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On Some Letters of Teilhard De Chardin: Letters from Egypt

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which are deposited in European Archives. An Index of persons, places and things facilitates the use of this book by researchers who will find it very useful in their study of the developments in Asia touched by this book.

JOSEFA M. SANIEL

ON SOME LETTERS OF TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

LETTERS FROM EGYPT 1905-1908. By Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Translated from the original edition: *Lettres d'Egypte, 1905-1908* (Aubier, Editions Montaigne, Paris, 1963), by Mary Ilford. New York: Herder and Herder, 1965. 256 pp.

When Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. was twenty-four years old, having just finished three years of philosophy on the Isle of Jersey, he was sent to teach science in the Jesuit School in Cairo. This book is a collection of sixty-eight letters, lovingly preserved, to his parents and family written during this assignment and they cover three years of his regency before he continued his theological studies.

The letters are all of almost uniform length, starting with mentions of family crises, illnesses, comings and goings, celebrations and anniversaries,—and characteristic student apologies for not having written sooner. The endings are all typical promises of prayers and special messages to certain members of the family. It is the bodies of the letters that catch the reader's attention in that they depict with startling vividness the bustling life of Egypt from 1905 to 1908. There are all the details of school life from every day lessons and examinations to the celebrations of Father Rector's birthdays, vignettes of the streets and market places, mosques and churches, the harbor of Alexandria and the Nile at Cairo, the rich in their palaces and the fellahin along the river-banks and in the desert, the waning of French influence and the waxing of supercilious British officialdom. There is even a bevy of ten young American lady tourists, whose antics draw from Teilhard the final observation: "It was quite entertaining." There is, of course, descriptions of visits to the ancient sites but much of the letters is given over to fossil-hunting and listings of the flora and fauna of the different regions.

These letters bespeak of profound respect and love of family. Indeed, unless the reader knows the author's present universal prominence in speculative thought, he might take them to be typical of letters any young religious would write home from an exciting and exotic foreign land. It would only be honest to mention that there

is nothing here of the profound lines of thought for which Teilhard is now famous. For those who admire Teilhard, however, certain overtones of intense sensitivity, unaffected gravity, and smiling objectivity, can be detected.

BROTHER D. GABRIEL, F.S.C.

THE "OTHER FACE" OF ST. THERESE OF LISIEUX

I CHOOSE ALL. A Study of St. Therese of Lisieux and her Spiritual Doctrine. By Sister Teresa Margaret, D.C. Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1964. 252 pp.

"Another study of St. Therese of Lisieux and her spiritual doctrine?"—one might be tempted to ask on taking up *I Choose All*, a book which purports to be just that in its subtitle. But if one can overcome that initial reaction and choose to read *I Choose All*, one will be rewarded by a very readable and refreshing slant on the Little Flower's spirituality, free from the oversentimentalism so often accorded her teachings as well as from the "psychological" treatment that has been given her during the past few years.

Written by Sr. Teresa Margaret, D.C., a Carmelite from Bridell, Wales, the book presents St. Therese in the light of the Gospels and of the papal documents concerning her virtues and mission, and against a background of Carmelite tradition, particularly the teaching of St. John of the Cross. The author has gone into a good deal of study in its preparation but happily has not succumbed to the temptation of producing a highly technical treatise. Instead, *I Choose All* is appealing and readable; even the four or more subheads under each chapter title do not distract as all are quite aptly chosen and the footnotes are unobtrusive.

In this study of Therese's spiritual doctrine and universal mission, Sr. Teresa Margaret presents the saint's "other face"—the Little Flower's little way washed clean of the sugary sentimentalism that has been wrapped round it by those who have misunderstood the idea of spiritual childhood and other aspects of Therese's teaching and devotions. In the chapter, "The Blessedness of Being Little," the author asserts, "Spiritual childhood... does not imply mental or spiritual immaturity.... The quality of being child-like is the result of development, and development in the right direction; it is something one has become." And this Therese exemplified to an eminent degree—in the short span of her life, she became a mature woman and a saint, one who "discovered" and offers to all of us a simple way of