. As a final result of their correspondence the Russian priest and four of his companions were re-united—all eager to extend the blessings of re-union to their comrades in America.

But Mar Ivanios grieved for the one he had always called the King Emperor. He had loved George V as head of the Indian Empire, and when travelling through London asked to be presented to His Majesty. This was arranged for at a Garden party in Buckingham Palace, July 21st, 1932. Someone photographed the scene as he was being presented: he cherished that photo and had many copies of it made. It may still be seen in the Archiepiscopal archives of Trivandrum.

It was mid-April before the letter of invitation from Archbishop Vauchon of Ottawa reached Mar Ivanios. His first care was to collect from the Government in Trivandrum the Rs. 64,000/- which they agreed to pay him for the surrender of his 2 acres and 5 cents of land at Bakery Junction. With cash and passport secure, he arranged a passage by the Trans-world Air Service to New York on June 22nd arriving there on June 5th, later crossing over the border into Canada.

NOTES

1. "Non-Christians around the mission stations" is the actual wording of the text.
2. He published a book called *World Religions* and tried to have it put on as a school text. It was calculated to disparage Christ. He and his Hindu supporters made a pastime of holding meetings in which they made provocative speeches and carried on insulting propaganda against Christianity, Christian doctrine, and Christian ecclesiastics. Christian speakers who pointed out this abuse of the freedom of speech were promptly prosecuted—thus the Bishops' Memorial of 1946. (Copies preserved in the Archdiocesan archives.)

Chapter Sixteen

THE ANTIOCHENE RITE (A)

Whilst Mar Ivanios speeds on his air journey to the West, let us take that opportunity to become acquainted with the Syro-Malankarese Rite which he is to demonstrate in many cities of the U.S.A.

The tremendous importance attached to "Rite" in various Eastern christianities is the first thing that strikes a visitor from the unified Latin West. This devotion to their Rite seems to be especially true of the Syrian Jacobites. In an editorial reprinted from "Sign" Sept. 1932, the writer says: "The Jacobites are extremely attached to their own liturgy and rites to which they bring, besides a genuine religious fervour, a sort of hereditary national pride."

"The ancient Christian liturgies are works of art, the supreme works of art, manifestations of the religious, social and cultural life of the Christian communities over long centuries," writes Mr. Donald Attwater.

The Antiochene rite is celebrated according to the liturgy of St. James the Apostle, the cousin of Our Lord and the first Bishop of Jerusalem. Mar Ivanios offers us the history of his beloved rite:

"A very ancient tradition says that on the first Wednesday after Pentecost the Apostle St James, the brother¹ of Our Lord, celebrated the holy liturgy for the first time, the ritual having been decided on by the Apostles during the two preceding days. The skeleton of the liturgy as used in Jerusalem is preserved in the Malankara Rite. The Rite migrated from Jerusalem to Antioch where it developed, and thence to the Malankara². Christians of St. Thomas in India."

In the Antiochene liturgy of Malabar the words of Consecration are

spoken in Aramaic –the language in which Christ himself pronounced them at his last Supper. The main text follows a Malayalam translation supplied by British missionaries of the nineteenth century.

Father Hambye, S.J. ascribes as a positive acquisition to the Jacobite Church of Southern India by the Low Church missionaries the introduction of Malayalam into their liturgy.³

“It gave a living liturgy to the faithful,” he says, “and permitted the strongly-congregational worship as practised till our days by the Jacobites and the Syro-Malankarese Catholics.”

And Mr. Joseph Thaliath (Retired Chief Justice) Travancore: “I am fully convinced that the greatest achievement standing to the credit of the late Mar Ivanios is that he was successful in inducing the authorities in Rome to recognise the use of the Malankara Rite liturgy which is conducted in Malayalam... for those Jacobites who become reconciled with the Catholic Church—after some slight alterations had been made in the text.”

He sustains his opinion in such an interesting way that we cannot refrain from quoting further passages—

“Speaking for myself” he says “I became a convert to vernacular liturgy some twenty years ago; I had occasion to attend the liturgy of the re-united Catholics a number of times in one of their important stations I went to that place to inspect a court, and the first day I attended their service was on a Sunday.... I have never been so moved in all my life by any religious service as when I attended the Liturgy on that Sunday. From the very commencement the entire congregation of about 300 men, women and children, began to sing the responses.... At the time of the Epistle the deacon came close to the congregation and facing them read the Message in the vernacular. Similarly the celebrant came to the congregation and facing them read the Gospel... When the time for Communion came it was a real climax....I tried to appear not very much moved, but in spite of it I simply broke down.”

The full rite of the Syro-Malankarese liturgy takes some hours to get through: though a shorter but by no means “short” form is now approved for daily use. The very division of the Qurbona (English equivalent would be “Sacrificial Offering”) into three parts is reminiscent of all we have read of The Sacred Mystery celebration in apostolic times.

THE ANTIOCHENE RITES (A)

Behind a closed door called the Holy Door, or failing that, behind a drawn curtain that completely shuts off the sanctuary, *Part I*—the Preparation—is carried out by the officiating priest, with his assistants—deacons, servers and “Sorrowers.” Mar Ivanios whilst in America arranged for “seven sorrowers” he tells us, for he, like all whom we have met here in Southern India, had a vivid sense of theatre. The Qurbono is drama and mystery combined—“a work of art” truly.

Part I consists of the vesting, naming of intention, especial prayers inspired by the significance of the sacred vessels and instruments about to be used in the sacrificial offering. That takes about twenty minutes. Seven instruments are used in the solemn Qurbono, five are common to the shorter form also—a paten, a chalice, a spoon, a finger-bowl, a lance, a sponge and a spear.

After the Preparation the screen is thrown open, the Altar and sanctuary revealed, and part II, the Mass of the Catechumens begins. During part II, the Gospel—prefaced by an Epistle—is read. Other prayers and hymns and blessings follow until the Creed—said also aloud with the priest—“We believe”—not “I believe.” With the conclusion of the Creed the Mass of the Catechumens is ended.

(A note after the Credo, in Mar Ivanios’ English Handbook of the Holy Mass, states:

“It is here the duty of the deacons to see that the Catechumens and all those who are not worthy to participate in the Holy Mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, leave the church without fail.”)

Part III is called the Mass of the Faithful. It consists of twelve distinct divisions which include the Kiss of Peace, the Sursum Corda, the Sanctus, the Consecration, the Fraction, the Eucharistic Procession, the Blessing of the Faithful with the veiled mysteries, the Communion, private prayers and (in the full ritual) the Eulogia, or blessing of bread brought by members of the Congregation.

Right through the liturgy incense is wafted, and little silver bells tinkle musically. If an Archbishop or Bishop celebrates, great fan-like silver discs, bordered with tiny silver bells, are used by the assistant deacons at particularly solemn moments.

Mention of the Blessing by the veiled mysteries must be clarified:

both paten and chalice are now veiled—in small golden veils especially made for them. The priest then takes the paten in his right hand, the chalice in his left, and holding the right over the left cross wise he stands before the congregation and says—(in Syriac)

The one Holy Father is with us who created
the world by his grace.

The one Holy Son is with us who has saved
us by his own precious sufferings.

The one living and Holy Spirit is with us, the
author and consummator of all things that
are or have been

The priest then blesses the people with the Holy Things and the Communion Hymn follows: The English translation is by Mar Ivanios from early Syriac:—

“Whom the angels, the fiery ones, shudder to contemplate, Him thou seest under the forms of bread and wine on the table of life, Alleluia (6 times), on whom the angels robed in lightning burn to gaze, Him the earth-born eat and their countenances shine. Alleluia.”

With the spoon the priest takes the particle from the Chalice⁴ for his own Communion and says:—

“I hold Thee who holdest the bounds of the world—Thee I am grasping who orderest the universe here below, and I place Thee O God in my mouth. Through Thee may I escape fire unquenchable, like the sinful woman and the robber. Thou art our Saviour and our God for ever and ever.”

There is, too, the Theological content of the Malankara rite, its devotional spirit, its use of Scripture, its age-old chant. The Blessed Trinity is constantly invoked, and the other Principal Mysteries are found foremost in the liturgical texts. Devotion to Our Lady breathes in every breath. There are also daily prayers that embody the doctrine of Purgatory—tear-dim prayers for the dead, and a joyous memento of the holy angels. Angelic witnesses themselves pray in the Preparation:—

“Sweet are the voices of the earth-born
Hasten. O Lord, to hear their petitions.”

Eulogia: the ancient custom of the Agape is still observed (on

occasion) during the full ritual. After the concluding prayers the priest blesses the loaves, sweets or fruits which the Faithful may have brought to the Church.

Is it significant that the Kiss of Peace in the Malankara Rite is given shortly *before* the Consecration? It is given by an interlacing of hands from priest to deacon, then to the laity and is considered of the greatest importance. Jacobites have told us that any member of their communion coming late for the Kiss of Peace, will stand just at the entrance door until he receives it from some one of the congregation to whom it had been communicated in the orthodox manner.

When Mar Ivanios first visited the Most Rev. Dr. Augustine Kandathil, Archbishop of Ernakulam, he demonstrated quite unconsciously the significance which this small ceremony had for him. It was very soon after his re-union and although both prelates had had some friendly correspondence they had not met previously. Mar Ivanios arrived in the Syrian Archbishop's house rather early, and finding that his host was at breakfast would not have him disturbed, but went to offer the Qurbono in the Bishop's chapel.

Having arrived at the ceremony of the Kiss of Peace, he suddenly left the sanctuary and to the astonishment of some young Syro-Malabar deacons who were there he asked one of them urgently to call the Archbishop.

Mar Ivanios calmly waited till Dr. Kandathil reached him; then without more ado he reverently exchanged with him the Kiss of Peace, and returned to the Altar to continue the Holy Sacrifice.

If the mere recitation of acts and scenes from that sacred drama should fail to convey anything of its devotional efficacy, perhaps an example of its ancient prayers may help the reader to realise it.

The prayer of the Fraction (when the Host is broken) we give below. This prayer was in use down to the eighth century, but has recently been restored. Holding up the paten on which rests the "coal"⁵—Eastern term for the broken portion of the consecrated Bread—the priest prays:

O Father of Justice behold thy Son who sacrificed himself to appease thy anger. Accept him: he died for me. Hear my prayer because of his merits. As great as are my offences so great are thy mercies if thou shouldst

weigh them, the sacrifice and the victim are infinitely superior to the sins. It is because I have sinned that thy well-beloved has suffered the piercing of the nails and the wound of the lance. His sufferings are sufficient to appease thee, and it is by them that I obtain life.... O Holy Trinity have mercy upon us all.

In the Antiochene Rite communion is given under both species: the laity do not drink from the cup, but the hosts to be consumed by them are sprinkled with the consecrated wine.

Symbolism of the Corporal

The Corporal in the Malankara Rite consists of three pieces: red, green and white, set over each other. The red is the largest in size and symbolises the created universe. The green is smaller than the red and is set over the red corporal. It symbolises the earth, the central planet of the Universe from the spiritual point of view, wherein God created and placed man for whose salvation God became Man on earth. The white corporal which is still smaller in size is placed over the green corporal. The Holy Vessels are placed over this. The white corporal symbolises the Church of Christ upon earth, wherein is treasured the Blessed Sacrament.

An incident may here be noted which illustrates the emotional effect that a familiar liturgy can have on a devotee.⁶ It occurred in December 1930, whilst the Jacobite community were still bitterly resentful of Mar Ivanios' action in submitting to the Supremacy of Pius XI. An angry but upright Jacobite hurried to the church where Mar Ivanios was about to offer the Holy Sacrifice. There the self-invited caller remained, just inside the door, determined to test for himself the extent of the "Romanist" innovations. His surprise was great when he discovered that beyond a few brief moments when the worshippers knelt (the Jacobites remain standing right through the celebration.⁷ he could detect no difference at all between the Mass as offered by Mar Ivanios, and the Qurbono to which he was accustomed. So Rome had not interfered with his beloved liturgy! He was so touched that he shed tears; all his indignation melted away, and he hurried to Mar Ivanios to be reconciled with him, and later to the Catholic Church.

The re-united warmly defend their use of leavened bread for the Holy Eucharist. They say:

THE ANTIOCHENE RITES (A)

“The official day of the Passover was Friday but Jesus knowing what was to befall on Friday and desiring ‘with desire’ to eat the Pasch with His disciples before He suffered, arranged for its celebration on the afternoon of Thursday. Thus it happened that the ordinary leavened bread of the household was served.”

“There was an old tradition”—it is mentioned by Mr. Yeats Brown—to the effect that the Syrians previous to the Synod of Diamper used to make their sacramental bread from the leaven of that used at the Last Supper.”

