

In their extensive philanthropical work the nuns devote their attention most of all to the so-called »sainte enfance», a school for about 300 small girls abandoned for various reasons by their parents. They are housed in a very large brick building surrounding a courtyard. The lower floor is occupied by the dining-room and 6 large dormitories, the upper floor by large, light rooms for classes, needlework and gymnastics. The girls have acquired great skill in handicraft. They make their own clothes, knit stockings, weave cotton cloth and ribbons, and do charming embroidery. A beginning has just been made in breeding silkworms. The idea is to maintain and bring up the children on a commercial basis as far as possible. About a dozen deaf and dumb girls are taught separately by one of the nuns. In addition about 1,000 deserted girls are kept at the expense of the mission in Christian Chinese families. Up to the age of 8 the cost of maintenance amounts to 6—8 taels a year for each child and later slightly more. The mission keeps charge of them until they get married, as a rule to Catholics.

A boys' school for about 100 youngsters from the mission stations in the neighbourhood is run by one of the fathers. The best pupils enter a seminary that prepares them for the priesthood. About 20 boys from the village at the monastery are trained by one of the sisters to become French interpreters. I witnessed a performance of »Mangegosse et petit Pousset», a little play with some songs acted by all the pupils of the school. They performed very creditably and were very amusing, when, after the play, they sang some comic songs in turn. »Pousset», a child of six, was not disturbed in the least by our presence and sang a snatch of song with appropriate gestures, and »Mangegosse» was very comical — swinging his cane and accompanying his hoarse little voice with the gestures of a true dandy.

There is a special section for a few dozen children who are mentally or physically deficient and will probably remain on the hands of the mission for the whole of their lives. Quite a number of grown-up cripples could be seen in the courtyards, gardens and kitchen of the monastery.

The kitchen garden, which was large and contained many vegetables unknown elsewhere in China, is managed by the nuns. There are only 15 of them, but they seem to find time for all their duties. The women's division was established 18 years ago and already there are 11 tombstones along one of the walls. The Superior told me that the first years were very hard, but that she would not return now, even if she had the chance. None of the nuns had ever gone back.

In the evening I had a heavy supper in the same little dining-room, where the table was decorated with fresh roses. »La mère Georgine», an excellent old Swiss woman, waited on the Fathers and me and forced everything the monastery could offer on me with gentle persistence. After listening to some music played by the brass band in the garden in front of the main building I left in order to make a start early the next morning.

*May 14th.* Provided with a large sack of food by the nuns, I mounted my horse, while the pupils of the seminary sang the Russian national anthem to the great delight of the villagers. Having thanked the numerous Fathers for their wonderful hospitality, we started on our way through the gate in the fortress wall that surrounds their village — an insignificant