



The General's Nephew Picks the Lepers

Father Joseph Sweeney, of New Britain, Conn., one of Maryknoll's "leper priests," recalls for us the remarkable story of Dr. Bagalawis, of Manila.

The General's nephew, Dr. Bagalawis (left), with Father Joseph Sweeney and one of the lepers.



SOME thirty-odd years ago, "the hero of the Philippines," as they called the little General, gazed upon a child in its cradle and dreamed a dream. In it, the parents entrusted to his guardianship this, the youngest of their many children. Presently Artemio Bagalawis was transferred from the parental home in one of Cavite's over-crowded districts to the sumptuous dwelling which tourist guides proudly pointed out as "the house where General Quinalso lives."

Now little Artemio lived there too. He and his uncle, the General, passed many happy days of sham battles with toy soldiers and cannon and machine guns. In time, the games were interrupted by the arrival of tutors—the best that the General could find.

To the palace often came high officials and dignitaries, who were charmed by Artemio's winning ways and entertained by his talented rendition of the native folk songs and dances. These men of affairs made no objection when the actor lingered, as he often did, to hear their discussions on important military, economic, and political matters. At such times, the old campaigner would smile complacently—excellent

training this, for his successor on the battlefield.

Then, one day, the General awoke to find his dream come true and his nephew grown to man's estate. Strangely enough, Artemio, with all his youthful promise, was not attracted to the army or politics as a profession, but to medicine. In the pursuit of this study, he went to Manila, and while at the University of Santo Tomas, he embraced the Catholic Faith.

In 1933 he obtained his degree, and then engaged in private practice in the city. One day, on his round of calls, he happened to hear about Dr. Harry Blaber, of Brooklyn, N. Y., who had affiliated himself with Maryknoll and was then in charge of Sacred Heart Hospital at Toi Shaan, South China. Following a generous impulse, the Manila doctor turned his back on a promising future and joined our family.

About this same time, our work among the lepers at Sunwui was begun. We set up our establishment in the cemeteries on the outskirts of the city, the only place where these unfor-

GOD'S work is done through human agencies, and much is left unaccomplished when we fail to act.

tunates are allowed to congregate. It was not long before the two doctors began to pay us weekly visits, and, as leprosy was Dr. Bagalawis' special field, he resigned his post at the hospital and took up a grave(yard) existence with us.

We hope the General does not fall asleep again at this point, for he would call it a nightmare if he watched his dream-child bending over a row of test tubes and bottles in a partitioned square of a flimsy matshed dispensary. In the tiny reception room adjoining, crowd scores of sore-covered, malodorous, ragged creatures. But these are the more fortunate of the colonists; they can still be up and about their daily round of monotony and suffering. They wait patiently in the little room while Dr. Bagalawis prepares the salves and ointments which, while they will not cure, will at least alleviate the pain. Some few may even have a thought of sympathy for the tired man who often enough is called to Toi Shaan for consultations and operations.

Yet, despite the handicaps and lack of facilities, Dr. Bagalawis' association with our Leprosarium has won for it a high rating in medical circles. Our methods of treatment follow closely those used at the world's largest leper asylum, at Culion, P. I. Recently Dr. Jose Manalang, world-famed pathologist returning from a League of Nations Conference on leprosy, stopped with us several days to study our cases and to give us the benefit of his research.

But withal, Dr. Bagalawis, like his famous uncle the General, must have dreams too—of a modernly equipped hospital, where battles for souls and human lives would not be against such terrific odds.

IF YOU CANNOT GO TO THE MISSIONS YOURSELF BE A

On the Maryknoll Newsfront



The late Father Connors with a leper

age and love of a Damien he went down to the most abandoned and suffering of men, the lepers—with all the tenacity of his Divine vocation he stood beside them though the war, the elements, poverty and the vicissitudes of human nature sought ever and again to tear him loose and to destroy all he had done to bring souls to Christ.”

We have since learned that flags on all public buildings were at half-mast, while every municipal department was well represented at a Requiem Mass celebrated in Peabody, at the hour when the remains of our confrere were being interred at Maryknoll.

Wedding Bells—

If prophetic vision had been granted General Quinalso some thirty-five years ago, we wonder how he would have expressed his congratulations to his adopted nephew, Artemio Bagalawis, on the recent occasion of that young man's nuptials in the chapel of the Maryknoll Leper Colony.



Doctor Bagalawis

What Others Think—

Our grief—and our pride—in the death of Father Francis J. Connors continues to find sympathetic vibrations among his countless friends throughout the country. Monsignor Hunt gives a glowing tribute to “the leper priest” in the “Visitation Weekly,” an excerpt from which reads:

“With the zeal of a Xavier he stood on the frontiers of Christianity to rally souls to the Crucified Christ—with the cour-

the army or the field of politics?

In brief, General, this is how it came about. While Artemio attended the University of Santo Tomas in Manila he was drawn to the study of medicine. Thereupon, he pursued this course while the *Hound of Heaven* pursued him. Before receiving his degree in 1933, Artemio embraced the Catholic Faith. Hearing of our Leper Colony in South China, the young doctor immediately offered his valuable services to the two priests in charge—Father Sweeney and the late Father Connors.