When we asked about this we were told that the tradition at least served to emphasise the continuity of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

NOTES

1. There is no term in the East that can be used as the equivalent of our word “cousin”: all to the first and second degrees of consanguinity are called “brothers” and “sisters”— (Author’s Note.)
2. Malankara was the ancient name of Malabar.
3. *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, Autumn 1955, p.117
4. “From the Chalice” is explained by recounting the ceremony of the Fraction. “The priest breaks the host into two equal parts, and each half is partially dipped in the chalice ... while a small fragment for the communion of the priest is placed in the chalice....” —*Rites of Eastern Christendom*, King, Vol. I, p. 184.
5. King: *Rites of Eastern Christendom*, P. 182. “Pearl” is also used.
6. Vouched for by one of the Bethany Mothers.
7. The standing posture has recently been restored to the Qurbono observance.

Chapter Seventeen

THE ANTIOCHENE RITE (B)

Besides the Qurbono the Antiochene rite differs widely in other respects from ritual observances of the Latin Church. In Mar Ivanios' day as still amongst the Malabar Jacobites "Chrismation" by the priest and Communion under the species of wine follow immediately upon the Baptism. Mar Ivanios received all three sacraments the day of his christening. Since the re-union, of course, the sacraments of Communion and of Confirmation are postponed, but otherwise there is a difference. Baptismal fonts are not used; the water for Baptism is blessed with long chantings in Syriac, whilst the baby waits in its guardian's arms.

At length the tiny mite is placed sitting in the basin of Baptismal water, supported therein by the sponsor during the remainder of the ceremony.

The Syro-Malankarese Lent begins on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, and covers fifty days, Sundays inclusive. Every Friday during Lent nothing is tasted earlier than twelve noon. And there seems to be no age limit.

A lady of 73, sister to a Jacobite Bishop, was still fasting when we called on her brother at 2.30 p.m. on a Lenten Friday. *She* was waiting until 3 p.m.

"Their fasts are many and severe," wrote Père Vincent in the early sixteenth century. That is still true. There is a fifteen day fast before the Feast of the Assumption, an eight day fast before the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady, especial fasts for the dedication of the Sowing season, the Harvest season, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and the

THE ANTIOCHENE RITES (B)

Feast of the Perpetual Virginity of Our Lady. There is another, previous to 29th June.

On Good Friday and on all the great Feasts, the church is opened before dawn and worshippers creep by in their silent sandals to take part in a dramatic representation of the mystery of the day. On Good Friday, the treachery of Judas is wept over; on Easter Sunday, the joy of Mary Magdalen is shared—priests, deacons, assistants and congregation joining like a theatrical company in a well-rehearsed performance that re-lives the Biblical scenes, words and personages applicable to the particular event to be commemorated.

On Good Friday, especially, the ceremonies last well into the afternoon—priests and people fasting throughout—and so realistic is the action that a bitter draught (it may be actually vinegar and gall—it certainly was the bitterest liquid I ever tasted) is poured in midget spoonfuls on the upturned lips of the kneeling ranks, by solemn priests assisted by their deacons bearing lighted candles.

The eager confidence with which the Syro-Malankarese will discuss every detail of the sacred passion is edifying. Finding a group praying with arms reaching upwards at an angle of about 45° we asked why not arms outstretched from the shoulder. Instantly it was explained that the position of Christ's crucified body would be impossible that way: its weight would drag the arms downwards at the angle I had seen. They are an intensely religious people. Every detail of the Passion of Christ seems to be as vivid and present to them to-day as though they or some close relative had been to Calvary but yesterday!

Mar Ivanios' devotion to the rite of fasting is shown in one particular incident that impressed itself on a non-Christian group who still speak of it with admiration. The Archbishop was engaged in mission work all morning in a rural locality and towards mid-day some kindly Hindu families contributed a dainty lunch and carried it to him in the make-shift chapel which had engaged his energies for many hours. It was a day of ritual fast and, of course, the re-united knew that—but not their Hindu neighbours. He smiled when they set the rich food before him and explained simply the situation. Then he blessed the food and the kindly benefactors, and asked that the poorest in the neighbourhood should be brought to take his place at the table.

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

The Filioque Clause in the Creed was not insisted on for the reunited, but there was a certain uneasiness in some minds concerning monophysism. To resolve it, Mar Ivanios, during his continental tour of 1932, paused to consult the Theological Faculty of Freiburg University on certain formulas of faith as taken from the Jacobite Prayer-Book.

Mar Ivanios submitted the Malayalam text in an English translation. The translated text was next changed into Latin, with Mar Ivanios' comments—thence through French, ending with the pronounced judgment of the Faculty, back to Mar Ivanios in Greek. Mar Ivanios would have been quite at home in Greek. Of Latin he knew little.

Excerpts from the Jacobite missal followed and the final declaration above the signature of the Right Rev. Marius Besson, Bishop of Geneva, Lausanne, and Freiburg affirms. "The undersigned deems that the two Latin citations made above, and drawn, one from the missal, and the other from the catechism of the Jacobites, contain the expression of Catholic doctrine because they mention expressly the two natures, divine and human, of the Saviour."

This declaration of 1932 proved an abiding source of satisfaction to Mar Ivanios through the years of missionary endeavour that remained.

The Popes and the Eastern Liturgies

The first encyclical of Pius IX (1846-1878)—

In suprema Petri Apostolic invited the dissident Eastern Bishops to return to unity:

"We will preserve your...liturgies intact, those you so rightly honour, although they differ in certain particulars from that of the Latin Church. Those liturgies have been equally honoured by our predecessors, as recommended by their fathers, and containing ceremonies of incomparable pomp and magnificance, suitable for maintaining and nourishing the veneration of the faithful towards the divine mysteries."

Leo XIII (1878-1903) said in a consistory held on December 13th, 1880:—

"...At the beginning of our Pontificate we hastened to occupy ourselves with the people of the East. There indeed was the cradle of the salvation of the whole human race and the first-fruits of Christianity, thence as a mighty river all the blessings of the Gospel came to the West."

THE ANTIOCHENE RITES (B)

The same Pope issued two Encyclicals bearing on the subject.

The first *Praeclara gratulationis* contained the following pertinent passages:— “First we turn with a look of great affection to the East whence came..... salvation to the world.... For the defence of Catholic doctrines we take arguments and examples from the rites, the teaching and the practices of the Eastern Christians.... For all rites and practices we will provide without narrowness.”

In the same Encyclical the Pope solemnly affirms that he never wishes to suppress the rites and usages of the East nor to suppress the privileges of their Patriarchs.

Orientalium dignitas (November 30th, 1894) pointed out that the Eastern Liturgies witness to the divine unity and apostolicity of the Catholic faith adding to it both dignity and honour. They are “the reflection of that homage given to the new-born Christ, divine founder of the Church, when the royal Magi from different parts of the East came to adore him. It is more than ever the duty of the Pope to watch carefully lest any injury should be done to them by the imprudence of ministers of the Gospel from Western lands, whom zeal for the teaching of Christ sends towards the Eastern nations.”

Any Latin missionary who shall have persuaded an Eastern Christian to adopt the Latin Rite shall incur *ipso facto* suspension *a divinis*, and all other pains threatened in the constitution *Demandatum coelitus*....

In 1896 regulations were fixed between the Eastern Patriarchs and the Latin Apostolic delegates.

Leo XIII also nominated a commission of Cardinals for promoting the union of Eastern Churches, presiding over it personally until his death.

Pope St. Pius X (1903-1914) by the constitution *Tradita ab antiquis* (September 14th, 1912) permits members of Eastern rites to receive holy communion in Latin Churches and Westerns in Oriental churches. “So that the Holy Eucharist as the centre of unity and love may produce abundantly the fruit of reconciliation.”

Benedict XV (1914-1922) “... the Church of Christ is neither Latin, nor Greek, nor Slav, but Catholic, it does not make any distinction between its sons, be they Greeks, Latins.... or members of other national groups, all hold the same position before the Apostolic See.”

In October 1917 the Pontifical Oriental Institute was established as a means to “mutual understanding...”¹

It was this Pope who in 1920 created the Syrian deacon St. Ephrem a doctor of the Universal Church.... “Rome is no enemy of nationality,” he says, “but only of that nationalism which seeks to deny the title of ‘Children of God’ to another race”

Pius XI (1922-1939) deserves the name of the “Pope of Unity.” He was the Pope who sent the “BIG WELCOME” to Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos on the occasion of their re-union, the 20th September, 1930. RERUM ORIENTALIUM urged upon all Catholics the importance of studying the Eastern Churches; he wished all universities to have a chair of oriental science and every seminary to teach the elements of Eastern Theology.

Our Holy Father, Pius XII, in his *Orientalis Ecclesiae*, published April 9th, 1944 is cited as follows:-

“Each and every nation of Oriental rite must have its own rightful freedom in all that is bound up with its own history and its own genius and character saving always the truth and integrity of the doctrines of Jesus Christ.... They will never be forced to abandon their own legitimate rites or to exchange their own venerable traditional customs for latin rites and customs. All these *are to be held in equal esteem and equal honour* for they adorn the common Mother Church with a garment of many colours. Indeed this variety of rites and customs, preserving what is most ancient and most valuable in each, presents no obstacle to a true and genuine unity.”

“The Liturgy is eternal; Schisms and wars are the work of man. These will perish but the liturgy will endure in this world in the various forms in which God has been pleased to let it develop.” (Quoted by King from *Franciscan Studies*, September, 1941. King’s Introduction p. 55)

NOTES

1. We have learned locally from the dissidents themselves that they resent being called Schismatics and rightly so, since they had no act or part in the original revolt; all that is meant by the term at the present day is that they are living in a Church separated from the Centre of Authority established by Christ.

Chapter Eighteen

FULL CIRCLE

Mr. George Catlin visited India in 1947. He met Mar Ivanios at Pattom a short time before his leaving for the Marian Congress. Mr. Catlin describes him:

“This Low Sunday I was invited to breakfast with the Most Rev. Archbishop Mar Ivanios. He is an energetic old man with the face of an Elisha, tall, thin, abundantly white-bearded, the beard framing a dusky face.¹

The Marian Congress opened in Ottawa June 19th, 1947. Mar Ivanios had arrived punctually. The vastness of it all pleased him much. He kept a pile of press cuttings illustrative of the day-by-day events in which he took part. From these sources one is able to give the reader an impression of that stupendous function: Landsdown Park, the great ball park of Ottawa, had been converted into an open air Cathedral, which took three months to construct. Seventy-five thousand Hosts were daily consecrated at the principal Mass, and 84 priests were engaged in distributing Holy Communion to the faithful. On the occasion of the Midnight Mass 500 priests were requisitioned for the purpose.

Did the Bethany tens of thousands leap to the memory of Mar Ivanios as he surveyed that mighty hosting? If so, the contrast must have proclaimed itself under other heads as well. Here in Canada two races, two languages and in the main two religions met and mingled for this striking centenary - that of the establishment of the Catholic diocese of Ottawa.

The Governor-General, Lord Alexander, with unaffected courtesy

acted as host to the Papal Legate, James Cardinal McGuigan of Toronto with his suite. The Prime Minister, Mr. MacKenzie King, attended on several occasions whilst the Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent read the act of consecration to Our Lady in French on the day appointed. The Hon. James McCann read the same in English. Mar Ivanios met each of these notables socially. he called on them before leaving Canada to make a plea in the interests of an Indian colony which had laboured under certain civic disabilities there, as will appear.

He kept the photo of a group of Cardinals, amongst whom are Cardinal Spellman of New York, the late Cardinal Mooney of Detroit and, smiling happily, Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary.

Alas! How little did Cardinal Mindszenty think, on that grand and gracious occasion, of the tragic fate so soon to overtake him! We shall speak of that later since it called forth a vigorous protest from Mar Ivanios.

The ordered traffic was a source of wonder to the Indian Archbishop; he would watch with delight the colourful spectacle of many thousands as trains, trams, buses and private cars disgorged their packed assortments of humans who converged upon the park from every possible approach, directed by official guides and watched over by vigilant traffic policemen. The Canadian mounties were there, and the Papal Zouaves—a total of 2,000 in the picturesque uniforms that were designed in 1868.

The Church's spiritual army was there too: nuns—thousands of them. Blue nuns, grey nuns, brown nuns, in habits of every variety, they crowded around. Priests, diocesan and regular, Bishops and Prelates of all degrees had assembled in the park to the reverent joy of the faithful laity. Archbishop Vauchon of Ottawa was rewarded that day for the long months of preparation he had expended organising every detail that could make the Congress a success.

Mar Ivanios' presence in Canada was due chiefly to his loving devotion to Our Lady, and after that to his desire to interest Western Catholics in the re-union movement—but he will make no appeal for funds. "I wish to make it perfectly clear that it is not my intention to make use of my visit to your great country for making any appeal for financial assistance."

