Everywhere People Are Waiting

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On page 45 one reads "a slate-grey type (stone) for Paris and Chartres." This is not true. Slate is dark bluish grey stone. The stone of Chartres is a very light grey, that of Paris has a faint creamy tint, now that it is cleaned.

On page 67 the author speaking of virginals puts in parenthesis: "(possibly named for the Virgin Queen)." In answer to this history seems to make it clear that Elizabeth I (1558-1603) did not remain a virgin. Furthermore I quote from Curt Sachs' History of Musical Instruments p. 335 "The term virginal . . . . . goes back to the 15th century. It occurs in a poem of the epoch of Henry VII 1485-1509 . . . . The word probably is related to medieval Latin virga, 'rod, jack,' "

On page 68 St. Peter's is called "one of largest cathedrals in Europe." That is an understatement. It is by far the largest cathedral in Europe.

On page 71 we read that Versailles was "designed by Bernini." The fact is: Bernini at the invitation of Louis XIV went to Paris for 6 months in 1665. He drew plans for the Louvre (not for Versailles), which were rejected by the French architects.

May these few ripples on the surface of Culture Currents not distract the reader from the pleasure of perusing this worthwhile book of Albert Faurot, concert pianist, and professor of music and art history for the past 22 years at Silliman University.

Theodore E. Daigler, s.j.


Helen de Chappotin was an extraordinary woman. Distinguished member of one religious congregation and foundress of another, in her lifetime she saw her institute grow to three thousand members in some eighteen countries, with seven of her daughters martyred in the Boxer uprising. Despite an intensely busy and challenging life, she was always deeply committed to prayer and closely united to God.

Sister Agnes Willmann, her biographer and spiritual daughter, has allowed the saintly foundress to speak for herself. The character and work of Mother Helen unfold gracefully in the book: the reader feels almost like a witness of the events described.

Helen de Chappotin was born in Nantes, Brittany, France, May 21, 1839, in a thoroughly Catholic home. When she was nineteen she felt a call to the religious life. Her parents — with that strange blindness not infrequently found even in devout Catholics — opposed her vocation. But Helen, as a hundred subsequent events were to show, was not a girl to be easily overcome by opposition.
She was attracted to the Poor Clares and, though she did not enter this order, she was then touched by the magic of the Franciscan spirit, which she retained all her life, until she could realize it in a more formal way in her Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.

The institute of her choice was The Congregation of Mary Reparatrix, which she entered in 1864 at the age of twenty-five. While still a novice, she was sent to the Madura mission in India, where, in 1868, barely a year after pronouncing her temporary vows, she was made provincial over the mission's three houses. Suddenly however she found herself under a cloud. She was abruptly relieved of office and the very existence of the work in India was threatened.

With the encouragement of her bishop, Helen went to Rome to place her cause in the hands of Pius IX. He authorized the group to continue in existence as an autonomous institute, and thus were born the Missionaries, later the Franciscan Missionaries, of Mary.

The growth of the new congregation was phenomenal, both in members and houses throughout the world. The readiness with which Mother Helen accepted invitations to enter new fields would seem foolhardy to human wisdom. Like all young foundations these religious had a flaming zeal (everywhere people were waiting) and complete confidence in God, who did not let them down.

But all was not smooth sailing for Mother Helen. Again in Rome she was the target of criticism and was required to resign her office as general. She accepted the command with saintly serenity and this cloud too soon passed away. She was restored and remained in office until her death Nov. 15, 1904 at the age of sixty-five.

Mother Helen is a good model for this age of renewal. Sister Agnes Willmann thinks that the foundress would have accepted contemporary change without demur, and suggests as examples the use of family names and flexibility regarding religious dress. The author is unquestionably right, though Mother Helen would never have allowed her daughters to forget that they had left the world, a fact of which religious names and garb are useful, if not indispensable, reminders. But Mother Helen would have accepted more difficult things. She would have accepted orders emanating from superiors even when they were hard, not to say harsh and arbitrary. She had two experiences in which her administration ran a collision course with the ideas of those above her. She did not abdicate her convictions; but neither did she show the least sign of rebellion. She presented her case to and through legitimate authorities, ready joyfully to accept their decision if they should judge against her. As it turned out, she was upheld in both instances.

It is not only in humble obedience that she has lessons for contemporary religious life. The things she insisted on were things which need renewal today: cultus of the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle, devotion to Mary, the value of suffering, loyalty to the Holy Father. At the same time she was very modern in her mobility and adaptability, in her workshops for women, her printing presses. As one would expect in a soul so
deeply imbued with charity, she considered leprosaria the choicest of apostolates.

The author has given us too much and too little. At times the profusion of detail seems excessive. On the other hand she is strangely reticent when one would have desired a fuller development. The crisis in India happens without a word of explanation. Mother Helen is provincial on one page and on the next she is not. Similarly, what really happened in Rome? She was requested to step down as general and did so with exemplary virtue. But what was it all about? Finally the picture presented of the sisters with whom Mother Helen lived and worked is hardly less flawless than that of the foundress herself. Were they all so perfect? The author does not do justice to her subject in omitting human frailties. These, no less than the heat of Trichonopoly and the ferocity of the Boxers, were instruments of sanctity for these women who in spite of them achieved great holiness.

The life of Helen de Chappotin will be profitable reading not only for the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary but for other religious men and women, and indeed for all who can admire a soul entirely dedicated to God.

Leo A. Cullum, S.J.


The philosopher who wants to be at home in his own country and at rapport with his own people must in his philosophizing return to original experience and the original world, divested of alien theoretical superstructures. Through this return the world shows itself again with its human face, becomes again our home country, in which we dwell and long for a better fatherland.

Fr. Mercado, however, would have nothing to do with this originality: he would rather be non-engage in his philosophizing. Guided by superstructural theories of anthropologists and linguists, he placed himself high above the subjects of his inquiry, treated all contents of his consciousness with the same method as the physicist analyzes matter in terms of its ultimate elements. He worked on his topic with the assumption that the philosophy of a culture is implied in the people's way of thinking and behaving.

The Filipino mass-man, in Mercado's calculation, has to be understood as a causal-meaningful unity within the context of the Oriental cultural Ganzheit, a systematic whole rooted in an aesthetic-intuitional cognition.

The Filipino looks at a person from the viewpoint of harmony. He wants to be in harmony with his fellowmen just as he wants to be in harmony with himself. In this harmony, he notices the hierarchy and