During his infrequent days off duty, Dr. Bagalawis met and courted Miss Venturda Dudley, a native of the Philippines, which brings the story *au courant* with three hundred lepers witnessing the happy union. God bless them—always.

Long May He Live—

Legally speaking, Ma Hsiang Po's lease on life expired two months ago, when he commemorated his ninety-ninth birthday. Among the guests at the party celebration were Monsignor Romaniello and Father



Mr. Ma on his ninety-ninth birthday

Toomey. With them we unite in the prayer that this renowned scholar may be permitted to renew his contract, and thus be spared many years to continue his noble apostolate.

Maryknollers first became acquainted with Ma Hsiang through their mutual friend, Father Lebbe, who inaugurated the method of teaching directly to pagans. Conference halls were opened at Tientsin and in surrounding villages, for the purpose of attracting natives who might hesitate to approach the missionaries under more intimate circumstances.

In 1914, Father Lebbe rented the beautiful and spacious Canton Guild Hall in Tientsin for three days, during which time Ma Hsiang—famous in literary circles throughout China—delivered several remarkable addresses. Since that time, Mr. Ma has been affiliated with the Catholic University of Peking and named Honorary Dean of the Catholic Action Association in China.

Despite his advanced age, Mr. Hsiang's mind is still keenly active, and he is intent on disseminating his great fund of knowledge—both religious and secular—among his fellow countrymen.

Americans who conquered Mount Everest. Next time, I thought, I'll bring a cross with me, plant it at the top and claim the mountain for Christ.

As we looked down the other side, we saw the village of Tai Ti nestled among the mountains. It was quite a sight to look down and see all of those thatched, mud houses crowded together. After a short breather, we started our descent.

When we arrived on the outskirts of the village, the people ran out in a group to meet us.

Broad smiles beamed across their faces. "Thank you, thank you. You have had much suffering in coming to our wretched little village. How can we ever thank you." They repeated this over and over again.

Father John and I were ushered into the largest house in the village and offered comfortable cushions to sit on. Then the children came in to offer us a bow of welcome. As soon as the welcoming ceremonies were over, they said, "Just to show you how much we have learned of your God and His wonderful doctrine of Love, some of our young men wish to recite the catechism from memory."

To my surprise, they had already learned over two-thirds of the catechism. Great numbers of the children came in and recited the prayers that are required before formal study of the doctrine can begin. The old and illiterate also came to us and asked if they might be able to learn so that they too could receive Baptism.

Hearing catechism lessons pro-

vides a good chance to teach the truths of our Faith. So I spoke to all the people present concerning the wonderful plan that God has for mankind, that He is our Father, that we are His children and thus are all members of one family. With reverent awe they listened quietly. Afterwards they promised to study the doctrine more zealously. As we left they said, "Please, Father, come to our village and offer your Sacrifice that God will bless us and our children." Who could refuse? They had a great desire for the Mass even though they were not baptized.

Since the hour was getting late and we still had to climb that mountain again, we prepared to depart. Although it meant a long return trip over the mountain for them, many insisted on accompanying us back to where our car was parked. It was a happy sight to see the children playing and laughing as they ran down the hill, racing one another to get to our car first.

After many bows, we left Tai Ti and promised to return as soon as possible. I feel certain that the devil will be driven from that hidden and forgotten village, and that Christ will reign in the hearts of these people. If all goes well, they will need a chapel soon, but more than anything else, they will need our prayers.

God willing, they will receive the fullness of Faith and the grace to become our brothers in Christ through Faith. I shall never forget that day when we visited the village that asked for God. ■■



Dr. Bagalawis (right) in China in the 1930's.

LONG BEFORE the term "lay missionary" came into common usage, Doctor Artemio J. Bagalawis of the Philippines was one. After earning his M.D. degree in Manila, he went to work thirty years ago in South China under the direction of Bishop James E. Walsh, who is now imprisoned by the Communists in Shanghai.

Doctor Bagalawis staffed a clinic in Toishan, and then joined Maryknoll's Father Frank Connors to work in a leprosarium. Eventually he wound up with Father Joseph Sweeney, and still is with him.

Twenty-five years ago the doctor married a nurse, Flora Dudley. During World War II they were arrested. Mrs. Bagalawis was sent to Manila, the doctor was imprisoned. As a result of confinement in cold and damp cells he contracted tuberculosis.

After three years Doctor Bagalawis

THIRTY YEARS A LAY MISSIONER

by RAYMOND NIHILL, M.M.

was released. Although he tried to help Maryknollers working with refugees in Hong Kong, they decided it would be best for him to return to the Philippines for rest.

Meanwhile, Father Sweeney was driven from his mission by the Communists. His next assignment was to South Korea, where he opened the Saint Lazarus Clinic for Hansen's disease and organized mobile units to visit small villages. As the work increased, Father Sweeney sent for Doctor Bagalawis. Since 1955 the two China veterans have been treating Korean victims of leprosy.

On their silver jubilee, Doctor and Mrs. Bagalawis were honored at a special Mass celebrated by Archbishop Ro of Seoul. In attendance were Maryknollers, Columbans, Benedictines and members of practically every other mission group in Korea. ■■