So he assures Archbishop Vauchon in his letter of thanks for the

invitation accorded him. But as a matter of fact his exotic appearance carried an appeal more subtle than any that words could convey: his gorgeous robes, his unusual head-dress, his flowing beard, drew all eyes and everybody was asking everybody else— “Who is he? They swarmed about him, learned his life-story and —well, it goes without saying, their voluntary offerings reached a considerable total. With the welfare of his University College ever in his mind, he spent practically all that cash on an order for iron girders and other materials to be shipped to Trivandrum within a specified time.

At the grand procession towards the final day of the Congress a little boy of ten held up the cavalcade and ignored the traffic guards by producing his camera and insisting on “taking the picture” of this extraordinary Bishop who smilingly posed for the photo, whilst exasperated individuals looked on helplessly.

A tiny tot seized his resplendent cope in the midst of a whirl of traffic, and looking up at the white-bearded face asked: “Are you Santa Claus?”

Mar Ivanios’ sojourn in Canada lasted a few months. Before leaving he wrote a column of thanks to the Canadians. “The great Congress of June demonstrates in striking instance the univesality of the Catholic Church in the world.... The Supreme Pontiff himself spoke directly to the Congress from Rome and this was the sublimest illustration of all those marks of the Church of which I have been speaking, namely, her oneness, her ubiquity and her indefectible mission.”

During his stay in Canada he used his introduction to good account to secure a great civic advantage for a Colony of Sikhs —210 families — who had settled in Canada thirty years previously.

He tells of this to his never-failing friend, Mr. Mamen Mapillay of Kottayam.

“... Since coming to Canada for the International Congress, I visited a few places. I had occasion to have interviews with the Governor-General, Lord Alexander, with Mr. MacKenzie King, the Prime Minister, and with the Cabinet Ministers. Some of the Ambassadors invited me to lunch or dinner and this gave me an opportunity for close contact.... Before I left, the Government, by a special Order in Council, declared that the 210

families of Indians (Sikhs) settled down in Canda some thirty years ago and who were hitherto without rights of citizenship, will hereafter have them."

Then with engaging naiveté he adds: "Our representative in Canada told me that the impression I created by my contact with the Prime Minister and with the Cabinet Ministers went a great way to help the Indian Colony in this matter."

From the United States he writes to Mr. A.J. John, a devout Catholic—and later Governor of Madras.

"... After leaving Canada I came to Detroit on the invitation of Cardinal Mooney; from there I was invited to Chicago by Cardinal Stritch. I was later invited to Washington D.C... to inaugurate the Church Unity Octave. I performed this by giving a message over the radio which was flashed by the Colombia Broadcasting Company. I was invited to speak at the Catholic University of America and at the Howard University for Negro Youth...."

We next hear of him in hospital where he has to remain for six weeks. During that time he wrote two letters: one, a duty letter to the Apostolic Nuncio in Bangalore, the other to Mr. Krishna Menon congratulating him on his appointment as High Commissioner in London.

He broadcast a defence of the Divinity of Christ after he had heard a public speaker bracket Gandhi "with Christ, Buddha and Luther." From another letter: "This morning I saw in the papers that Lord Mountbatten, British Governor-General of India, will be retiring for good on the 21st June and that my personal friend, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, will be succeeding him. This morning I sent a cable to him to congratulate him and to convey the assurance of my prayers for the success of his administration. He is a sincere man practising high ideals. We have been friends for years. I am indeed glad that he has been chosen to guide the destinies of India."

The Rev. N.A. Thomas, the Syro-Malabar priest, before mentioned accompanied him to an interview with Mr. Truman, the then President. The interview had been arranged by the Hon. Mr. O'Grady, U.S. Minister to India. As so often happened, Mar Ivanios cast the spell of his conversational powers on his breathless listeners so that what was meant

to be the conventional exchanges of a few brief moments developed into a one-hour sitting of absorbing interest. Many years previously Mar Ivanios had prepared a learned lecture on Ancient Coinage (or some such subject). Now he gives the benefit of his researches to Mr. Truman, Mr. Asaf Ali and others. One reference can alone detain us here. he told them how an extensive traffic sprang up in early times between the Mediterranean cities and the ports of Kerala. The Phoenicians were the first to make their way to these ports.... After the Phoenicians came the Jews in the reign of Solomon who had "a navy of Tharsis and a navy of Hiram bringing gold and silver, ivory, apes and peacocks" from Kerala. He followed all that up by declaring that the gold for Solomon's Temple was obtained from the district around Mavelikara, and he identified the little village of Puvar on the coast of Malabar with the Biblical Ophir which the great King's ships visited about 1000 B.C.

With tales like these of pearls and ivory and silks that had adorned the Holy Place itself Mar Ivanios entertained the company until in the end they were compelled to tear themselves away

Father N.A. Thomas is our authority for stating that the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and the Vatican was indirectly due to Mar Ivanios. He said that a U.N.O. meeting was being held in New York, the leader of the India delegation being Srimathy Vijayalekshmi Pandit, sister of Mr. Nehru. Mar Ivanios urged upon her the desirability of establishing diplomatic relations with the Vatican. She said she would write to her brother. A few months later the diplomatic representative was appointed.

The Jesuit Fathers in San Francisco next received the Archbishop of Trivandrum. The University conferred on him the honorary degree of LL.D., which he used in all his correspondence thereafter.

He was on his way to Australia in response to an invitation extended to him by the Most Rev. Dr. Mannix. Archbishop of Melbourne. He left San Francisco for Australia by plane. The plane touched down at Honolulu on Wednesday. The next day was Friday in Sydney! In crossing the date line he had lost one day from his life's reckoning. He often playfully referred to this in the years that followed.

Writing from Melbourne he says:

“I have been given a warm welcome here not only by the good Catholics of Australia, but the secular press has noted my presence and has published my photographs.”

Finding that Mr. Eamon de Valera, the Irish Prime Minister, had planned to return home from the Centenary by air via India, Mar Ivanios wrote off promptly to Mr. Nehru: “I feel that an eminent man like Mr. de Valera, passing through our country, should be met by yourself just to convey felicitations and that is my purpose in writing this to you.” He wrote much more besides.

Mar Ivanios did not now know, perhaps, that the India representative in Australia had already written to Mr. Nehru informing him of Mr. de Valera’s intentions. “The arrangements for Mr. de Valera’s programme in India were made under the directions of the Prime Minister,” writes Mr. Nehru’s Private Secretary. “Mar Ivanios was not personally known to the Prime Minister.” he adds.

Besides his letter to Mr. Nehru, Mar Ivanios wrote also to Mr. Rajagopalachari, to Dr. John Mathai and to Most Rev. Dr. Perier, S.J., Archbishop of Calcutta, making suggestions—no it is more true to say *giving minute directions*—for the fitting reception of the Irish Prime Minister during his expected stay.

To Archbishop Perier he says: “I thought the Catholics of Calcutta would be pleased that Mr. De Valera, an eminent Catholic so devoted to the Church, is coming and shall be the guest of Your Grace.”

To Dr. Thomas, an important member of the Government of New Delhi:—“... I have asked His Grace (of Calcutta) to arrange reservations in the aeroplane from Calcutta to Karachi and provide for Mr. De Valera’s halting at New Delhi for a short time.... Perhaps you would like to invite a few friends of yours to come in for a social party to meet Mr. de Valera.... He is accompanied by his Secretary, Mr. Aiken....”

Having thus contacted and hustled the religious and political leaders of India, as well as some personal friends, to receive the visitor with due honour, it must have given him great satisfaction later to know that Mr. Nehru had invited Mr. de Valera to address Congress—a unique tribute of respect and esteem which no other foreigner it is said had ever previously been offered.

FULL CIRCLE

Mar Ivanios, before leaving Melbourne, assured Archbishop Mannix that he had enjoyed every minute of his stay in the Metropolis. Then Brisbane, Sydney, Perth; thence to Colombo and Trivandrum, where he was accorded a wonderful welcome home.

* * * *

Mar Ivanios carried back the happiest memories of his tour. The Fathers say he had grown mellow and genial as a result of his prolonged absence in the expansive world of the West. He had also grown physically weak, and it was no surprise to those nearest him to find that he was unable to enter energetically as was his wont, upon the mission work so dear to him. They should have been deep in preparation for the Jubilee celebration of his consecration as Bishop, since May 1950 was not far off, but though he did not actively discourage them, the question of his health affected their councils and caused them for a while to procrastinate.

His step had grown feeble, but his spirit was strong, as ever. When news of the sacrilegious treatment meted out to Cardinal Mindszenty reached him, he sent off a cable to the Governor of Budapest: "Conscience of Indian population upholding non-violence shocked at the travesty of justice at the high-handed condemnation of Cardinal Mindszenty."

He also cabled sympathy to the Holy See.

The Vatican acknowledged the cable graciously, but the Russian-booted Commissar in Budapest may have wondered why one single ecclesiastic from a tiny corner of the Southernmost State in another continent should have made himself the mouthpiece of a whole population!

But Mar Ivanios always acted according to the dictates of his own generous heart and followed his own judgement independently. So when the first Churchman to be brought down by Soviet tortures lay broken in a prison cell, he was more than a name in a newspaper to Mar Ivanios. He was the kindly Cardinal whom he had met little more than a year previously in Canada, introduced we may be sure by the Archbishop's own two friends—Cardinal Mooney and Cardinal Tisserant.

As one who had always acted independently, Mar Ivanios had often much difficulty in conforming to the canons of the Church in certain instances. A conscience case would arise amongst the newly received. In his pre-reunion days Mar Ivanios would not have hesitated to follow his

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

own decision on the matter. Now he is a Catholic, and must have recourse to canon law for the solution; but he does not read Latin, therefore he consults a Latin prelate. Tomes are taken down, the relevant paragraph translated and discussed. Mar Ivanios frowns—evidently he is not satisfied.

“You will apply the Canonical ruling?” the consultant asks, anxiously. “Perhaps, perhaps,” the Archbishop replies. Nevertheless he invariably drove his will to follow the code as enunciated.

NOTES

1. See *In the Pathway of Gandhi*, p. 71 by George Catlin.
2. Extract from letter to the author signed R.K. Goel, Private Secretary to Mr. Nehru dated 5th August, 1957.

Chapter Nineteen

TOWARDS EVENING

“26th APRIL, 1949. I am very tired and am therefore stopping with these few lines.”

So wrote Mar Ivanios to the Right Rev. Thomas Tharalay, Bishop of the Suddist diocese Kottayam, and Secretary to the all-India Bishops' Conference, then assembled to cope with another schools' trouble in Malabar. This time it is the Secondary Teachers who threaten to strike against the Managers of private schools, and in doing so they are being openly encouraged by the Government. Dual control will always produce contentions and the vision of a unified authority will always appeal to a Minister of Education.

Mar Ivanios tells his friend in America: “...Government are compelling the Mangers of Private Secondary Schools¹ to remit to the Government Treasury 80% of the fee collections. Government also have proposed that teachers in private schools shall be appointed out of a list prepared by the Public Service Commission. If the Government proposals are brought into effect our schools will cease to be Catholic Schools. We are praying hard and trying our best to save our schools from the impending danger.”

Mar Ivanios lost no time in giving his word of honour to his own group of Secondary Teachers that 80% of the fees collected would be used by him towards their salaries. Having absolute confidence in his word of honour, these teachers remained firm when a vociferous crowd of their associates came calling to them from the school compound.

Mar Ivanios had the greatest sympathy with the financial troubles

of these men and women, in view of the sharp rise in the cost of living that followed immediately on the war years.

The all-Christian Managements point out the reason for the comparatively low salaries in private schools of Travancore. "Grants in aid to private schools have practically ceased; besides the fee in the secondary schools of Travancore is *fixed*-unlike in the rest of India. To make matters worse, the rate of fees a few years ago was lowered by 50%, thus making it impossible for the Managers to pay their teachers in keeping with the abnormal rise in the cost of living."

The Memorial ends with: "Much as we desire to co-operate with Government...we have to oppose the present educational scheme which will work out the nationalisation policy once attempted to be enforced...in Travancore."

Not all Mar Ivanios' teachers, however, behaved worthily. There was one High School in particular which so demoralised its pupils as to encourage them in all manner of indiscipline and insolence towards two of his Bethany Sisters whom he sent to try and bring order out of the anarchy that persisted. The Sisters, as Catholic nuns will always do, persevered day after day under all manner of personal indignities until peace was restored, and the shortsighted couple who had instigated the trouble found themselves obliged to flee from the residential part of the school premises in the dead of night. They left no forwarding address behind them.

That secondary school to-day has a teaching staff of half-a-dozen Bethany Sisters-all University graduates, besides more than twice that number of qualified lay-teachers.

But the tussle with Government went on and on. Ill as he is Mar. Ivanios never leaves down his pen: "You may introduce the following emendations in the draft." Long pages follow.

There is a constant interchanging of correspondence with the Right Rev. Secretary of the Bishops' Conference. It must be recalled that as a result of Catholic resistance to the totalitarian scheme of 1946 the then Government of Travancore compromised in March 1947, but only as a temporary measure, by a *modus vivendi* pending a final settlement, which permitted Catholic managements to carry on their schools as state-aided

denominational schools restricting admission to Catholic pupils only. This was followed by permission to other Christian communities to open communal schools also. All non-Christian children on the roll were transferred and provided for in separate Government schools—thus the 1947 position.

Now after a spate of discussion and a long-drawn-out battle of words the 1949-50 Ministry reverse the policy and declared their intention to abolish all denominational schools. It ordered all recognised schools to admit children of all communities. Some managements declared their unwillingness to change, and opinions on the subject of denominational education were aired in public and in private.

Opposing views are very interesting:—

Mar Ivanios is all for the new policy. “Continuance of denominational institutions will only promote communalism instead of true citizenship. Training and formation of comradeship mentality in pupils, which will pave the way for world citizenship ought to be one of the higher aims of education. We need not, therefore, repeat that denominational schools should never find a place in the scheme of education to be adopted in this State.” (April, 1949)²

Opposing view:

“Denominational schools have advantages of their own. The atmosphere of such schools is found to be conducive to the proper moulding of character and to the formation of habits of discipline, good manners and devotion to God and duty, as well as to the achievement of better standards in education. The staffing of such schools with teachers of the same denominations adds to the tone and homogeneity of the institution.”

In spite of his illness Mar Ivanios prepares a lengthy statement for the press.

“...The Honourable Minister declared that the problem of education would be treated as a problem of Capital versus Labour....

...It is unfortunate that such a statement was made by the responsible Minister.... It is seen from the circular issued by the Director of Public Instruction... that 80% of the fee collection is considered as “Government

Share”....Is it not to be inferred from this that private schools are deemed Government property and that Government have a claim to the lion’s share?”

He then makes a sound and very practical suggestion to the allocation for the school fees. He concludes by making it very clear to any totalitarian-minded Minister or M. L. A. who might have an eye upon school properties that those under *his* administration at all events will never be surrendered, since they owe nothing to Government aid.

“Within the last few years we have expended large sums for establishing and conducting schools in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum. This has been done without any desire for profit. We have not received either grant from the Government or contributions from the public for the purpose. The whole amount has come from liberal-minded and generous Catholics of other countries. All these schools are the property of the Catholic Church. We wish to make it clear that it is not our intention to conduct these schools by accepting the new scheme in its present shape which may prove detrimental to the proprietary rights of the Catholic Church.”

The best method of protecting the rights of ecclesiastical property was then being discussed by the Indian Catholic Hierarchy. Mar Ivanios favoured the reiteration of these rights by voice and pen, so as to form a sound public opinion on the question.

One more spirited protest from his own pen and he has said his last word on the Secondary Schools’ Scheme of 1950.

“Teachers selected by a bureaucracy can hardly be expected to be particularly devoted to the ideals and traditions of their institutions. Such teachers save a few who may be specially gifted are more likely to be placid transmitters of ideas favoured by a Party Government to which they owe their appointments. The managements may find it hard even to maintain discipline with teachers not selected by them...The proposal that managements should remit 80% of their fee incomes to a common pool from which the salaries of all teachers will be paid, is untenable. It amounts to placing a premium on inefficiency, as the more efficient schools which have built up scholarship funds and other funds from which to pay for the education of deserving children coming to them will be required to

maintain the deficient schools to perpetuate the existence of parasite institutions. And doing so, the larger schools will be prevented from developing and expanding their own activities.”

Having said which, the grand old warrior sheathed his sword and devoted himself to the affairs of his College mainly. But he, with his friend T. O. M., must have enjoyed the little triumph which the Government Order dated 12th November, 1951 had brought them:

“Government are pleased to lay down the following scheme in supersession and cancellation of the Government Proceedings...dated 19th August, 1950.” In the November Order the points objected to had all been rescinded.

T. O. M. mailed the revised Scheme to Mar Ivanios with a personal note in manuscript: “Submitted to Your Grace with sincere congratulations and a pardonable sense of achievement.”

It was the Archbishop’s final controversial victory. Like the Church he loved, he could not compromise... “The Catholic Church will never compromise on questions of faith and morals; that is her strength,” was his reply when remonstrated with for alleged “intolerance.”

Mar Ivanios should have been celebrating the Jubilee of his episcopal consecration in May 1950, but he was too ill. In daily conference with Father Benedict, the Rev. Principal, he was forming the educational tradition that was to distinguish his College—and which will not cease to distinguish it, as long as its staff continue to pursue the ideals of its founder. In the Mar Ivanios College *all* pupils (2,000 of them) are obliged to attend at the ethical or moral instruction class which is held daily³. This plan is welcomed by Government and parents. The consequent good order and discipline of the students who absorb this ethical teaching is an indication of its efficacy. It was the author’s privilege to be present at the celebration of College Day in the Mar Ivanios College, January 1957. To that function under the Principalship of Rev. Fr. Francis Kalachery, came a university don as guest of honour and chief speaker on that occasion. Those ranks of students, Christians, Moslem, Hindu, sat and listened with respectful attention to his discourse.

The speaker himself in reply to the vote of thanks commented appreciatively on this exemplary behaviour. He said that wherever he

TOWARDS EVENING

went amongst modern youth, he was grieved and saddened by the irresponsibility and indiscipline of the majority.

He would carry away, he said, pleasant memories of the excellent discipline manifested that evening by the Alumni of the Mar Ivanios University College. "It is a tribute to your illustrious founder, to your distinguished Principal, and to your devoted staff," he said.

It was all deserved because it was all simply true. The author was also present at Convocation later in the year when Father Kalachery, donning his academic robes, shepherded groups of his students to the Chair to be honoured before that great concourse by the conferring of their various degrees.

Observing their shy happiness as they returned to their appointed places, one was obliged to recall the concluding words of a former principal, Rev. N. A. Thomas, who spoke a year or so previously, at the unveiling of a fine portrait of Mar Ivanios in the main hall of the College. "Had it not been for him...we could not have been here, and many young men would have been deprived of the privilege of college education. Mar Ivanios is not dead. He lives in all that he was, and all that he has left, as means of serving humanity without distinction of colour, caste or creed."

Mar Ivanios though ill, found himself sufficiently recovered to attend the Jubilee of the Sisters' Congregation which was held in Nalamchira. They had made their first vows on September 8th, 1925. The Archbishop, deeply affected, took part in the rejoicings, and bestowed a generous gift on this the first House to be erected in the Archdiocese. Afterwards he wrote in the Visitors' Book:

"...the faith in the everlasting mercy and guidance of God that was manifested at the founding of this Congregation and its subsequent transplanting in the Catholic Church, have been amply rewarded and many more blessings are in store. To-day the foundation stone was laid at the Bethany Madhom, Trivandrum, for an Orphanage to be called The Children's Home of the Nativity of Our Lady to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of this Congregation."

We must interrupt the quotation here to state that Mar Ivanios on reflection decided to utilise the site at the Bethany Madhom, Trivandrum, for the erection of a future Noviceship in view of the rapidly increasing

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

numbers requesting admission. True to his first resolution, however, he provided an alternative site for the orphanage in Bresha. At present, fifty little orphans are being cared for there by a branch of the Bethany Sisterhood.

We now resume the quotation:—

“The Merciful Lord has spared me to unite in the joys of this Congregation to -day. This Congregation will, I do firmly believe, be at all times a willing instrument in the hands of Our Lord to carry out His Divine Will, so that the daily prayer “Thy will be done” may be realised in its fulness. God bless this Congregation, by the prayer of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of St. Joseph, St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom and the Apostle of Love, St. John.”

We omitted to mention the medical clinic for the poor—chiefly for ailing children—which forms a special feature of the service to the neighbour exercised by the Bethany Community, Nalamchira. They come—streams of them, morning, noon and night, the sick, the hungry, the poor, the wailing children—Christian and non-Christian, all alike are treated with Christ-like kindness and care. Mar Ivanios also provided a Hostel, in Trivandrum City, for the accommodation of university students of all creeds, and placed it under the care of the Bethany Sisters. Girls of all denominations avail of it annually.

NOTES

1. In India all schools not directly controlled or managed by Government are called private Schools.
2. From a collection of controversial articles contributed to the daily newspapers by Mar Ivanios (and others) during 1949-50. They are preserved in the Archdiocesan archives, Trivandrum.
3. Catholic students are instructed in Catholic Doctrine apart.

Chapter Twenty

JOURNEY'S END

THE Jubilee of Mar Ivanios' consecration as Bishop should have been held in May 1950, but the state of his health forbade the usual rejoicing. The day therefore was observed in the Archdiocese by extra Masses, Communion and prayers. Later, of course, material gifts and loyal addresses were presented to him on a date arranged.

From Deviculam, a hillside resort, the Archbishop wrote to Benoni (Father Seraphion, O. I. C.) to have a Tabernacle constructed and sent to him there. "Jesus Christ desires and deserves all our love," he had written in pre-re-union days. He has not changed: like John the beloved, his patron, he will lean lovingly on the heart of Christ to the end.

Pope Pius XII and His Eminence Cardinal Tisserant sent congratulations which cheered and consoled him.

Pius XII:

"Venerable Brother,

"Health and Apostolic Benediction. We have learned with singular pleasure that you are about to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of your episcopal consecration. We always cherish the memory of that event when you, Mar Ivanios, and Mar Theophilos, Syro-Malankara Bishops of the Antiochene Rite, together with many priests and faithful of both the dioceses, by divine grace happily entered into the bosom of the Holy Mother the Catholic Church.... We do know what great difficulties you had to pass through—what hardships you had to put up with before and after your reconciliation.... We congratulate you, Venerable Brother, on your pastoral office which you have so long and so usefully

held....Meanwhile that the celebrations of this holy event may become more useful to your flock, we further grant you the faculty to bless in our name and by our authority, the faithful present on that day...granting them a plenary indulgence under normal conditions pertaining to the Holy Year.

“As a pledge of Heavenly help, and by our special love, we do most lovingly in the Lord impart to you...and to your clergy and to the flock entrusted to your care, Apostolic Benediction.”

Cardinal Tisserant:

“Your Excellency,

“...I desire very much to offer the good wishes of my own self, of His Excellency the Assessor and all the officials of the Sacred Congregation, and I do not want to let slip this occasion for reaffirming my great appreciation of the work you have turned out on behalf of Catholicism.

“Your fidelity to the Holy Father, your zeal, your spirit of sacrifice, your fortitude in difficulties and your Apostolic activities, nourished by an intense faith and piety, have enabled the solid organisation of the Archdiocese of Trivandrum, which by its Catholic activities has become a beacon-light of attraction and has added further lustre to the Church....”

The Cardinal's reference to the “solid organisation of the Archdiocese” is borne out by the facts: In that year (1950) as in every succeeding year since then, the Noviceships of both Fathers and Sisters were taxed to full capacity, with a long waiting list besides. And similarly with the Seminaries for the diocesan priesthood. From the banks of the Pampa River southwards to Cape Comorin the land is dotted like to the midnight firmament with mission stations, Bethany Asrams, Bethany Madhoms¹, with convents, seminaries, high-schools, middle schools, small presbyteries, some dainty little churches, innumerable shed chapels, scores of primary schools and a few orphanages —all founded and most completed before the death of Mar Ivanios, that is to say, between 1931 and 1953, an extraordinary achievement.

A college lecturer notes this immediately after the death of the Archbishop: “His Grace was a great man.... You felt like a babe before him...the orientalist, the ecclesiastical statesman, the visionary and the

JOURNEY'S END

builder....His life had been an Aeneid. It is given to few men to realise the vision of their life in such abundant measure."

He was listed for operation in Madras for July 7th, 1952; but when the preliminary examination was made, such a complication of liver trouble was discovered as rendered surgery impossible. Rev. Francis de Sales, T.O.C.D., Adm. of the Archdiocese, went with him afterwards to Bangalore hoping his health would pick up there, but he grew worse and begged to be taken back to Trivandrum to die. Father de Sales and Benoni accompanied him on the plane to Trivandrum, Mar Severios went by train.

"Better divide our forces" the invalid suggested with a flash of his former geniality, "for if the plane were to run into disaster, where should Trivandrum look for my successor?"

But he did not return direct to the archbishop's house in Pattom. The Fathers in the Nalamchira Asram received him like the faithful sons that they had proved themselves.

He wept, thinking nostalgically of his first Bethany Asram amidst the jungles of Perunad—seeing again the saffron-robed brethren around him and he their Abun—the Father of Bethany. There, each day, he had exhorted them to seek the heights of sanctity: "Let us all be saints," was his constant exhortation, "that we may bring others to God...."

Lying on his couch watching the slow approach of death, he is occupied with incidents of the past: "I have made many mistakes in my life," he acknowledged one day with a rueful little smile, "but this I can say with truth: I made them all with a good intention."

And to whom or to what was he referring when he was heard to say: "I still believe that what I did was just, but I had not sufficient charity."

The doctors expected his death any day but he still lived on.

Soon it began to be whispered about that an Archbishop should live—or die for that matter—in the Archiepiscopal residence. He listened and agreed to be transferred to Pattom—since the diocesan priests seemed to desire it.

But before he left the Asram, a solemn ceremony had to be performed. In the Syrian Church when death threatens, a solemn Extreme Unction is administered by a Bishop, but only to another Bishop or Archbishop or

(by request) by a Bishop to one of his priests.

This solemn Extreme Unction, called in Syriac the Kanteela, of Mar Ivanios was to be held in the Asram Chapel. A couch was fixed near one of the side altars. An Archbishop, several Bishops and secular clergy besides the Fathers and Sisters of the Congregation were present. Candles, flowers and incense were set in readiness.

But when Mar Ivanios appeared, leaning heavily on the Superior's shoulder, he did not at all like the arrangement. He insisted on having his couch placed before the High Alter. The change was speedily accomplished and there he received from Mar Severios the Holy Oils, the last anointing, to the sound of chant and psalmody, with lights and incense all around—a most inspiring ceremony. That same afternoon he was taken to the Archbishop's house. He never left it again.

With what strength remained to him he composed a last message to the re-united. "To my people," he addressed it in their own Malayalam. The translation runs: "I believe you are being kept informed of my failing health. I am not improving though the doctors are doing their best. I doubt if this sickness be not the boat that is to take me across the Jordan of death. The last rites were administered to me on the 14th September by His Lordship Mar Severios in the presence of His Grace Mar Augustine Kandathil who has helped a lot with our re-union movement by co-operation and advice from the very beginning. Their Lordships the Bishop of Kottayam and the Bishop of Tiruvalla who conferred the Sacrament as also a good number of our priests, sisters, and parishioners were present.

"I hear that even the skilled doctors have no hope of my recovery. Moreover things may reach a sudden crisis at any moment."

He speaks of repenting of his sins, and he requests the prayers of his people.

"Do not grieve but pray for me, for patience in suffering and a happy death...I would remind you of what I have done: I was born and brought up in the Jacobite Church and worked for its progress. The Bishops and laity of that Church had put their full confidence in me and I had dedicated myself to its uplift...I tried my utmost for re-union of the Jacobites with the Catholic Christians of Kerala, who are part and parcel of ourselves...but I have not been fortunate enough to see the completion of the same. I

JOURNEY'S END

believe and hope and pray to Our Lord that in the near future my desire will be fulfilled.

“...Lying on this cot I remember with pleasure and happiness the re-union of my brother Bishop-Theophilos, Dioscoros², Severios, Joseph Remban Pulicottil, Philip Remban Cheppard, and number of priests and laity of the Jacobite Church...With folded hands I thank the mighty power of the All-Merciful for using me, His weak instrument, for the accomplishment of His work...I remember with gratitude all those who have unselfishly co-operated with me, and all who are responsible for the marked progress of the re-union movement.

He than recalls the joy that the Pope's message brought to him in 1930: “Welcome! a big welcome!” were the loving words of the Vicar of Christ.

He thanks the Bishops of foreign countries for their generous help especially in the early days of re-union, the Bishops of India as well, and the Apostolic Delegate—the Internuncio. He also remembers “with tear-filled eyes” the help, consolation and encouragement he received from the Syrian Archbishop, Bishops and priests who considered the re-union movement as their own.

“...You should feel proud of having become Catholics. Let your purity of life and your good example be a guiding light to the non-Catholics...Dear children, let each family be the abode of virtue and peace like the Holy Family of Nazareth...Pray for me...Your Prayers will be a priceless treasure and a refuge for me...I can say with St. Paul: ‘I have fought the good fight, I have run the race, I have finished the course, and for the rest, there is laid up for me the crown of Life...’I request you to pray continuously that those words of St. Paul may console weak me in my last moments.”

He ends on a note of Christian forgiveness: “There is no one who is perfect: I beg of you all in love to forgive me in the name of Our Lord, if I have offended any of you during my life-time. So also, in the name of the loving God, I forgive and forget if any of you have done any wrong to me, knowingly or unknowingly. My beloved children, I bless each one of you. May Christ the King live in your hearts and homes so that one day you may hear His: ‘Come ye blessed of my Father and receive the

Kingdom prepared for you.”

His Grace’s physical sufferings were severe: he was hungry but could not eat, thirsty but could not swallow a satisfying drink. The Fathers who nursed him constructed a little gadget by means of which water dripped, drop by drop, from a container suspended above his pillowed head. It, at least, helped to cool somewhat his parched tongue.

He kept two crucifixes, one on the right, the other on the left, of his pillow. When asked why he needed two, he replied that in his restless tossings to and fro he wished to have always the sufferings of Jesus before his eyes.

His reverence for the Apostolic Benediction may be inferred from an incident that took place some weeks before his death. He had fallen into a coma and had lost the use of speech. The Internuncio came and remained in the house, daily expecting the end. At length, knowing he could no longer remain away from pressing duties, he silently approached the couch and gave the Apostolic Blessing.

To the amazement of the onlookers to comatose man awoke, lifted up his hands in a gesture of joy and cried: “What a privilege! Oh, what a privilege!” The Internuncio bending down whispered softly: “Your Grace deserves it!”

Father Seraphion, without technical study or training in the subject, had developed an amazing genius for architecture, and as long as Mar Ivanios’ failing health permitted, they had worked together on drafts and plans for the schools, churches, cathedrals and college buildings that were even then in process of erection all over the Archdiocese.

Father Seraphion tells of the last farewell: “His Grace could not speak, but when I entered the room he stretched his arms towards me and clasping me in his embrace, he kissed me tenderly.”

Benoni had consoled him for his pain.

The calmness with which he contemplated death and the detached way in which he discussed the manner of his burial are admirable. Bishops of the East are regarded as holding royal authority, and are buried after the fashion of Eastern Kings. They are carried to the burial chamber, seated on a throne, embalmed of course, and arrayed in their richest robes of office, with full insignia. Great quantities of incense are poured down

JOURNEY'S END

upon the body before the vault is sealed. Some two months previous to his death, Mar Ivanios called his Rev. Secretary and warned him to buy discreetly and in different markets ample supplies of incense for his burial. A huge quantity was gradually acquired. It was soon to be needed.

The end came at 10 p.m. on the 15th July, 1953, Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel³.

NOTES

1. Madhom=Convent in Malayalam
2. Dioscoros: he died soon after his re-union; hence there was no occasion to mention him in the course of our brief sketch.
3. By the Church's reckoning a Feast commences at Vespers on the eve of the date listed on the Calendar.

Chapter Twenty-One

THE OBSEQUIES

THE last conscious prayer of Mar Ivanios was to Our Lady of Sorrows.

Our Lady under all her invocations seemed to be constantly before his mind, and gifted with keen artistic discernment as he was, he brushed aside the prejudice against images derived in part from his Eastern heritage, and acquired an exquisite statue of the Blessed Virgin which he placed provisionally on a hillock near one of his temporary homes. It is now enshrined in the grounds of the Archbishop's house at Pattom under the title: "Our Lady of Re-union."

"When I go to Heaven I will continue to work for the re-union movement," so he declared towards the end when one of his fitful spasms of speech permitted it.

The following prayer composed by him in Syriac, will give some indication of his love for our Heavenly Mother:

Translation

O Cloud that rained forth The Dew of Life

Maid through whose face the sun shines,

Who stands out among the generations of the earth

And prevents darkness encompassing it.

Central diamond set in the crown of the Lord of Heaven,

Who transmits the light of her Son to the four corners of the Universe,

Door unbuilt by hands, uncut by tools, closed forever,

THE OBSEQUIES

Through whom the King of Glory entered once,
Ship that carried to us riches from the treasury of the Father,
All-pure, ever seaworthy vessel piloted by the Prince of Peace,
Creeper plant that climbed to the zenith of the mountains
And budded for the fruit of life—the Son of God.

Mother in whose lap the sad find comfort, the sinners hope, and the saints ecstasy.

In Chorus: Pray for us

Mary, Mary the Holy

Mary the Immaculate,

Mary the ever Virgin,

Mary the Eve of Redemption,

Mary the Mother of God,

MARY THE SECOND HEAVEN,

Mary my Mother,

Alleluia!

All who visited Mar Ivanios even within a few days of his death, have told us that though his body was sadly emaciated, his face still retained an expression of vigour and power. Even after death, that noble and exalted look remained.

His body, enrobed in the rich official garb of an Archbishop of the Malankara Rite, was removed to St. Mary's, his pro—Cathedral in Trivandrum.

The paragraphs that follow we take from the journalists' published descriptions of the obsequies:

“The dead prelate, seated on the throne according to custom, appeared more like a living and reigning monarch than one from whom life had departed.

“Early on the morning of the 16th, all the bells of the city tolled the sad news. With heavy hearts, men, women and children began to flock to the pro—Cathedral. All that day and all through the following night crowds of people belonging to every religion and community came to the

church to pay their last respects to him whom all had loved.

“On the morning of the 17th, three Holy Masses were celebrated simultaneously. Besides thousands of the faithful, a good many Bishops, Archbishops, priests and nuns also assisted.

“The funeral procession from the pro—Cathedral to the Cathedral that is being built in Pattom, where His Grace’s body was to be interred, started at about 9 a.m. It was a magnificent pageant. Tens of thousands of mourners participated in it. When lined up four abreast, the procession lengthened to one and a half miles. A Volunteer Corps composed of the students of Mar Ivanios College...kept order in the procession. Men, women, children, schoolboys, schoolgirls and college students, nuns belonging to various religious orders, each group dressed differently from the others, clerics regular and secular, bishops and archbishops...presented a spectacle the like of which has never before been seen in this Metropolitan City.

“Hundreds of jewelled ornamental umbrellas, the kind you see only (on ceremonial occasions) in the Orient, reddish purple, vivid pink, and vermilion, green, emerald aquamarine, saffron, yellow, gold and orange, blue, cobalt and ultramarine, and of innumerable other hues and shades, added beauty and pomp to the solemn scene. This effect was heightened by row upon row of processional crosses of gold and silver, studded with variously coloured precious stones which sparkled in the sun.

“It was not an ordinary funeral procession that we witnessed that day: it was rather the triumph of a victor returning home. The State band played the funeral march and many Ministers of State had taken their places in the grand cortége.

“The dead Archbishop sat in state in a carriage beautifully draped and decorated for the occasion. Mar Severios, Mar Gregorios, Father Seraphion and other members of the O. I. C and diocesan priests of every rank grouped themselves around that impressive figure.

“The Archbishop was placed, still in the seated posture, in an underground vault beneath the sanctuary. The face was then covered with a delicate white silk veil, the body anointed with olive oil and the vault filled with incense and perfumes. Finally the opening into the vault

THE OBSEQUIES

was closed and sealed with cement. Thus ended the last journey of Mar Ivanios."

* * * * *

The first message of condolence to reach Mar Gregorios was from His Highness, the Maharajah:

"It is with feelings of deep sorrow I have come to know of the demise of His Grace Mar Ivanios.

"It is not only a loss to the Archdiocese and those who are familiar with him, but it is also a loss—an individual loss, to the members of our family and to myself. During many years past I have come to know him intimately. He has been a close friend of ours, so I request you to accept our condolence on this occasion of deep sorrow."

The New Leader (Madras):

"Ministers of State, officers and prominent citizens of all castes and creeds called at the Archbishop's Palace to pay their last respects."

This same newspaper gives some less well-known facts concerning the Paniker ancestry:—

"Born 72 years ago, in the ancient 'Mallitti Paniker' family of Mavelikara, the late Dr. Mar Ivanios created a sensation by his re-union with the Catholic Church in 1930. Bhaskara Ravi Varma, one of the later rulers of the Perumal line of kings of Kerala, had bestowed the title Mallitti Paniker on the family, and had given it rent-free lands in recognition of services rendered by one of its members."

Another—a Catholic magazine: "A man endowed with rare and sterling qualities, both of mind and heart, His Grace was at home in the halls of learning as well as in the courts of princes."

Anonymous: "The death of Mar Ivanios removes one of the most colourful personalities of the Catholic Church in India...His appointment as Archbishop of Trivandrum brought to the hierarchy one who knew the Church from outside and added variety of experience and outlook to its organisation. He might have contributed much to Catholic literature in India. But his time and labour were occupied with the building up of his diocese. He was a sacerdos magnus, a pillar of the Church of India. That will be his epitaph."

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

Mr. George Catlin: "If to-day his College has 1,000 students¹, half of them residential...this has been due to the energy of a great man, the head of a more than millenium-old community in a land where Christian parish churches honouring St. Thomas, have the size of small cathedrals, and enshrine a devotion which puts ours to shame."

An editor who admired him: "The late Metropolitan Archbishop of Trivandrum had only one ambition: to devote all his talents and energies to the service of his Lord. And what telents! What energies! Gigantic intellectual power, tremendous strength of will, infinite capacity for hard and persevering toil, inflexible determination, courage unshakable—these were but a few of his many great and marvellous qualities."

One who knew him well: "He led a life of simplicity and service to the poor."

And never were so many poor fed nor fed so sumptuously as after the conclusion of his obsequies.

NOTE

1. More than 2,000 students are enrolled in the Mar Ivanios College as we go to press (1959).—(Author's Note.)

Chapter Twenty-Two

RE-UNION IN TIRUVALLA

I HAVE left the suffragan diocese—Tiruvalla—to the last.

The present Bishop, Rt. Rev. Zacharias Mar Athanasios, was consecrated Bishop Auxiliary to Mar Severios in 1954. On the death of Mar Severios, Mar Athanasios succeeded him. Zacharias Mar Athanasios is himself one of the re-united; he has the distinction of having been first to be reconciled in the presence of Mar Ivanios. His uncle, his brothers and sisters also entered into re-union. His zealous administration is blessed with much fruit.

Within the territorial boundaries of the Tiruvalla diocese, many distinguished Jacobites have entered the Catholic fold during the past few years.

1. Father V. C. Gevarghese B. A. Chorepiscopa: Father Gevarghese was reconciled June 18, 1956. A man learned in Eastern languages, he made an intensive study of Biblical originals, and on comparing these with various post-sixteenth century versions he realised that the Catholic text alone was free from the suppressions and interpolations of the others. This discovery proved the immediate cause of his re-union.

2. Father T. V. John, M. A., L. T., is a graduate of the University of Madras. For many years he held the post of Professor in the Union Christian College, Alwaye. He was reconciled March 17, 1957.

3. Father C. A. Abraham, M. A., B. D., D. Litt. (Oxon.), also graduated from the Madras Christian College. He took his Oxford degree in 1955. He was received into the Catholic fold July 21, 1957. Below will be found his reasons as he himself presents them:

ANTIOCH TO ROME¹

Fr. C. A. Abraham, M. A., B. D., D. Litt. (Oxon.)

...I had always been a Jacobite with an apology! I was born, brought up and ordained in the Patriarch's party of the Jacobite Church, but I was critical of this party on many points, especially in its negative attitude to the ecumenical movement.

But I would not have left the Church of my fathers except through overwhelming inner conviction and compulsion. Nothing less than God's grace can lead one to the truth. I can only briefly indicate the process through which in God's providence I came to the certitude of faith in the Catholic Church.

Since the Jacobite Church could not make claims appropriate to the universal Church, without making itself look ridiculous, my natural tendency was to consider the personal commitment to Christ as the only thing that mattered. The Church was an extra. In any case the true visible unity and order did not matter much. I think many good Jacobites to-day escape in their imagination to a dream Church, for they can hardly recognise the Church in their community. It was during my training in an Anglican Theological College that my eyes were first opened to the relevance and the centrality of the Church in the Christian scheme of things. I learnt that the Church is integral to the Gospel, that it is the Body of Christ without which He is incomplete. The Church is the key to the understanding of history, the agent of God to gather all mankind into God's unity. The Church is the mystery hidden from the foundation of the world. The Church is the New Israel and its wholeness should manifest itself in its outward order. The Church is commissioned with authority to teach the true doctrine and to reject the false. I discovered with some surprise that these statements about the Church, which I had considered Roman Catholic, were entirely Biblical and had the Patristic authority behind them.

The Church of God, I became convinced, cannot be a mere abstraction. The faith in one, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church cannot be the mere expression of a pious hope. I believed with Berdyaev that if the *Una Sancta* has not always existed, it will never exist. But where was it?

The world-wide Protestant communions fascinated me with their vigour; but they could give me little satisfaction theologically. Protestantism is a house deeply divided. It has little claim to historical continuity with the early Church. The Protestant re-union movements are largely efforts at are-adjustment of differences which arose after the sixteenth century. They have no hesitation in rejecting or watering down doctrines and practices for which there was unanimous witness in the Church for about sixteen centuries. Protestants, too, are lovers of tradition; the only difference is that the traditions dear to them usually date back to the sixteenth or later centuries. They set the authority of the Scriptures in the place of the authority of the Church. But their claim that the Bible alone is a self-sufficient standard and guide for doctrines is untenable. This is begging the question, for the claim itself has no Biblical basis. Besides, the appeal to the Scriptures means the appeal to the interpretation of some leader, or of the individual, which is worse. I could not build on the shifting Protestant bases.

Ever since I took the visible unity and order of the Church seriously, there was one constant challenge which I was prevented from taking up by inherited prejudice. That is the massive fact of the Catholic Church, the biggest effective religious force in the world, the only Church which can make universal claims without losing face. The human blemishes of the Church were a good enough reason to keep me away from it for a long time. It did not occur to me then that the tension between the Divine nature of the Church and the sinfulness of its members cannot weaken the Christian belief in what the Church is. To say that the Church has failed is like saying that the weather has failed, there is no substitute for it.

While there have been shadows in the history of the Church, the Catholic Church has always been the home of saints. As Baron Von Hügel said, one finds in the Catholic Church "a quality of sanctity and spiritual achievement that does not seem to be equalled anywhere else". The overbalance of sanity and sanctity has always been on the side of Catholicity. Nowhere else is to be found such an unbroken chain of a host of lives of extraordinary sanctity, beauty and power. There is little doubt that the non-Catholic groups have always benefited secondhand by the work and witness of the

Catholic Church throughout the world. Non-Catholics seem to think (as I did once) that the Catholics are concerned only in touting for the members of other denominations. In point of fact there has never been any missionary enterprise as sustained and vast as that of the Catholic Church. It is interesting to note that the achievements of Catholic missionaries in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, literally from China to Peru, stirred no Protestant emulation for over a century after the death of Luther. There has not been anything quite like the Catholic Church in human history. It is commonplace that the Catholic Church renews herself in every age, while those separated from her either petrify or become hotbeds of curious teachings.

I refer here to the greatness of the Catholic Church, for I can now see that the mere courage to face facts (and not making theories to suit our petty divisions) was the first right step for me. The initial difficulty of the non-Catholic is the suspension of disbelief. Prejudice is the last ditch of the defenceless.

I shall only briefly refer to those eternal points of controversy—the Primacy of St. Peter, the claims of the Bishops of Rome to be his successors in office and certain Catholic dogmas such as Infallibility and Assumption. The Jacobites at least cannot deny the primacy of St. Peter, for the Jacobite Divine Offices and Canon bear ample testimony to the early faith in the Petrine Primacy. A study of the Gospels and Acts as a whole leave no doubt about the fact that St. Peter was the rock on which the Church was built and that Christ made him the head of the band of his chosen Apostles. Recently, an important book on St. Peter has been published by Oscar Cullinan, the greatest New Testament scholar among Protestants. Of the verse, Upon this rock I will build my Church, he says: “When Jesus says that he will build his ecclesia upon this rock, he really means the person of Simon...Upon him is to be founded the Church, which after the death of Jesus will continue his work upon earth.” In another place Cullinan says: “When we

read the promise of Jesus in the light of the history of the Apostolic age, it must be said that it was fulfilled in the sense that Peter actually is the head of the primitive Church.”

It is arguable that the unique office of St. Peter was not meant to be handed down. But there is no evidence to support that view. Christ gave nothing to His Apostles which was not meant for the whole Church. The early Church guided by men whom Christ trained, surely had less need of a head than the Church in the later periods.

When St. Peter went to Rome he could hardly have left behind his office: he still needed it. No one except the Bishop of Rome ever pretended to be the head of the Church during the first eight centuries. A head is no good if it hides! St. Ignatius, who was a successor of St. Peter in Antioch, far from making any claim for his see, acknowledged Rome as presiding over all other Churches. St. Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp, who was trained by the Apostles, says of Rome,

“For with this Church on account of its high origin, the whole church must agree.” It is true that there had been occasionally some complaint against the claims of Rome; but such objections are slight in the context of the whole evidence.

The ecumenical Councils—even of Nicea and Ephesus—proclaim the influence and authority of the See of Rome over the whole Church.

Some of the finest non-Catholic minds have recognised the supreme value of the Papacy. In a report on Catholicity a committee of Anglicans (including Gregory Dix and T. S. Eliot) says: “If such an institution as the ‘universal church’ is to exist as more than a sentiment and an ideal—as a concrete substantial reality within human history in our highly organised modern society—then some such central institutions as the Papacy would seem to be more than just a convenience.”

As for the dogmas, there is no doubt that there has been a development of doctrine in the Church. This is true even of the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. The Church is a living organism and its doctrines are organic developments. This had been ably proved by Cardinal Newman in his *Development of Christian Doctrine*. It still remains the classic statement of this theme.

There is a sense in which the dogmas of the Church can be apprehended only from within. All I can say is that I have enough knowledge and conviction about them as to build my life on those. From within the Church they seem simple in a sense. The infallibility of the Pope can be accepted on the authority of the infallible Church, which in turn is based on the infallible Christ. The Assumption is true because the bond of the Incarnation is unbreakable and St. Mary is united with her Son. Once she was home for Him, now He is home to her.

It is true that the devotional developments in various parts of the Church will not be suited equally to all other parts. The great blessing of the re-union movement in Malabar is that it does not cause any devotional uprooting. The real treasures of the Jacobite Church are preserved in the generous life of the Catholic Church. I do not believe that there is any distinctive value in the Jacobite Church which cannot be better preserved in communion with the Holy See of St. Peter.

My contacts with some of the Catholic thinkers in the West also played some part in shaping my attitude to Catholicism. Through the books of Gerald Vann, Knox, Martindale, de Lubac, Congar, Maritain and others I got a glimpse of the dimension of life in the plenitude of the Church. One cannot be the same again after that. I cannot turn my back on that vision and be alive. I have chosen, therefore, to be a small duck in a big pond rather than

remain a big one in a small pond. "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord" with me.

* * * * *

In the diocese of Tiruvalla there resides, to-day, a lady of charm and culture, who re-united during the lifetime of Mar Ivanios. She is the widow of Mr. George Joseph, M. A., Barrister-at-law. Her husband was a close associate of Mr. Gandhi and for some time edited the journal *Young India*. Subsequently, Mr. Joseph dissociated himself from Gandhi's paper and gave considerable thought and prayer to the claims of the Catholic Church. Archbishop Mar Ivanios received him into the Church soon after his own re-union.

His wife, however, was not convinced—until she saw the extraordinary calm and even the joyous expectancy with which her husband awaited the end. Then indeed, she prayed and studied. To-day, her greatest happiness lies in tending the sanctuary and decorating the altars of one of the daintiest and most artistic little churches ever raised by Mar Ivanios.

NOTE

1. By kind permission.

Chapter Twenty-Three

EXPANSION

BUT it must not be thought that diocesan expansion slowed down after the death of Mar Ivanios. Not at all. The total of the re-united to date (1958) is 1,20,000 souls—the rate of re-union from dissidence keeping steadily to a figure between 5,000 to 6,000 annually during the past five years.

As an example, let us take the expansion of the O. I. C.—the Congregation of Bethany Fathers. Their Asram at Nalamchira is the head-quarters of the inter-diocesan Congregation. Its church, which needs must serve the purpose of a parish church until better times, is a most attractive little edifice which lifts the austere outlines of its slender cross above the feathery foliage of the surrounding tree-tops. Noviceship buildings, monastery, guest house, and study-rooms, are grouped around the church but not structurally connected with it.

There is an O. I. C. Asram at Tiruvalla and another at Kattanam. Their scholasticate in Poona has an interesting history—too long to relate here in any detail. The Papal Seminary—formerly in Kandy—has been removed to Poona, so the Fathers—with greatly increased numbers—are able to combine their own religious community life with the pursuit of specialised academic knowledge. But then sanctity wedded to scholarship has ever been the Catholic ideal.

Work on the mission stations is pre-eminently the Fathers' vocation—a vocation they fulfil with a cheerfulness that at times amounts to heroism. The sun in season, the monsoon in season—they face each quite selflessly. Soaked in perspiration they climb scrubby hills, they negotiate unbridged rivers. Soaked in monsoon downpours, regardless

of leaping lightning and earth-shaking thunders they spend Saturday-Sunday dispensing the Sacraments and offering Qurbano in shed chapels for the most part—miles away from the Asrams of their community. And not one Holy Mass mind you: so inadequate at present is the supply of priests to the need of the ever-increasing Catholic population, that we have known Fathers who had spent till Saturday midnight in the improvised confessionals of their remote mission, leave again on Sundays after their First Mass, sermons, conferences with individual parishioners, to *walk* to the next chapel several miles away. There are of course *some* stations to which buses can be availed of, but for the most part hills and rugged valleys offer no facilities to mechanised transport—even to a simple bicycle. The diocesan priests have like difficulties, and we have seen a member of the college staff return from his Saturday-Sunday mission station exhausted, scarcely able to push his bicycle up the avenue slope. Yet this is the life that Catholic Syrian youth craves—in the diocesan as well as in the religious priesthood. Young men of Kerala offer themselves to the Church and young women of Kerala to the convents in scores and in hundreds: brains and beauty and literary attainments are all poured out generously upon the service of God, with a fervour of sacrifice that has to be seen if it is to be properly appreciated. A Jesuit Father once asked—in a tract the name of which we forget: “Is the Syrian Church indeed reserved to be the salt of the East in the latter day?” That well might be.

The Bethany Sisters too have a wonderful record: from the 10 who entered into re-union in 1930, there are now more than 200 Sisters, including aspirants, scattered over the two dioceses. They conduct high schools, middle schools, primary schools, and a few orphanages. Recently, a new type of school, a nursery school, has been added. It bids fair to be as successful as any of their other undertakings.

The ten Sisters who so courageously entered into re-union in September, 1930, deserve a paragraph to themselves. We have chosen to call each one Mother, for are they not truly the Mothers of their Institute? Let us name them then in order of precedence: Mothers Shina, Huba, Deneha, Salga, Maxa, Tybus, Basim, Sibar, Hymeneuse, and Trisus¹. Of these the first six named are they who studied under the direction of Mar Ivanios and Anglican Sisters in Calcutta and in Barisol respectively. Indeed we may confess here that Mother Deneha is to be identified with the

“B.A. Girl” mentioned in one of our earlier chapters. Mother Shina, the first Mother General, had died; Mothers Maxa and Salga held the office of Mother General over different periods. Mother Huba proved herself a capable and zealous superior of the Tiruvalla Houses when the original circle had been divided up between the two dioceses.

Thanks to the Cardinal Protector — His Eminence Cardinal Tisserant...Rev. Dr. Placid, T.O.C.D., was empowered by Papal Bulls to raise the Sisterhood to the dignity of a Pontifical Congregation. The date was 21st August, 1956; now Mother Maxa is once more Mother General of the Inter-diocesan body and Mother Basim takes the duties of Mother Provincial.

The Fathers of *this* Third Order of Carmelites Discalced—a purely Syrian Order—have always had an especial connection with the Congregations founded by Mar Ivanios. Rev. Fr. Pius, T.O.C.D., was Vicar to Mar Ivanios in 1936, and temporary Father General to the O.I.C Congregation. Father Francis de Sales, another member of the T.O.C.D., acted as administrator for the Archdiocese during the declining years of Mar Ivanios. It was under the administration of Father de sales that Mgr. Augusto Lombardi regularised the Bethany Fathers’ Constitutions. Syrian Carmelites to-day work in the Tamil districts of the Archdiocese.

Mar Ivanios in his last message acknowledges gratefully the co-operation he had so unstingingly received from the Syro-Malabar Bishops and priests. There was one Syro-Malabar priest who was to contribute to the Archdiocese not alone personal service but the lasting benefits of a Religious Congregation which his apostolic zeal brought into being. He is Rev. Fr. Joseph Kuzhinjalil and the Sisterhood which he founded is known as the Daughters of Mary: but as Marthandom is the seat of the Mother House, they are popularly called the Marthandom Sisters.

Twenty-five years ago young Father Joseph’s mission lay chiefly among the Tamil-speaking Hindu population of the South. Soon his catechumens and newly baptised grew too numerous for his own unassisted efforts: he saw the need for a band of devoted women who might be engaged in reaping where he had sown. Mar Ivanios saw the need more clearly still. Three capable women of the Syro-Malabar Rite soon presented themselves. One is the present Mother General. On May

EXPANSION

8, 1938, Mar Ivanios assisted by the Rev. Fr. Purakel, S. J.—brother of Rev. Mathew Purakel (who in 1932 efficiently organised Anna Paniker's funeral, when Mar Ivanios was fleeing from his enemies), laid the foundation-stone of their Mother House in Marthandom. Postulants presented themselves: the numbers increased. Someone was needed to train them in the principles and practices of the Religious Life. Mar Ivanios sent the young Bethany Mother Basim to them. Mother Basim remained in the Marthandom house for two whole years, thus forging a bond of mutual affection and esteem between the two Congregations.

As is the way with Syrian religious institutes the Daughters of Mary spread rapidly. Soon they were opening schools and studying nursing professionally. Now their schools and hospitals are recognised and aided by Government—though with regard to the schools they worked valiantly for years without any salary. They run a much appreciated hospital at Anchal, the medical staff of which works under the Sisters' management.

The Daughters of Mary now number ten convents, and nearly 160 professed members. Most of their teaching Sisters possess University degrees. And all this build-up was accomplished by the co-operation of Mar Ivanios with the carefully economic administration of the Founder-Director, Rev. Fr. Joseph Kuzhinjalil. A further important development took place during 1957 under Archbishop Mar Gregorios; the Sisters bought an extensive acreage and built a roomy noviceship within reach of the Medical College Hospital. This augurs well for their expectation of future expansion. At present the Marthandom communities exist only in the Archdiocese.

As previously stated one of the first to visit Mar Ivanios in his Little House in Tiruvalla a few days after his re-union was the then youthful Rev. Brother Elias of the Missionary Brothers of St. Francis of Assisi. To-day he is the superior of an orphanage in a fold of the Bethany Hills. It was declared open by Sri. B. V. K. Menon, Chief Secretary of the Government, and was blessed by Mar Gregorios, 22nd April, 1956. Previous to that the Brothers were confined to a small compound at the college gates.

Several mission stations were earlier opened up by the Brothers in various parts of the Archdiocese. Some of those mission stations have

become regular parishes. The new orphanage building now sheltering 150 orphan boys, was one of the most cherished projects of Mar Ivanios. He grieved that he must die before he should behold its accomplishment.

Last year (1956) Mar Gregorios introduced two unique Sisterhoods into the Archdiocese. They live in small groups—3 to 5—usually in earthen whitewashed leaf-thatched houses like those of the poor around them. They do their own housework, trudge to market when necessary, use French, English or Malayalam as circumstances may require. When properly organised they will live by the labours of their own hands. To the casual passer-by, theirs is just another thatched domicile—like that of their neighbours. Within, structurally it is also similar; but one tiny room is set aside as an Oratory where the Blessed Sacrament abides, and where with the generosity that springs from the intensity of Faith, the Bethany Fathers and the diocesan priests at whatever cost of their own convenience, come on appointed days to offer the Holy Sacrifice, and to provide spiritual guidance.

These Little Sisters are the dream-children of that extraordinary ascetic of modern times—Père Charles de Foucauld. We call them his dream-children because although he drew up detailed rules and constitutions of the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus, the two congregations which he longed to establish, he died by an assassin's hand, alone in the desert of the Sahara before he could initiate them. About twenty years ago certain holy souls, fired with the spirit of Père Charles, brought into being, under Papal sanction of course, the two congregations for which the holy man had sighed. They are called respectively the Little Brothers of Jesus, and the Little Sisters of Jesus—just as he had named them in his dreams.

In 1933 another congregation—the Little Sisters of the Sacred Heart—also following the spiritual ideals of Charles de Foucauld came into existence. Mar Gregorios has brought both Sisterhoods into the Archdiocese. The Little Brothers have not so far reached S. India.

The number of catechists increases annually, and as for the Legion of Mary—well, its name is legion in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum.

The Mar Ivanios College to-day offers hospitality in season to various Catholic conferences and associations. The most important, perhaps, of

EXPANSION

these, the South Kerala Regional Conference of the All-India Catholic University Federation, was held in Mar Ivanios College from December 29, 1957 to January 2, 1958 (vacation time). Its men members found ample room in the spacious dormitories, but the girls came, hundreds of them, and took possession of a partially-finished High School within reach of the Bethany Sisters' Convent, Nalamchira. At these conferences, Latins and Syrians meet and mingle under their respective Bishops, priests and religious lay-leaders of both sexes.

Here is an extract from their Call to Action: "The ultimate aim of the All-India Catholic University Federation is neither cultural nor political: it is something deeper—to help our fellow-students to discover the love of Christ for them, to bring them into the unity of His Church...."

Thus we see the Church unity movement perpetuating itself.

Abroad in the Archdiocese we find graceful modern churches replacing shed-chapels with almost magical swiftness. It is quite impossible to keep up-to-date with current developments. Before these pages get through press, the number of priests, diocesan and regular, sisters, schools, orphanages, clinics and reconcilements with Holy Church will have multiplied over again in both dioceses.

And finally the very latest news from Trivandrum: "The jurisdiction of the Syro-Malankara Hierarchy has been extended to north. The area has been more than doubled.... Our mission work is making real progress. The Holy Father's call has aroused great sympathy among dissidents. The Church will see a flowering of Christian life after the General Council." (From letters to the author, June to December, 1959, written by His Grace Most Rev. Benedict Mar Gregorios, Archbishop of Trivandrum.)

Praise God for the Re-union of Mar Ivanios!

NOTE

1. The Syriac forms of Saints' names.

Appendix One

ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

WHEN the late Holy Father wrote to the Bishops of the Universal Church asking to be informed of the “feeling” of their various flocks concerning the Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven, Mar Ivanios gives such a detailed history of the East’s ancient devotion to the Mother of God, that one cannot omit it from the Appendix.

2nd November, 1946.

May it please Your Holiness,

I, the undersigned, Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan Archbishop of Trivandrum of the Malankara Syro-Antiochean Rite, Your Holiness’s devoted son in Christ, beg leave to express hereby my explanation and judgment concerning the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven, body and soul. I do this in answer to Your Holiness’s circular letter of 1st May, 1946, sent to all the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops and local ordinaries of the whole Catholic Church:

The Archdiocese of Trivandrum of the Malankara Syro-Antiochean Rite over which I preside under Your Holiness’s Supreme Petrine jurisdiction came into existence in 1932, two years after my re-union with the See of Peter in 1930. The faithful of my Archdiocese are composed of souls received into the Church from the Jacobites, Marthomites (Reformed Jacobites) and other schismatics as well as from non-Christians of various castes and creeds. Among my priests there are those who were ordained in Malankara Schismatic Church as I myself was; there are some I conditionally ordained after my re-union; and there are others who received ordination after going through a course of

ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

Theology in major seminaries conducted by Catholic priests; and of these latter some are re-united, while some are young men who were originally Catholics of the Syro-Malabar Rite. There are also under me Syro-Malabar priests lent to me by the Syro-Malabar Bishops and by the Prior General of the Tertiary Syro-Malabar Carmelite Congregation.

My priests and I believe and teach that the Blessed Virgin Mary after her physical death was assumed into Heaven soul and body. Those of my priests who were born and brought up in the Catholic Church believe this doctrine as something handed on to them from all antiquity. Regarding those re-united from Jacobitism both clergy and laity, I have no hesitation to say that they find in this doctrine the same teaching that they were believing while they were in the schismatic Jacobite Church. Those reunited from the Marthomite and similar bodies may not have had any idea about this, their former tendency having been to belittle the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Jacobite Church both of Malankara and of Syria, celebrate the Transitus (Shunoyo) of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the 15th of August, and the Feast is preceded by a fast called the FIFTEEN DAYS' FAST, the last day being the Feast day itself. The Divine Office assigned for the Feast and for the days that precede and follow, speaks in the clearest terms that the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary was separated from her body at her death. and that her soul and body were transferred to Heaven after her death. The ancient Syrian Office containing these passages is called PENKISO. The Jacobites of Syria have it only in manuscript copies. Hence only few Syrian manuscript copies are to be found among the Malankara Jacobites. Nevertheless the Jacobite Cor-Episcopa Mathew Konatt (appointed Malpan—Doctor of Theology—of Malankara by a former Jacobite Patriarch, Peter III, who visited Malabar in 1875) selected certain passages from the Syrian PENKISO and published them in book-form in Malayalam for the use of the laity as part of the layman's prayer book. Patriarch Ignatius Abdullah, on the occasion of his visit to Malankara in 1910, approved the translation and ordered the laity to use it. It was published again in 1927 from St. Thomas Press, Mulamthuruthi. At present there is a faction in the Malankara Jacobite Church, one party supports the Patriarch, and the other party supports the Catholics. There is no doctrinal difference between the two sections. The Jacobites of both

sections use the PENKISO as well as this book of selected prayers in Malayalam. The importance of the latter comes from its being published for the use of the faithful in Malayalam, the everyday language of the people, as part of the Divine Office for the use of the laity. The passages therefore that favour the doctrine of the Assumption must be said to express the faith of the Jacobite clergy and laity. May I cite below the pertinent passages translating them from Malayalam in which language they are used in Malankara.

**The Prayer Book of the Jacobite Syrian Christians of
Malankara**

(2nd Edition—1927)

The following passages are given under the heading on page 211, “Prayer to be said along with the Evening Office, every day from August 1st during the FIFTEEN DAYS’ FAST preceding the Feast of the Assumption.”

Page 230: “O Lord Thou didst receive the soul of Thy Mother at the time of Her death, coming down as Thou didst with the assembly of Angels, Prophets, Martyrs and Ancient Fathers, So do Thou in Thy mercy look upon and accept our fasts and prayers. In the same manner as *Her body was lifted up into Heaven* in the midst of the solemn reception and songs of the Angels and of all the Saints, so may our fasts and prayers be lifted up before Thee into Heaven.”

Page 216: August 15, the Feast day—Evening Office.

“O God Christ , Who didst honour and *lift up the body* of Thy Mother into Heaven in the midst of the solemnity of the choirs of all the Apostles who were living and who had departed, and of the Prophets and of all the Heavenly Host, may the prayer of Thy Mother be a fortress to us. In Her going up into Heaven the air (atmosphere) was sanctified and the earth was blessed.”

“Blessed art thou, O Holy Mother of God, because thou didst become the Throne of God, who can describe (adequately) the event of the taking up solemnly into Heaven of the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Throne, by the Angels of the Son of God and by the Prophets and the Apostles who were all well pleasing to Him. O Virgin Mother, may thy prayers help us to glorify with joy the holy and happy state and to resemble thee.”

Page 218: The Feast Day—Morning Office.

ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

“Indescribable are the miracles and helps which were worked by Her, while She was alive and also after Her soul had departed Her body, from Her cot and from Her bed and from Her clothes. Holy Mother, since thy prayers are incomparably acceptable before the Son of God to whom you gave birth, do have the compassion to pray for us.”

“O Mother of God, thy only begotten Son has clearly shown forth by thy death and by thy going up to Heaven that thou art verily the Mother of God, the Queen of Saints and the Pride of Christians.”

“The hosts of Angels, the just, the holy ones, the saintly ones, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Holy Fathers and Doctors, assembling in choirs and standing in rows shouted forth praises in solemnity and *lifted up Her body* with praise and with reverence.”

“O Lord, grant that we be led forth to places full of repose and joy by Thy Angels of peace.”

This Jacobite Office which was introduced into Malankara three centuries ago reflects the old Faith of the Jacobite Church which had its origin in Syria in the sixth century. The faith in the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was not anything newly invented by the Jacobites at any time. It is the common heritage of all ancient Christian bodies. If it had been invented and newly introduced by the Jacobites, the other Christian bodies would have found fault with them in this matter. So too, the Jacobites would have blamed the other Christian bodies if they had invented it at any time. The fact that the Nestorians, who were the immediate neighbours and the most implacable foes of the Jacobites, do not find fault with the Jacobites in this doctrine, is clear proof that this doctrine is pre-Nestorian, and had been handed down from the undivided Syrian Church which existed before the schism arose between the Nestorians and Jacobites. The Nestorians, too, celebrate the Feast of the Assumption (Shunaya) on August 15, and they too have 15 days, fast before the Feast, which is itself a clear proof that the tradition and the practice of the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the faith in Her bodily Transitus into Heaven existed before the period of the separation of these two sects. As there is no age in the history of the Church to which one can point out that this belief in the bodily Transitus of the Blessed Virgin Mary was newly introduced, we must infer that it is Apostolic in origin.

Schism arose in the Syrian Church of St. Thomas in Malankara (Malabar) as a result of the attempt of Latin missionaries to introduce Latin customs and liturgy into this Oriental Church. And in 1663 a Jacobite prelate was welcomed by the schismatics into Malabar. The schismatics could not have had any objection to agreeing with the Jacobites in the teaching about the Assumption of Our Lady. To illustrate thus, may I be permitted to go back to the past history of the undivided St. Thomas Syrian Church of Malankara.

Till 1653 the Apostolic Syrian Church of Malankara was one, and was using the Syro-Chaldean rite. From 1600 to 1653, the year of the split, all the St. Thomas Christians were under the rule of Latin prelates. Before that period it had Syro-Chaldean prelates. The Synod of Diamper of 1599 which made revolutionary changes in the Syro-Chaldean Church of Malankara (Malabar) says, in decree 10, Actio VIII:

“Approbat insuper Synodus jejunium praemitti solitum ad *assumptionem* Dominae nostrae a prima augusti ad illud festum.”

The Feast therefore and the fast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary were being kept by the Syrian Church of Malankara (Malabar) before 1599.

It will therefore be very pleasing to my clergy, people and myself to have the doctrine of the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven declared as a dogma of the Catholic Church.

With regard to the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar, both the Syro-Malankareans and the Syro-Malabarians, such a declaration will give a new impetus to their filial devotion to the Mother of God whom they venerate in a very special manner. They alone in the whole world observe an EIGHT DAYS' FAST ending with the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady, thus manifesting that they have a special devotion to her. The characteristic of this Fast, traditionally believed to have originated in the ninth century, is that in some parts of Malabar even non-Christian girls keep it giving offerings to Christian churches and praying in them. e.g., at Manarkad Church in the Jacobite Heptarchy of Kottayam and at the Church of Nagapuzha in the Syro-Malabar Archdiocese of Ernakulam. Unmarried girls, and girls who are married but without children, assemble in the church during these fast-days and spend the daytime in fasting and prayer.

ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

I therefore with my priests and people most humbly beg Your Holiness to have the doctrine of the bodily Assumption into Heaven of the Mother of God declared as a dogma of the Church. Hoc enim licet, decet atque expedit.

Humbly prostrating before Your Holiness and begging blessings.

I remain,

Your Holiness's devoted son in Christ,

(Signed) Mr. Ivanios,

Archbishop of Trivandrum.

Appendix Two

MY RE-UNION

by Rev. Fr. V. T. Thomas

(Rev Fr. V. T. Thomas was a student under Rev. Professor Gevarghese in the Carey College, Serampore, but became a Catholic years before the re-union of his revered Guru¹.

Father Thomas is living still, and has most kindly given us permission to include several interesting paragraphs from his autobiography as an appendix to our very imperfect account of the struggles and achievements of the great Archbishop).

A Retrospective Study.

A retrospective study of the operations of grace in me will, I hope, be helpful to my non-Catholic friends. As I was received in the Catholic Church seven years before the re-union of my revered GURU, His Grace Mar Ivanios, the first Archbishop of Trivandrum of the Syro-Malankara Rite, the following account will throw much light on the history of the re-union of His Grace to the Catholic Church.

Having finished my school final in 1914, in my twenty-second year, at Mavelikara B. H. High School; while remaining a Jacobite, I was ordained a deacon, i.e., a cleric, at the Parumala church in Travancore. As the Jacobites had no college of their own, it was a custom at that time, to send their young men to the colleges of other denominations, to be educated in Arts and Theology, Hence, I too, with some of my selected companions, was sent by the ecclesiastical authorities to the Protestant College at Serampore near Calcutta, which stands on the river Hoogly in

Bengal. As Rev. Fr. Gevarghese, M. A., the former principal of the M.D. Seminary, Kottayam, the late Mar Ivanios, Archbishop of Trivandrum, was one of the newly appointed professors of the Serampore College, the clerical students were entrusted to him as their guardian.

Kottayam

After six year of my college course at Sarampore, I returned with a diploma of Licentiate in Theology. In 1921, Mar Dionysius, the Jacobite Metropolitan of Malankara, appointed me to teach Theology, Bible and Church History to the clerical students of the old seminary at Kottayam.

I have with me even now a group photograph of the staff and students of the Theological seminary at Kottayam. From it one can see that out of forty clerical students who became priests long ago, seventeen are reunited with the Catholic Church, working in the two dioceses of Trivandrum and Thiruvalla.

Towards the end of the year 1923, Mar Dionysius, the Malankara Metropolitan, advised me to prepare myself for becoming a priest of the Jacobite Church. I was, however, reluctant to follow his advice.

Search for truth had become a habit with me and some of my companions, wherever we happened to be. Formerly also during our stay with Rev. Fr. Gevarghese, the college professor and warden of the Syrian Hostel, Serampore, I with my companions Deacon Jacob, Deacon Koshi and Deacon Joseph used to discuss with the neighbouring vicar, an old venerable Jesuit Father, various religious topics, in particular the claims of the Jacobite Church, and of the Catholic Church. Rev. Fr. Gevarghese permitted his students to attend Holy Mass in the neighbouring Catholic church of the above-mentioned Jesuit Father, on Sundays and other feast days, when there was no Mass in our chapel.

* * * * *

But before joining the Catholic Church I thought it my duty to go and see my professor, Fr. Gevarghese, at Thiruvalla, where he was staying at that time, working for his newly-started Religious Order. When I informed him of my intention to join the Catholic Church, he did not object, but he told me to wait for some time and not to be in a hurry, but I could not follow his advice in this.

Just like the man in the parable of Our Lord who sold all that he had in order to buy the field having a great treasure hidden therein, I was determined to embrace the Catholic Church at any cost, without any further delay. Hence, leaving behind all, my people and community, in spite of the displeasure of my Jacobite superiors, I entered the Catholic Church, trusting in the help of the Almighty God.

It must be remembered that in those days a convert to Catholicism had to face strong opposition from non-Catholic brethren and had to be prepared to face volleys of accusations and reproaches from his former co-religionists. When the Jacobite Bishop of Kundara, Mar Gregorios—the present Catholicos—was informed that I was about to join the Catholic Church, he sent a priest to Mavelikara to take me back to him. But before he could find me, I had already reached Quilon.

* * * * *

Soon after joining the Major Seminary, Quilon, I gave the Bishop of Quilon and the Rector and Spiritual Director of Seminary, Quilon, an account of Fr. Gevarghese, Superior of the Bethany, his newly organised Religious Society of the Order of the Imitation of Christ and His attitude towards the Catholic Church. They were all glad to hear of it and asked me to pray fervently for the re-union of Rev. Fr. Gevarghese (Mar Ivanios) and his followers. Each of them told me that Fr. Gevarghese and his Religious Society would surely join the Catholic Church, if they had a pure intention, because many such religious Societies had in times past joined the Catholic Church in England and in other places. With the re-union of the Bethany Superior and his Religious Society, the above hope was fulfilled.

After successfully, completing the courses of Philosophy and Theology in the Major Seminary, I was ordained priest with seven other classmates of mine, on March 16, 1929.

* * * * *

Until the re-union of Mar Ivanios, those Jacobites who were convinced of the true Faith were re-united to the Catholic Church here and there individually as priests or laymen, chiefly within the territorial limits of the Diocese of Quilon. *Now, the far-sighted Archbishop has devised an effective means to re-unite the Jacobites in large numbers by*

getting recognised from the Holy See the Malankara Syrian Rite and a separate Ecclesiastical Hierarchy for the same.

* * * * *

The next scene of my labours is the Pro-Cathedral of Tangaserry, Quilon, where I was able to work satisfactorily for nearly a year; from Tangaserry I was sent to the District of Arinelloor-Koivila, to fill up the vacancy caused by the sad demise of the Very Rev. Fr. Dominic, the parish priest. Here, I remained till 23rd May, 1955, when owing to my ill-health, His Lordship Bishop of Quilon kindly insisted that I must have the necessary rest and treatment to recuperate my health. During my resting period in the Bishop's House, I attempted to fulfil my long cherished desire to return and work in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum of the Malankara Rite. His Grace, the late lamented Mar Ivanios and his successor the present Mar Gregorios were most willing to receive me into the Archdiocese to employ me there, even though I had spent the major part of my life in the Quilon Diocese. After having got the necessary permission, I left Quilon Diocese on the 9th of March, 1957 and was received here on the same day by His Grace Benedict Mar Gregorios Archbishop of Trivandrum. A few days having elapsed, I was appointed the Vicar of St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Trivandrum, where I continue my pastoral work with more vigour and earnestness. Hence I cordially thank the Almighty for His guidance and graces towards me, for giving me health and long life to work for the divine glory and the salvation of souls.

I sympathise with so many others outside the fold, who have not yet got the light nor found out the way, the truth and the life, in the Church of God, and I sincerely pray for their conversion.

Deo Gratias Virginique Matri Laus.

(Signed) Fr. V. T. Thomas.

NOTE

1. Professor.



MALANKARA
LIBRARY

ARCHBISHOP MAR IVANIOS

Apostle of Church Union

MARGARET GIBBONS

"This book opens a window on the too-little known East and its teeming millions. Archbishop Mar Ivanios, the subject of this discriminating study, was a member of the Malankara Church which is the indigenous Church of India originating with St. Thomas the Apostle. He reunited with the Catholic Church in 1930 and with thousands of other Jacobites, became convinced of the unique claims of the Catholic Church and the futility of seeking sanction and spiritual solace elsewhere and believed in the reunion of Christendom on the basis of historical Christianity.

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Book Review in *STUDIES* (Dublin) Spring 1964, Vol. LIII, No. 209, P.94.



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